



# INSIDE DIRT

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

### President's Message

David Bickerstaff, Master Gardener

Our master gardeners have been busy with our numerous projects which are designed to educate the Henderson county residents regarding horticulture. At the time of this writing we have volunteered over 5,000 hours. I would encourage you to attend one of our summer or library series. The DREAM Garden, located at the East Texas Arboretum is another opportunity for you to enjoy the garden. We are also nearing

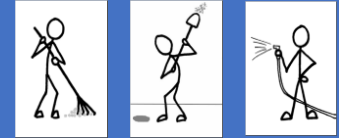


completion of our new Harvest Garden. This garden includes fruits and vegetables and we will invite groups to have hands on learning experiences. We are also working with some of the local schools to establish a Children's Garden so that our youth can gain an appreciation of horticulture.

Have you thought about becoming a Master Gardener? Master Gardeners are members of the local community who take an active interest in their lawns, trees, shrubs, flowers and gardens. They are enthusiastic, willing to learn and help others, as well as able to communicate with diverse groups of people. What really sets Master Gardeners apart from other home gardeners is their special training in horticulture. In exchange for their training, persons who become Master Gardeners contribute time as volunteers, working through the Henderson County's Texas AgriLife Extension office to provide horticultural-related information to their communities.

Is the Master Gardener program for me?

- Do you want to learn more about the culture and maintenance of many types of plants?
- Are you eager to participate in a practical and intense training program?



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- Do you enjoy sharing your knowledge with people?
- Do you have enough time to attend training and complete volunteer service hour requirements?
- Do you have special interests that could benefit the community or an interest in developing one? (i.e. bird or butterfly knowledge, native gardens, wildflowers, etc.)
- Do you have a sincere interest in nature or gardening?

If accepted into the Master Gardener program, you will be required to attend over 50 hours in specialized training courses. The program offers instruction in lawn care; ornamental trees and shrubs; insect, disease, and weed management; soils and plant nutrition, vegetable gardening; home fruit production; garden flowers; perennials and annuals; and water conservation.

In exchange for training, participants are asked to volunteer their time to the Henderson County's AgriLife Extension program. The type of service performed by Master Gardeners varies according to community needs and the abilities and interests of the Master Gardeners. Some Master Gardeners answer telephone requests for information related to gardening. Others participate in plant clinics or community events. Master Gardeners may speak to local groups and conduct workshops. They may help establish community garden projects, work with youth, or assist their agent with other events related to gardening.

We are seeking Henderson County residents that have an interest in taking the next Master Gardener class which will **start in September**. You can visit our website to learn more about the program and requirements. It is a rewarding experience and you be able to network with others in our association that have a love of gardening and educating the public. Please contact us if you are ready to become a Master Gardener!

We are also planning for a celebration in 2020 since it will be the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Henderson County Master Gardener Association. Look for more details soon!

Please enjoy reading this issue of *Inside Dirt* and happy gardening!

*David Bickerstaff,*

President HCMGA

## HCMGA Projects

- **Children's Garden:** HCMGA is available for consultation on school or teaching gardens.
- **DREAM Garden:** (Demonstrate, Research, Educate, Apply, Maintain) The HCMGA maintains a cottage-style ornamental garden at the East Texas Arboretum in Athens.
- **Fall Conference:** The largest fundraiser for HCMGA, this conference includes a guest speaker, possible raffles and/or auctions and a dinner.
- **Greenhouse:** The HCMGA maintains a greenhouse located at Trinity Valley Community College. This greenhouse allows us to propagate and grow plants that are sold at our annual spring plant sale.
- **Harvest Garden:** The HCMGA's newest project, the Harvest Garden, is a teaching garden on growing fruits and vegetables with hands-on demonstrations. It is located inside the Regional Fairpark Complex.
- **Library Series:** Educational presentations are hosted by the HCMGA on the third Tuesday of each month. These programs are open to the public at the Clint W. Murchison Memorial Library in Athens.
- **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 to share expertise and educate the public on various gardening topics.

# Thoughts from 2018 Interns

From Christy Graham:

I initially joined the class in hopes that I would gain knowledge and teachable materials to teach a Horticulture class that I “acquired” at Athens Christian Prep. Even though I already loved gardening and playing in the dirt I needed to be able to sustain a yearlong class. I didn’t have the knowledge or resources. The MG program helped me with just that. It gave me tools and leads on where to find info, hands on instruction (my favorite class times) and even meeting new people in the community that we can share ideas and resources.



**2018 Interns Receiving their certification as Master Gardeners in December.** (left to right) Shery Damuth, Christy Graham, Susan Skommesa, Sherry Sorrell, Barbara Thompson. Not pictured: Sherri Doss.

