



INSIDE DIRT



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

President's Message

David Bickerstaff, Master Gardener

Our group continues to follow the COVID-19 health guidelines and we have not met as a full group since our March meeting. We do have small teams that perform maintenance on our various gardens and our greenhouse. We also have been continuing our education via online events. We have also been busy planning for fall events (assuming we get back to a somewhat normal level) such as the grand opening of our new Harvest Garden, our Fall Conference and the Intern Conference. We are anxious to begin meeting with the public and sharing our passion for gardening!



You can still enjoy information from the Henderson County Master Gardening Association via our Facebook page, website, newspaper articles and reading *Inside Dirt*.

Our board meets virtually each month to review the status of the pandemic in Henderson County. As soon as we believe that our membership is no longer at risk, we will be able to enjoy the fellowship and learning that the program is all about.

I recently read an article from Charlie Hall, Ph.D., AgriLife Extension horticulture and economics specialist. He conducted research to uncover all the ways gardening and plants can help better your mental health. Dr. Hall states "Interacting with nature, especially with the presence of water, can increase self-esteem and mood, reduce anger, and improve general psychological well-being with positive effects on emotions or behavior." Two major benefits of gardening are:

- **Decreased depression**
 - Being immersed in nature and vegetation were used as active components in a therapeutic horticulture intervention for clinical depression in 2018, said Hall.



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- “Garden walking and reflective journaling decreased depression scores in older adults.”
 - Outdoor gardening and plant care exposes people to sunshine and high amounts of vitamin D, a synthesizer of serotonin. Serotonin is the chemical in brains that induces happiness.
 - Plant filled homes and areas also can boost memory and heighten your attention span, he said. Overall mood improves greatly after spending time in nature.
- **Reduced anxiety and stress**
 - In high stress times and environments, gardening lends an outlet for keeping the hands and mind busy, Hall said. Hands-on activities like gardening allow the brain to focus on another task.
 - “Consumers have historically shown an inclination to purchase plants that enhance their quality of life, meaning they will purchase items that positively influence their social, physical, psychological, cognitive, environmental and spiritual well-being,” he said.
 - “Increased access to green spaces also reduces psychological distress, depression symptoms, clinical anxiety and mood disorders in adults,” Hall said. “Stress reduction and mental restoration occur when individuals live near green areas, have a view of vegetation, or spend time in natural settings.”

We have several people in Henderson County that have discovered either a renewed or new interest in gardening during this pandemic. We are here to assist you!

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

“Life Is Not Measured by the Number of Breaths We Take, but by the Moments That Take Our Breath Away”

~ Unknown

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.

LIBRARY SERIES

**Programing on hold until public gatherings are again allowed.
Watch our website for details.**

Library Series meets the **3rd Tuesday** of every month. All presentations are held at the **Clint W. Murchison Memorial Library**, 121 S. Prairieville, Athens at 5:30pm. Come early as all presentations start on time and last for an hour. For details on the above presentations, visit us at <https://txmg.org/hendersonmg/welcome/events/learn-at-the-library-series/>



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.

**Visit our website and watch the *Inside Dirt* for
celebration details**

The Good Beetle

By Lydia Holley, Master Gardener



Texas has a vast array of beetles. Playing with June Beetles is a fun diversion for children, but adults worry about the damage the beetles cause to the landscape. Blister Beetles can, as the name implies, blister. They can also kill a horse if eaten. Some are destructive, like the Southern Pine Beetle and the Emerald Ash Borer (which has been discovered in Harrison, Marion, Cass, Denton and Montague Counties).

Stag Beetles look alarming but are not considered a pest. Red Headed Beauties have the best common name, although they are not found in East Texas. A few,

like the Goldenrod Soldier Beetle, are considered beneficial. The beetle that caught my eye this week was the Eyed Click Beetle.

As their name implies, Click Beetles make a clicking sound. They do this by flexing then snapping sections of their bodies together, much like the snap of a rubber band. This gives them the ability to right themselves if they land on their backs, although landing is a game of chance.

Studies on Click Beetles have shown that they can jump up to 25 times their body length. They also rotate and do somersaults in the air. Squirming like a dropped cat, they try to right themselves before landing, but only achieve that about half the time. If they land upside down, they must try again.