As a MG I look forward to teaching students in the Children’s Garden at ACPA all about the miracles that happen in all growing stages of plant life and how they can be a part of it. Already, I’ve seen my students get excited about watching their own vegetation grow, harvesting, and even trying and loving new vegetables they have never eaten before! I also plan to bring my classes to be involved as much as possible in Henderson County MG projects. I am really looking forward to bringing them to the new Harvest Garden.

The MG class was an easy and enjoyable class and gave me the flexibility to be as involved as I want to be. Obviously the more involved I was the more knowledge I gained. My classmates were superstars in putting our project together and I learned a ton just in doing

the project. I’m so glad I decided to join MG. It has given me everything I initially was hoping for but also a purpose for my love for digging in the dirt in the community and many new friendships.

From Susan Skommesa:

There was much to appreciate about the HCMGA class and internship. I loved that a variety of specialists taught from their expertise - almost a different teacher for each subject. I’m a tactile/visual learner, so the many hands-on and field-trip experiences made the material interesting and memorable. I received a wealth of knowledge from a variety of sources, and now have a manual that is filled with outstanding information that serves as a valuable reference tool. I have grown in knowledge and skill as a gardener.

I used to grow houseplants and vegetables. Though flowers are pretty, I never fully appreciated their importance in a healthy living ecosystem. The summer I took the class, I noticed how few pollinators were visiting my vegetable flowers. About the same time, we were learning in class about plant reproduction. I finally understood why my very healthy veggie plants, that were flowering like crazy, produced so few vegetables. This new knowledge created in me an excitement for adding new plants to my gardens. Adding flowers that draw pollinators and considering larger landscape adornments, such as the bones of my trees and the accent of shrubs, expands my delight as a gardener, and adds to the beauty of my property.

I came to the program very unsure of myself in the garden. Everything I knew I learned by trial and error. I didn't know why something either worked or didn't work. Now that I know the basic principles of horticulture, I can fix my problems methodically, I can surmise why my successes work, and I know how to find answers to my questions. I'm still tentative offering what I know to others, as there is still so much to learn.

Our intern project was very challenging. It took many more hours than expected. However, the beautiful end product, all that I learned along the way, and the bond developed with fellow interns and our intern coordinator, Lydia Holley, made it very much worth my time and effort.

On this journey, I've made many new friends, and love the comradery of the HCMGA. So many members are involved and active. This vibrancy and friendliness make belonging precious.

This next year I am the editor of Inside Dirt, and will help make the website a resource that is up to date, full of information, and an important resource. Hopefully, my contribution to HCMGA will be valuable to reaching those who need the horticultural knowledge we collectively have to offer.

### From Shery Damuth:

I joined the Henderson County MG program because I love gardening and have a passion for growing everything! My interest goes from trying to have the healthiest soil to having an "over the top harvest" and trying to raise that "what kind of plant is that"? If you ask me what my favorite plant is, my answer would be "all of them".

I have been a long-time gardener since I was in high school, propagating African Violets in my room, then on to horticulture classes at the junior college and any class I could find in my community. I have since become a Viticulturist (a Horticulturist specializing in grapes - mine being in wine grapes) and have degrees from the T.V. Munson Center and Texas Tech.

The Master Gardener program gives the participants not only knowledge to learn for themselves but knowledge to share with the county. You become a steward and teacher of your county. Everyone knows something to share and that is where the beauty of the Master Gardener program comes in. You learn and share within the group and then extend that to the public.

For 2019 I have two areas for the Harvest Group: the grapevines and orchard; plus, the Specialist Training Program. I am also on the audit committee.

I cannot say enough about the Henderson County MG program. I was a Denton County MG for about 5 years, but it was so large you only got to know the people on your particular project. Our MG program in Henderson County is so personable and we have some amazing projects, so there is something for everyone.

### From Barbara Thompson:

My goals when I signed up for the MG class were:

- Fill some of the extra time I would have when I retired
- Learn about the Master Gardener program and projects
- Learn about everything gardening related
- Move out of my comfort zone and become involved in the community

### Henderson County Master Gardeners

The master Gardener program is a volunteer development program, offered by Texas AgriLife Extension Service, that disseminates horticultural information to individuals and groups in Henderson County. The mission is to develop and cultivate community projects related to horticulture. We are a group of volunteers who share a love of gardening and are eager to learn and share our knowledge.

The MG class provided background knowledge, but for me not knowing a lot about gardening except putting a plant in the ground and hoping it would grow, I knew I needed to learn a lot more. So, I decided to become involved in the Dream Garden, Greenhouse, Library & Summer Series and Plant Sale. After working at all of the projects, I found I enjoyed them all. I was learning about gardening but I was enjoying the fellowship of some great Master Gardeners at each of the projects.

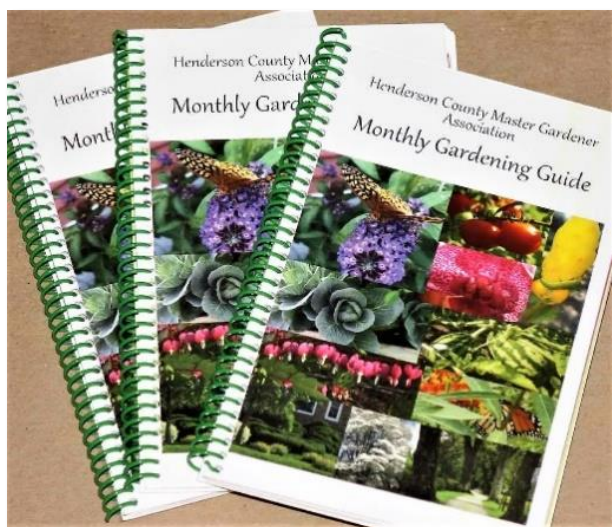
The intern project was another learning experience. I was glad that our class was able to decide what we wanted as our project and it was not a project assigned to us. I feel that our project was extra special and will continue to make an impact to the community thru the knowledge in the Gardening Guide, and to HCMGA by generating a little source of revenue. A special thank you to Lydia Holley for guiding us thru the process.

This coming year will be full of new and exciting adventures. I still have a lot to learn, so I plan to continue working at the Dream Garden, Greenhouse, Library & Summer Series, Plant Sale & hopefully venture to the Harvest Garden. I will be working as Treasurer, assisting Cynthia with the Greenhouse, finishing the HCMGA Handbook.

I believe I accomplished my goals this last year as an HCMGA Intern. Looking forward to 2019.

### From Sherry Sorrell:

I enrolled in the HCMGA class to meet new people having just moved to the area only 4 months before, and I knew next to nothing about gardening and horticulture.



Pictured above is the Intern project mentioned in the testimonies. You can obtain the HCMGA Monthly Gardening Guide through the Henderson County Extension office (903-675-6130). This guide is a great resource to help you decide what to plant and when to plant it.

The classes were well taught with a variety of professionals and experts in their fields, and I loved that some of the classes were taught by local Master Gardeners (MG). The binder provided was good in its basic information that allowed us to add more region-specific data and lists. While it couldn't possibly provide all the information one needs, it certainly provides the resources to go find the answers. Lydia Holley and Yvonne Sparks did great work picking up the responsibility for the program in the absence of an extension agent. We learned much from them and all the teachers who came to share their knowledge.

It doesn't stop there. My exposure to MG principles has taught me there are good bugs and bad bugs, I don't have to stomp everything with more than four legs; and bees, wasps, and spiders serve a purpose. Recycle leaves rather than put them in the landfill. Bring a known female yaupon into the landscape to see if the ones I already have are male or female. Move flowering plants nearer to the garden to ensure pollinators find my vegetables and watermelons, and hand-pollinate the watermelons when the bees don't find them!

The intern project was much more challenging than we could have imagined. However, as our numbers dwindled from 9 to 7 to 5, we were determined to produce the best county-specific gardening guide in Texas, and I believe we did! Our team worked well together and became good friends that will carry on. I have met so many wonderful people through my association with HCMGA, and it all started with Barbara Thompson, Shery Damuth, Christy Graham, Susan Skommesa and Lydia Holley.

# LIBRARY SERIES & SUMMER SERIES - Open to The Public

**Tuesday, July 16<sup>th</sup>, at 5:30 pm:** *Library Series presents* Master Gardener *Dub Hirst*. He will speak on "The Design Process - Concept Designs". This event will be held at the Clint W. Murchison Memorial Library, 121 S. Prairieville, Athens.

**Thursday, August 8, at 6:00 pm:** *Summer Series presents* Chris Wiesinger, owner of Southern Bulb Company, will be presenting "The Bulb Hunter". This event will be held at the Senior Citizens Center, 3344 TX Hwy 31, Athens.

**Tuesday, August 20<sup>th</sup>, at 5:30 pm:** *Library Series presentation* will be a panel of Master Gardeners who will speak on and answer questions regarding *Fall Gardening*. In addition, there will be a *Meet & Greet* with AG Agent, Spencer Perkins. This event will be held at the Clint W. Murchison Memorial Library, 121 S. Prairieville, Athens.