Why do Click Beetles click? Other than to right themselves, scientists are not sure. Some suggest they do this to startle a bird into opening its mouth and dropping an insect for the beetle to feed on. The pattern of the Eyed Click Beetle has two circles on its back which resemble eyes. To birds, this beetle must look like Jason Voorhees from the 1980's movie *Friday the 13th*. How frightening it would be to have those eyes jumping toward you!

However, some believe Click Beetles feed only on aphids, leaves, or pollen. Some think they do not feed at all. So perhaps their click is just another scare tactic used strictly for defense.

The larva of the Eyed Click Beetle is called a wireworm. It is this stage which makes the Eyed Click Beetle beneficial. While some wireworms can be very destructive, the wireworm of the Eyed Click Beetle eats the larva of flies and wood-boring beetles. So, watch out, Emerald Ash Borer and Southern Pine Beetles! Jason the Eyed Click Beetle may be coming for you.

For more information, call 903-675-6130, email hendersonCMGA@gmail.com, or visit txmq.org/hendersonmq.

Native Plants

By Carolyn Savage, Master Gardener Intern



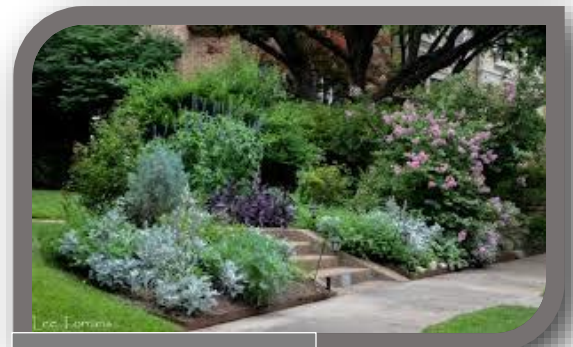
Longleaf Pine

A hot, dry wind blows across the parched earth. Dried leaves rustle high in the trees, beseeching the sky to open up and bring forth the life-giving spring. Dead grasses crunch underfoot as faithful gardeners make their way toward the stricken landscape. Dozens of prized and highly sought-after plants have perished. Many have succumbed to harsh conditions.

The fussy nature and ill-tolerance of common horticultural plants have led generations of gardeners to be disappointed as healthy plants wither under the might of summers in East Texas. What if I told you there is another option? What if I told

you there is a whole world of plant species perfectly suited to our region? What if I told you these plants not only survive the harsh conditions of our state, but thrive in them? Native plants are hardy ecosystem-helpers and a beautiful addition to any garden.

Native plants are any group of plants indigenous to a particular region and occurring without human introduction. In the United States, that translates to any plant growing here before the Europeans settled the continent. Plants such as Bluestems and Longleaf Pines all fall into this category. Many of these species are overlooked in the gardening industry because they often do not produce the showy blooms or intoxicating fragrances that so many horticultural plants will.



Native Plant Garden



Little Bluestem

Even though some may think them dull, native plants are anything but. These plants are the basis of an alive and diverse community of birds, pollinators, and mammals. Thousands of fascinating and beneficial species such as quail and native bees depend on these plants for food and shelter to raise their young. In addition to meeting the needs of wildlife, native plants make a lovely contribution to landscapes and garden beds.

With all that said, you may still be wondering: "That's great, why should I put them in my garden?" I'm glad you asked. To answer that, we're going to have to go back a little bit. Before Columbus discovered North America, native plants were happily growing here. They didn't get weekly watering or yearly aerations. They just grew and have changed little since then. In addition to supporting wildlife, native species

of native plants are hardy ecosystem-helpers and a beautiful addition to any garden.

require less water and fertilizer than common garden plants and are highly drought-tolerant and resistant to many diseases. Due to this, natives are cheaper to grow and require fewer chemical controls, making them safer for the environment.

Native plants are amazing organisms. They survive conditions in our region that are difficult for most “fussy” plants to endure. Requiring less care and pest control makes them healthier for the planet and less hassle to manage, especially during the hot months. Additionally, these plants aid the environment through providing nutrition and cover for other native species. These plants, while not as splendid and bold as horticultural ones, are a good choice for diverse and hardy gardens. Natives are the backbone of a healthy community, it’s our job as gardeners to make sure these species are in place to preserved the heritage of our land.