Library Series meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of every month. For details on these presentations, turn to page 9, or visit us at <https://txmg.org/hendersonmg/welcome/events/learn-at-the-library-series/>



## 2019 HCMGA Meetings

**When:** Noon (luncheon), 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month

- \* July 17<sup>th</sup>
- \* August 21<sup>st</sup>
- \* September 18<sup>th</sup>
- \* October 16<sup>t</sup>
- \* November 20<sup>th</sup>
- \* December 18<sup>th</sup>

**Where:** Richard M. Hart & Johnny Morris Conservation Center

**Address:** 5601 Country Road 4812 Athens, TX 75752

*For more information on how you can become a Master Gardener:*

- Call: (903) 675-6130
- Email: [CMGA@gmail.com](mailto:CMGA@gmail.com)
- Visit: [txmg.org/hendersonmg](https://txmg.org/hendersonmg)

**For more events, see the calendar on page 12**

# Oakleaf Hydrangeas

David Bickerstaff, Master Gardener



My new love in the garden is the oakleaf hydrangea (*Hydrangea quercifolia*). This plant puts on a show and demands center stage! The large landscape specimen plants grow 5 to 6 feet tall and 6 to 8 feet wide. The creamy white floral spikes are huge - 8 to 12 inches long. The Genus name comes from *hydor* meaning water and *ageion* meaning vessel in reference to the cup-like capsular fruit.

Because they do grow rather tall, and because their texture can be coarse, oakleaf hydrangeas are probably best when used in open shade, for example, at the bases of large shade trees. They tolerate a bit of morning sun, but they do much better if they're protected from late morning and afternoon sun in the summer. Their leaves are so large, and their growth

is so vigorous that the plants may not be able to pull water up to the large leaves quickly enough if they're exposed to much sunlight. The new growth will wilt each day, and the edges of the leaves are likely to scorch.

The oakleaf gets its name from the shape of its beautiful large leaves. (What did you expect 😊?) These are truly plants of all seasons. In addition to their showy spring blooms and dramatically large summer leaves, their fall color can often be beautiful. In the fall, leaves often turn colors of brilliant red, orange, yellow and burgundy. In addition, the leaves may hang on for a couple of weeks. In the winter, the bare stems show their interesting character.

Soak your oakleaf hydrangeas regularly in the heat of summer. Sprinkler irrigation alone may not be enough. Drench their soil deeply at least two or three times every week during the summer for the first couple of years. After that, watch them daily when it's hot and dry, and let them be your indicator of when they need to be watered. When they begin to wilt slightly, soak them again. But remember that their leaves do wilt if the sun hits them, even though the soil may be adequately moist.

Unlike their cousins mophead hydrangeas (*Hydrangea macrophylla*), soil pH doesn't affect the color of oakleaf blooms. With the popularity of the plant, new varieties are becoming available from large landscape specimens to compact and dwarf types.



## Care of your oakleaf hydrangea:

**Site and sunlight** – Provide them with sites that have morning sun and protection from intense afternoon rays.

**Soil** – Oakleaf flourishes in rich, well-drained, slightly acidic soil. In areas with heavy clay, take time to amend your soil at planting time.

**Water** – Oakleaf hydrangeas naturally do best when soil stays evenly moist, but never soggy. Water thoroughly, then check the soil by hand before watering again. To prevent root rot, avoid overwatering. If the soil is wet, wait a few days and check again.

**Fertilizer** – A complete fertilizer at planting time starts your hydrangeas off with essential nutrients they need. Feed your oakleaf in early spring each year with the same fertilizer or a flower-enhancing fertilizer. Then feed it again four months later, in midsummer.

**Insect and Disease** - No serious insect or disease problems. Some susceptibility to leaf blight and powdery mildew. Aphids and spider mites are occasional visitors.

**Pruning** - Some hydrangeas bloom on new wood grown each year, but oakleaf hydrangeas flower on old wood carried over from the year before. Canes can be cut to the ground every two or three years to keep the shrub smaller, but if the canes are allowed to grow, the naturally peeling bark is attractive. The buds that become striking oakleaf flowers, form on stems in the summer. Always prune oakleaf hydrangeas immediately after they finish flowering, before next year's buds can form. Wait too long and you may prune away all the flower buds you're hoping for. Little pruning is typically required.

I hope you add this to your garden and enjoy the show!

References:

<http://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org>

<http://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/plants>

<https://wateruniversity.tamu.edu/design/plant-database/view/?id=59>

[https://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id\\_plant=hyqu3](https://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id_plant=hyqu3)

## Resources for Natives Plants

Filling your garden with native plants may seem like quite the challenge. Which plants are native? Where do you find them? How do you care for them? The HCMGA *Monthly Gardening Guide* has an article on Earth-Kind from Texas A&M AgriLife Extension. In that article are listed many native grasses, groundcovers, perennials, shrubs and trees of all sizes, as well as vines. The index lists about 325 plants, trees, shrubs, and vines, by both their common name, as well as their scientific name. The natives all have stars next to them. Here are a couple more awesome resources:

- Native Plant Society of Texas: <https://npsot.org/wp/>
- Ladybird Johnson Wild Flower Center: <https://www.wildflower.org/magazine/landscapes/natural-accent> - click on "South Central Plains"
- Texas A&M AgriLife Extension: <https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/earthkind/> and <https://agriflifeextension.tamu.edu/solutions/best-plants-trees-grow-texas-landscapes/>
- Texas A&M Agriculture Program: <https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/ornamentals/nativeshrubs/>
- Texas A&M East Texas Gardening: <https://easttexasgardening.tamu.edu/east-texas-home-gardening/plants-for-east-texas/>



## Learn at the Library Series

Open and Free to the Public

### July 16<sup>th</sup> at 5:30pm: *The Design Process: Concept Designs*

As part of the Henderson County Master Gardener Association's Library Series, Dub Hirst will present "**The Design Process - Concept Designs**". His presentation will be held on Tuesday, July 16, at the Clint W. Murchison Memorial Library, 121 S. Prairieville, Athens.

In Dub's first presentation in April, the steps involved in the Design Process were discussed, along with the importance of establishing Goals and Criteria. In July, Dub's presentation will first review the major points from the April discussion and then continue to the next step in the Design Process, which is Concept Design. A case study will be used to explore in depth how there can be two different concept design solutions for the same set of Goals and Criteria.

This presentation is free and open to the public. For more information, please call 903-675-6130, send an email to [hendersoncmga@gmail.com](mailto:hendersoncmga@gmail.com), or visit our website: [txmg.org/hendersonmg](http://txmg.org/hendersonmg).

### August 20<sup>th</sup> at 5:30pm: Panel Discussion & Meet-N-Greet

The August Henderson County Master Gardener Association's Library Series, will feature a panel of Master Gardeners who will speak on and answer questions regarding **Fall Gardening**. In addition, there will be a **Meet & Greet** with AG Agent, Spencer Perkins. This event will be held at the Clint W. Murchison Memorial Library, 121 S. Prairieville, Athens.

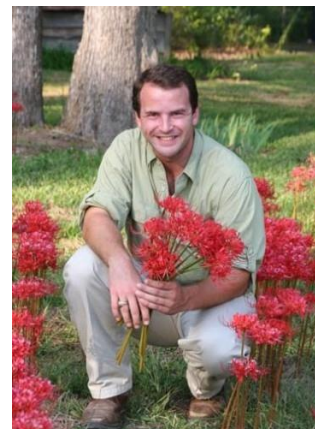
This presentation is free and open to the public. For more information, please call 903-675-6130, send an email to [hendersoncmga@gmail.com](mailto:hendersoncmga@gmail.com), or visit our website: [txmg.org/hendersonmg](http://txmg.org/hendersonmg).

## Summer Series

3344 TX Hwy 31, Athens.

Chris is the owner of Southern Bulb Company near Tyler, Tx, where he farms and sells bulbs, most of which he has collected throughout the South. He travels nationally as a frequent speaker to nursery groups, garden clubs, cemetery preservation organizations, and small business associations. He and his company have been featured in the New York Times, Southern Living, and House and Garden. Wiesinger is coauthor (with Cherie Foster Colburn) of "Heirloom Bulbs for Today".

As part of the Henderson County Master Gardeners' Summer Series, Chris Wiesinger will be presenting **The Bulb Hunter** on Thursday, August 8, at 6:00 pm at the Senior Citizens Center,



Chris will be giving his presentation about bulbs. He will also be selling his book, *The Bulb Hunter* and selling his bulbs. For more information, please call 903-675-6130, send an email to [hendersoncmga@gmail.com](mailto:hendersoncmga@gmail.com), or visit our website: <https://txmg.org/hendersonmg/welcome/events/summer-series/>.

# Garden Lessons We Need to Relearn

Robert Erickson, Henderson County Master Gardener



**A bed of climbing cucumbers**

Growing your some of own food has become more important to many families. There are many reasons why people look to their gardens. However, they often boil down to three reasons: save money, better tasting food, and healthier food. All three of these can be achieved but there is a price tag to achieve these desirable results which isn't money; the price is learning and planning.

Historically, people have always grown a high percentage of their food at home. Gardens for the sake of beauty are relatively new, having become popular in the 1700-1800s. This coincided with the increase in wealth and the improvements in farming technology, food storage ability, and reliable and fast transportation. The poorest elements of society have always relied on growing their own.

However, as we have had a resurgence in the popularity of home gardening, we have also tended to forget or ignore a couple of important hard-earned lessons from the past. These lessons can become very important to the home gardener and should be reconsidered annually.

One of the most important lessons is the importance of rotating crops. This is particularly important to those embracing raised bed, square foot gardening, and container gardening. Essentially, these techniques involve growing more in a smaller space than traditional in-ground methods. In short, they are intensive planting schemes and work very well for home gardeners. However, the temptation is to grow the same plants year after year. If this continues for some time, bad things can happen and will affect the garden for years to come.