Echinacea, or Purple

Carolyn Savage, is a Henderson County Master Gardener Intern. She has experience writing for the East Texas Beekeepers Association’s monthly newsletter. We welcome Carolyn as a contributing writer to the Inside Dirt.

~ Susan Skommesa, Editor

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-accents> - click on “South Central Plains”
- Texas A&M AgriLife Extension: <https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/earthkind/> and <https://agrillifeextension.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/>

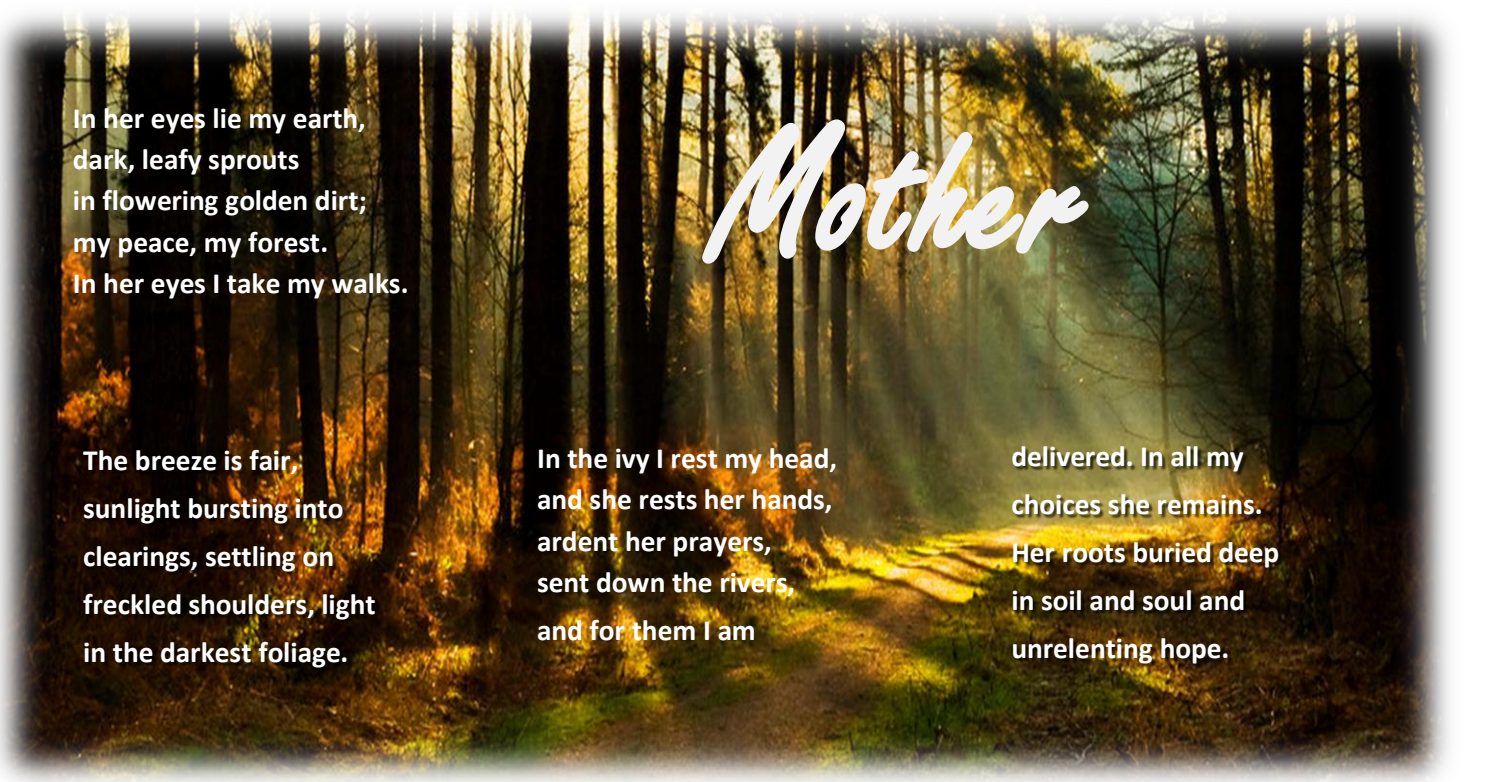
Sara Drummond's Water Saving Tip #1:

USE MULCH



Grow healthy plants and save water at the same time! Experienced gardeners have long known the secret of mulching the garden and all its benefits. What is a mulch? Mulch is simply a protective ground covering that saves water, reduces evaporation, prevents erosion, controls weeds, and in the case of organic mulches, enriches the soil.