Possibly the worst thing is the growth and contamination of a garden soil with diseases, blights, and wilts. This was the primary cause of the great Irish potato famine which caused many people to starve and many more to emigrate from the Emerald Isle. Simply stated, farmers grew potatoes year after year in the same soil. The soil-borne diseases became so rampant, entire crops failed. This can still be a problem with a number of plants today. Potatoes, tomatoes, peppers, and others are particularly vulnerable. Failure to deal with the problem, will eventually lead to crop failure. There are chemical solutions available but these are often harsh and potentially dangerous. The



**Tomatoes**



Lemon Cucumbers

simplest solution is to rotate the area where these plants are grown and plant others in the same space for several years.

The second reason to consider crop rotation is to avoid nutrient decline in the soil. Soils can rebuild their nutrient level, but it's a slow process. The alternate is to add increasingly larger amounts of fertilizers to achieve the same yield. One of the goals of organic gardening is to sustain and maintain the health of the soil. Crop rotation and planting beneficial plants each year is part of this process.

For raised bed and square foot gardening, the simplest plan is drop rotation. In general, a four-year rotation is recommended. Starting with the year you plant nightshades (tomatoes, peppers, potatoes, and eggplant), follow this with Cruciferous (cabbages, cauliflower, broccoli, etc.) plants. Nightshades are heavy feeders as well as soil disease prone. Light feeders, such as the Cruciferous, reduce the stress on the soil and tend to resist to most soil diseases. In the third year, consider planting root crops (carrots, radishes, beets, turnips, etc.). Follow these, with legumes like beans and peas. These are gentle to the soil and add

vital nitrogen-fixing back into the soil. Then you can return to start the cycle with nightshades again.

Along with crop rotation, adding fresh compost or manure annually helps dilute the soil diseases while adding back the micronutrients which are often missing in chemical fertilizers. The same process holds true for container gardening except the container itself should be periodically cleaned with a bleach and water solution to rid it of any soil disease residue.

Happy gardening and enjoy the fruits of your efforts

# Harvest Garden Happenings

By Lydia Holley, Master Gardener

The Harvest Garden is starting to take shape! So far, we have:

- ✓ put up fencing around the garden
- ✓ installed an irrigation system with plantings on separate timers
- ✓ constructed raised beds and planted them with herbs and vegetables
- ✓ installed grape trellising and will be planting grapes soon
- ✓ erected a hoop house
- ✓ planted fruit trees and berries (blueberries, blackberries and raspberries)



We are working furiously to complete the various areas of the Harvest Garden in order to schedule a Grand Opening, begin demonstration/educational programs, and teach everyone how they can grow fruits and vegetables on their own property. The Harvest Garden, located at the FairPark Regional Complex in Athens, is approximately 100 ft x 100 ft, about the same size of an average suburban lot.

# Calendar

## Of Events

### July

7/1 HCMGA online member survey open  
7/6 Thunder Over Cedar Creek Air Show  
7/6 HCMGA at Athens Farmers Market  
7/16 Library Series: Delbert Hirst- Landscape Design  
7/17 HCMGA General Meeting

### August

8/3 TMGA Director's meeting - Texas A&M campus  
8/3 HCMGA at Athens Farmers Market  
8/8 HCMGA Summer Series - The Bulb Hunter  
8/17 Deadline for Inside Dirt articles (Sept-Oct edition)  
8/20 Library Series: Panel Discussion and Meet & Greet  
8/21 HCMGA General Meeting

## Events Around Town

- **July 4<sup>th</sup> – Independence Day!**
- **July 9<sup>th</sup> - East Texas Arboretum:** <http://www.easttexasarboretum.org/events.html> **Canning Series: Jams and Jellies (6:00pm)** Taught by Carolyn Tyler, Henderson County Extension Agent. Held in the Woman's Building. \$25.00 per person. Call 903-675-5630 to Register.
- **July 16<sup>th</sup> - East Texas Arboretum:** <http://www.easttexasarboretum.org/events.html> **Canning Series: Salsa (6:00pm)** Taught by Carolyn Tyler, Henderson County Extension Agent. Held in the Woman's Building. \$25.00 per person. Call 903-675-5630 to Register.
- **July 16-17 - Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center:** <https://www.wildflower.org/event/invasive-curriculum-teachers/2019-07-16> **Class: Invasive Species: Highschool Curriculum Training Workshops for Teachers (9:00am-4:00pm)** *This workshop will introduce teachers to a curriculum designed around the issue of invasive species. Gain skills and knowledge to transform high school students into citizen scientists as they collect data on local invasive plant species. Developed by [texasinvasives.org](http://texasinvasives.org) (TI.org), the curriculum consists of four units with a total of eleven lessons covering basic information on invasive species: Mapping and GPS; invasive plant identification; training to collect data on invasive plants as TI.org's Invaders of Texas citizen scientists; and a summative assessment. The lessons will satisfy the TEKS 11th – 12th grade Environmental Science Section 112.37 (Environmental/Systems). CEU and ES credits are available.*
- **July 23<sup>rd</sup> - East Texas Arboretum:** <http://www.easttexasarboretum.org/events.html> **Canning Series: Pickling (6:00pm)** Taught by Carolyn Tyler, Henderson County Extension Agent. Held in the Woman's Building. \$25.00 per person. Call 903-675-5630 to Register.
- **August 15<sup>th</sup> - East Texas Arboretum:** <http://www.easttexasarboretum.org/events.html> **Plant Propagation Workshop (5:30pm-7:00pm)** Watch their website for more details as the date approaches.
- **August 24<sup>th</sup> – Smith County Master Gardeners:** <https://www.facebook.com/events/2327776467437792/> **Learning Landscaping from my Grandmother's Quilt (8:30am-11:30am)** *"Greg Grant, Smith County Extension Horticulturist, will present "Stitching an Heirloom Garden... Learning Landscaping from my Grannies' Old Quilts" on Saturday, August 24 at Harvey Hall, 2000 W. Front St in Tyler, TX. Along with the lecture, which also features Jo Helen McGee on Quilt Preservation, there will be an Heirloom Quilt Show featuring the inaugural showing of Greg's extensive heirloom family quilt collection. Registration begins at 8:30 AM with the program beginning at 9 A.M. Tickets are \$15 and may be purchased at the door."*

# Master Gardeners at Farmers Market

By Lydia Holley, Master Gardener



Do you have gardening questions? Are you interested in knowing what nutrients your soil might need? Want to identify a certain weed, know how to grow a particular plant, or need a plant recommendation for a difficult area? Ask a Master Gardener.

Access to Henderson County Master Gardener Association (HCMGA) has never been easier. From now through October, HCMGA will be at the Athens Farmers Market on the first Saturday of every month.

The Athens Farmers Market is located at 212 N. Palestine, Athens, Texas. HCMGA will have a booth on July 6, August 3, September 7, and October 5, from 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m.

Stop by the HCMGA booth to pick up a soil sample kit, a brochure about becoming a Master Gardener, ask plant- and garden-related questions, or find out about future events and presentations. In addition to your gardening problems, HCMGA is also interested in hearing about your gardening successes.

For more information, call 903-675-6130, email [hendersonCMGA@gmail.com](mailto:hendersonCMGA@gmail.com), or visit [txmg.org/hendersonmg](http://txmg.org/hendersonmg).

# Master Gardeners Receive Awards

By Lydia Holley, Master Gardener

The Texas Master Gardener state conference was held in Victoria, Texas, on April 27, 2019. During the conference, Henderson County Master Gardener Association (HCMGA) received four state awards for the 2018 year. HCMGA competes in the Medium-Large category, with 50-99 members. HCMGA received awards in each *Search for Excellence* category submitted to the Texas Master Gardener Association.



For *Outstanding Association*, HCMGA won first place. This category “recognizes a Master Gardener Association that has completed at least one or more programs and/or projects of importance to the community”. HCMGA has an ornamental demonstration garden, a soon-to-be-completed fruit and vegetable demonstration garden, and offers numerous educational programs, including the popular “*Learn at the Library Series*” given free to the public every month.

HCMGA’s *Monthly Gardener Guide* was awarded second place in the *Written Education* category. This monthly guide is available for purchase at the County Extension Office and Master Gardener booths at multiple locations throughout the year. The guide is written specifically for East Texas gardeners, with chores divided monthly. Additional tips are included each month, and includes pages of useful information as well as blank pages to individualize the guide. Guidebooks are offered for \$15.





Yvonne Sparks received second place as *Outstanding Individual*. The Outstanding Individual category recognizes a “*Master Gardener whose involvement and contributions during the award year are of primary importance*”. Sparks was certified in Henderson County in 2014 and served as President of HCMGA during 2018.

HCMGA’s Educational Program, “*Facts and Fantasies of Texas Gardening: An Evening with Neil Sperry*” was given third place. This program was one of HCMGA’s fundraisers for 2018.

For more information, call 903-675-6130, email [hendersonCMGA@gmail.com](mailto:hendersonCMGA@gmail.com), or visit [txmq.org/hendersonmq](http://txmq.org/hendersonmq).

## July & August Gardening Tips

### In General:

What a wet May and June! Plenty of water for the gardens. July through September tends to be much dryer. Regular watering will most likely be necessary. Keep a close eye on the soil for moisture, and your plants for pests. As plants get distressed, they get vulnerable to pests.

### Love veggies and herbs?

My vegetable harvest is bountiful. This spring, rain and bees abound! The main task in July is to keep the weeds out, the plants happy, and harvest, harvest, harvest!

As early tomato, pepper and eggplants are spent through the month of July, get prepared for a second harvest by transplanting another round. While you are at it, seed your garden for southern peas, pumpkin, watermelon, and winter squash. Mid-July, seed cantaloupe, lima beans, and another crop of summer squash. Keep your garden clean of dying plants to avoid a breeding ground for pests.