Information from Earth-Kind Texas AgriLife Extension Service: An adequate supply of water is a critical issue. For more ways to help preserve this valuable resource visit: <https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/earthkind/files/2010/10/waterconservation.pdf>



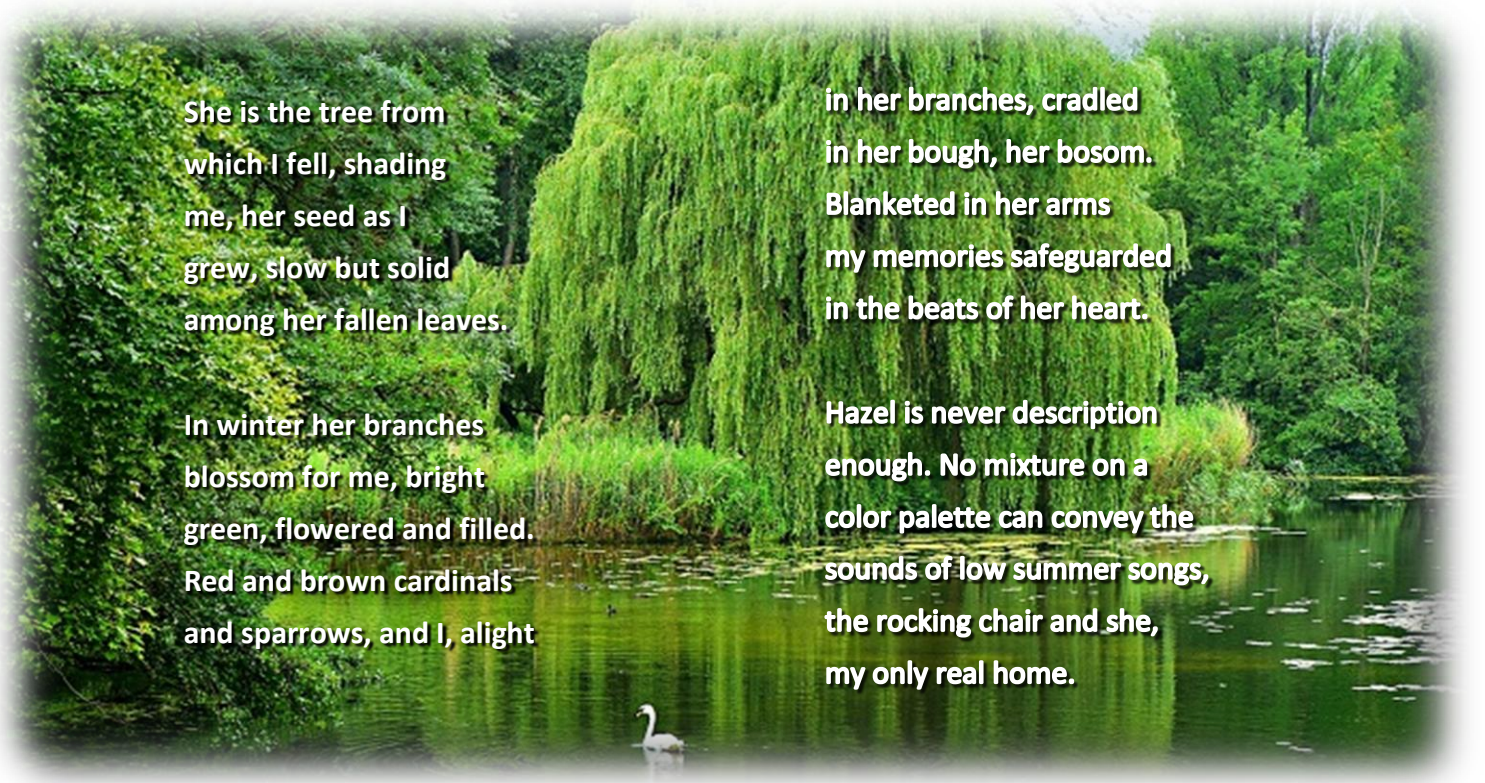
In her eyes lie my earth,
dark, leafy sprouts
in flowering golden dirt;
my peace, my forest.
In her eyes I take my walks.