Early August is your last chance to seed the sweet corn. However, you have until the end of August to sow bush and pole beans, cucumbers, and Irish potatoes. This month is also the last chance to add Cole transplants such as broccoli, brussels sprouts, cabbage and cauliflower. Plants needing protection from the heat are the cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, peas, and broccoli.

As you pull spent plants and either sow seeds or add transplants, don’t forget to add compost to refresh the soil. In addition, rotate your plants. Don’t plant the same plant family in the same spot. For example, if you are pulling spent tomato plants, (night shade) don’t replace them with eggplant (another night shade). Try planting Cole plants or beans instead. This prevents disease from taking hold in the soil, dissuades pests, and helps rebuild soil nutrients if you’ve refreshed the soil with compost. Healthy soil, healthy plants, plenty of harvest.

## How about Flowers?

In July and August, your annuals may need some attention. Nip the tips to encourage new growth, fertilize, and add mulch as needed. If spent, replace them. Now is the time to prepare for fall colors. There is plenty of time to plant Asters, Celosia, Marigold, Mums, Portulaca and zinnia.

August is the time to purchase wildflower seeds! Most wildflowers should be sown in late September through November. Also, start ordering spring flowering bulbs. Try something new. If you attend our HCMGA August Summer Series event with Chris Wiesinger, he will be presenting on Bulbs. Chris is the owner of Southern Bulb Company near Tyler, Tx, where he farms and sells bulbs, most of which he has collected throughout the South. The Summer Series event is titled after Chris' book, *The Bulb Hunter*. Be sure to attend this fabulous evening on Thursday, August 8, at 6:00 pm at the Senior Citizens Center, 3344 TX Hwy 31, Athens. His book will be available for sale, as well as his bulbs.



Texas Spiderlily (Hymenocallis liriosme)

The HCMGA Monthly Gardening Guide has a fabulous article on Hydrangeas in the August *Tips and Tricks*. It can help you identify your type of hydrangea, so you'll know how and when to prune them. Pruning at the wrong time will mean no flowers next year. Did you catch David Bickerstaff's article on Oakleaf Hydrangeas on page 7? A must read filled with meaty information and references.

## Do you care for your trees and shrubs - or are they just there?

In August, cut back on fertilizer to allow new tree and shrub growth time to harden off before winter weather arrives.

Harvest and enjoy your fruit from trees. However, remember to remove fallen fruit and debris from beneath the trees to eliminate a breeding ground for insects and fungus. Do you have Blackberries? Remove this last season's fruiting canes. In order to encourage compact growth, tip-prune new shoots that are developing.

Remove flowers regularly on Rose bushes as they fade to encourage new blooms.

Keep adequate organic mulch around trees and shrubs to conserve moisture and keep the soil cooler as the summer heats up. Water deeply and less frequently, to encourage roots to go deep.

## And what about your grass?

Time to raise your mower a notch. Slightly longer grass will fare better in the heat. Be sure to water as needed, and preferably very early in the morning to reduce evaporation. If you can leave footprints behind on your grass, it's time to water. Remember to water deep and less frequently. There is a good article in the May-June Issue of the Inside Dirt on watering grass.

Areas of your lawn that you are renovating, should be complete in August. You want to give any new plantings or seeding time to grow strong before the winter die-back.

## Master Gardeners, Mark your calendar!

The 2020 Texas State Conference will be held in Waco, TX. The dates to remember are May 12<sup>th</sup> thru May 14<sup>th</sup>. Hotels are now taking reservations, so don't wait!



## A Garden Reminder

By Robert Erickson, Henderson County Master Gardener



As we finish spring and enter our summer season, wise gardeners need to pay special attention to the rainfall and watering schedule for their gardens. A look at the historical averages for all months but especially for the summer ones show a fairly consistent pattern. However, these numbers represent the averages of many years of data. Our gardens care about what actually rains on them in any given week or month, not what the averages say it should be.

For the first five months of this year, comparing the actual versus the posted averages illustrates the importance of paying attention on a regular basis. This year, January, February, and March had less rain than average but both April and May greatly exceeded the average amount. For the year-to-date, we are ahead of our average rainfall but most of this happened during April and May rather than being spread out over the five months.

The impact of too little or too much rain on our gardens can be critical to the success of our plants. It is also important to realize that July, August, and September are historically the driest months of the year. Having said this, no one knows for sure what might actually happen this year. Pay attention.

Be prepared. Check your garden moisture a couple of times a week. If the soil is dry, add water. If it remains damp or moist, hold off for several more days. Most plants like consistently moist soil rather than fluctuating dry and wet conditions. Understand the plants you grow and take care of their needs and they will take care of you.





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Texas master gardeners



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