Mother

The breeze is fair,
sunlight bursting into
clearings, settling on
freckled shoulders, light
in the darkest foliage.

In the ivy I rest my head,
and she rests her hands,
ardent her prayers,
sent down the rivers,
and for them I am

delivered. In all my
choices she remains.
Her roots buried deep
in soil and soul and
unrelenting hope.



She is the tree from
which I fell, shading
me, her seed as I
grew, slow but solid
among her fallen leaves.

In winter her branches
blossom for me, bright
green, flowered and filled.
Red and brown cardinals
and sparrows, and I, alight

in her branches, cradled
in her bough, her bosom.
Blanketed in her arms
my memories safeguarded
in the beats of her heart.

Hazel is never description
enough. No mixture on a
color palette can convey the
sounds of low summer songs,
the rocking chair and she,
my only real home.

~ Poem by Gracie Rae Seguin, Writer, 2020 graduate of TAMU



Events Around Town



Here are some websites I usually comb through to find events for this section on **Events Around Town**. As Social gathering restrictions are relaxed, visit these websites to see if there is something going on.

- ✓ **Henderson County Master Gardener Association:** <https://txmg.org/hendersonmg/>
- ✓ **East Texas Arboretum and Botanical Society:** <http://www.easttexasarboretum.org/>
- ✓ **Texas A&M AgriLife's Dallas Center:** <https://dallas.tamu.edu/events/>
- ✓ **Dallas Arboretum and Botanical Gardens:** <https://www.dallasarboretum.org/>
- ✓ **Texas Parks and Wildlife:** <https://tpwd.texas.gov/>
- ✓ **Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center:** <https://www.wildflower.org/>
- ✓ **Smith County Master Gardeners:** <https://txmg.org/smith/coming-events/>
- ✓ **Kaufman County Master Gardener Association:** <https://www.kcmga.org/events-4/>
- ✓ **Free State Master Gardeners Association of Van Zandt County:** <https://txmg.org/freestatemastergardeners/>



July in History

*Editor's note: In lieu of not being able to make a calendar of events during this shutdown, I've highlighted a number of events from history, occurring in the month of July. What an interesting read, reminding us that it is good to remember the struggles and the victories. These highlights * come from <https://www.historyplace.com/specials/calendar/july.htm>. Feel free to visit them to see more events for July, as well as every month throughout the year.*

July 2, 1964 - President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964, prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race in public accommodations, publicly owned or operated facilities, employment and union membership and in voter registration. The Act allowed for cutoff of Federal funds in places where discrimination remained.

July 2, Birthday - The first African American on the U.S. Supreme Court, Thurgood Marshall (1908-1993) was born in Baltimore, Maryland. Nominated by President Johnson, he began his 24-year career on the High Court in 1967.

July 4, 1776 - The Declaration of Independence was approved by the Continental Congress.

July 4, Birthday - Song writer Stephen Foster (1826-1864) was born in Lawrenceville, Pennsylvania. Among his nearly 200 songs were; *Oh! Susanna, Camptown Races, Swanee River, Jeanie with the Light Brown Hair, and Beautiful Dreamer*. He died in poverty at Bellevue Hospital in New York.

July 6, 1885 - Louis Pasteur gave the first successful anti-rabies inoculation to a boy who had been bitten by an infected dog.

July 6, Birthday - Baseball pitcher Leroy R. (Satchel) Paige (1906-1982) was born in Mobile, Alabama. Following a career in the Negro Leagues, he became, at age 42, the first African American pitcher in the American League. He was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1971.

July 9, 1868 - The 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified. The Amendment defined U.S. citizenship and prohibited individual States from abridging the rights of any American citizen without due process and equal protection under the law. The Amendment also barred individuals involved in rebellion against the U.S. from holding public office.

July 10, Birthday - American artist James Whistler (1834-1903) was born in Lowell, Mass. He is best remembered for his portrait *Whistler's Mother*.

July 11, Birthday - John Quincy Adams (1767-1848) the 6th U.S. President, and son of the 2nd President, John Adams, was born in Braintree, Massachusetts. After serving just one term as President, he served 17 years as a member of Congress. He died in 1848 while in the House of Representatives in the same room in which he had taken the presidential Oath of Office. He was the first president whose father had also been president.

July 15, Birthday - Dutch painter **Rembrandt van Rijn** (1606-1669) was born in Leiden, Holland. Best known for *The Night Watch* and many portraits and self-portraits. The first American saint, **Frances Xavier Cabrini** (1850-1917) was born in Lombardy, Italy. She was the founder of the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and established Catholic schools, orphanages, convents and hospitals. She was canonized, July 7, 1946, by Pope Pius XII.

July 16, 1969 - The Apollo 11 Lunar landing mission began with a liftoff from Kennedy Space Center at 9:37 a.m.

July 16, 1999 - A small plane piloted by John F. Kennedy Jr. took off at 8:38 p.m. from Fairfield, New Jersey, heading toward Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts. His wife, Carolyn Bessette Kennedy, and her sister Lauren were passengers on the 200-mile trip. The plane was expected to arrive about 10 p.m. but disappeared off radar at 9:40 p.m. Five days later, July 21, following an extensive search, the bodies were recovered from the plane wreckage in 116 feet of water roughly 7 miles off Martha's Vineyard. The next day, the remains of John F. Kennedy, 38, his wife Carolyn, 33, and her sister Lauren, 34, were scattered at sea from a U.S. Navy ship, with family members present, not far from where the plane had crashed.

July 16, Birthday - Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen (1872-1928) was born near Oslo. He was the first to sail from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean via the Northwest Passage. He discovered the South Pole in 1911 and flew over the North Pole in a dirigible in 1926. In June 1928, he flew from Norway to rescue survivors of an Italian Arctic expedition, but his plane vanished.

July 18, 1947 - President Harry Truman signed an Executive Order determining the line of succession if the president becomes incapacitated or dies in office. Following the vice president, the speaker of the house and president of the Senate are next in succession. This became the 25th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, ratified on February 10, 1967.

July 18, Birthday - Nelson Mandela was born the son of a Tembu tribal chieftain on July 18, 1918, at Qunu, near Umtata, in South Africa. He became a lawyer, joined the African National Congress (ANC) in 1944, eventually becoming deputy national president in 1952. In 1964, he was convicted for sabotage as a result of his participation in the struggle against apartheid. He spent the next 28 years in jail, but remained a symbol of hope to South Africa's non-white majority. Released in 1990, he was elected President of South Africa in 1994, in the first election in which all races participated.

July 19-20, 1848 - A women's rights convention was held at Seneca Falls, New York. Topics discussed included voting rights, property rights and divorce. The convention marked the beginning of an organized women's rights movement in the U.S.

July 20, 1969 - A global audience watched on television as Apollo 11 Astronaut Neil Armstrong took his first step onto the moon. As he stepped onto the moon's surface he proclaimed, "That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind" - inadvertently omitting an "a" before "man" and slightly changing the meaning.

July 20, Birthday - Explorer Edmund Hillary was born in Auckland, New Zealand, July 20, 1919. In 1953, he became first to ascend Mount Everest, the highest mountain in the world at 29,023 ft.

July 22, 1934 - Bank robber John Dillinger (1902-1934) was shot and killed by FBI agents as he left Chicago's Biograph Movie Theater after watching the film *Manhattan Melodrama* starring Clark Gable and Myrna Loy. Dillinger was the first criminal labeled by the FBI as "Public Enemy No. 1." After spending nine years (1924-1933) in prison, Dillinger went on a deadly crime spree, traveling through the states of Indiana, Illinois, Ohio, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Iowa. He was reportedly betrayed by the "Lady in Red."

July 22, Birthday - "The Liberator" Simon Bolivar (1783-1830) was born in Caracas, Venezuela. He is known as the George Washington of South America for his efforts to liberate six nations: Venezuela, Colombia, Panama, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia from the rule of Spain.

Birthday - American pilot Amelia Earhart (1898-1937) was born in Atchison, Kansas. She became the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic and to fly solo from Hawaii to California. She perished during a flight from New Guinea to Howland Island over the Pacific Ocean on July 3, 1937.

July 25, 1898 - During the Spanish-American War, the U.S. invaded Puerto Rico, which was then a Spanish colony. In 1917, Puerto Ricans became American citizens and Puerto Rico became an unincorporated territory of the U.S. Partial self-government was granted in 1947 allowing citizens to elect their own governor. In 1951, Puerto Ricans wrote their own constitution and elected a non-voting commissioner to represent them in Washington.

July 26, 1953 - The beginning of Fidel Castro's revolutionary "26th of July Movement." In 1959, Castro led the rebellion that drove out dictator Fulgencio Batista. Although he once declared that Cuba would never again be ruled by a dictator, Castro's government became a Communist dictatorship.

July 26, Birthday - Irish playwright George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950) was born in Dublin, Ireland.

July 28, Birthday - Jackie Kennedy (1929-1994) was born in Southampton, New York (as Jacqueline Lee Bouvier). She was married to John Fitzgerald Kennedy and after his death later married Greek shipping magnate Aristotle Onassis.

July 30, 1975 - Former Teamsters Union leader James (Jimmy) Hoffa was last seen outside a restaurant near Detroit, Michigan. His 13-year federal prison sentence had been commuted by President Richard M. Nixon in 1971. On December 8, 1982, seven years after his disappearance, an Oakland County judge declared Hoffa officially dead.

Birthday - Automotive pioneer Henry Ford (1863-1947) was born in Dearborn Township, Michigan. He developed an assembly-line production system and introduced a \$5-a-day wage for automotive workers.

July 31, 1776 - During the American Revolution, Francis Salvador became the first Jew to die in the conflict. He had also been the first Jew elected to office in Colonial America, voted a member of the South Carolina Provincial Congress in January 1775.

July 31, 1790 - The U.S. Patent Office first opened its doors. The first U.S. patent was issued to Samuel Hopkins of Vermont for a new method of making pearlsh and potash. The patent was signed by George Washington and Thomas Jefferson.

* Some of the above highlights were edited for space.

Sara Drummond's Water Saving Tip #2:

Mowing grass at the proper
height conserves water



Mowing at these relatively tall heights allows the grass to develop a deeper and more water efficient root system. Taller grass acts as a living mulch, shading the ground and reducing water evaporation. As the grass grows taller, it grows slower and needs less water and mowing.

Information from Earth-Kind Texas AgriLife Extension Service: An adequate supply of water is a critical issue. For more ways to help preserve this valuable resource visit: <https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/earthkind/files/2010/10/waterconservation.pdf>

- ✓ Bermuda: 1"
- ✓ Zoysia: 2"
- ✓ Centipede: 2"
- ✓ Buffalo: 3"
- ✓ St. Augustine: 3"

Henderson County Master Gardener Association

~~ Members Page ~~



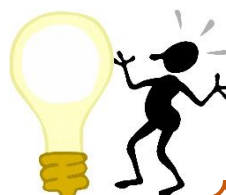
2020 HCMGA Meetings

When: Noon (luncheon), 3rd
Wednesday of the month
Where: Richard M. Hart & Johnny
Morris Conservation Center
5601 Country Road 4812 Athens, TX 75752

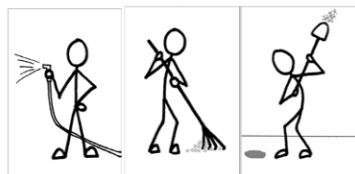
- * August 19th
- * September 16th
- * October 21st
- * November 18th
- * December 16th

For information on how to become a Master Gardener

- ✓ Call: (903) 675-6130
- ✓ Email: hendersoncmga@gmail.com
- ✓ Visit: txmg.org/hendersonmg

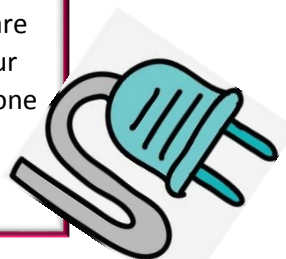


*Master Gardeners,
remember to
record your hours!*



Corona Virus Relief

HCMGA has many projects that need you! If you are not **plugged** in yet, one of our projects will fit your schedule, energy level, and mobility. Talk to someone to explore a good fit for you.



CONTINUING EDUCATION HOURS: If you would like to get an hour of continuing education, please click on the virtual tour of the gardens at The Dallas Center of Texas AgriLife Research Water University. Claudia has this on our bucket list for a day trip tour of the facility once we are past the COVID-19 situation.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rfpH0vOoDqk&feature=em-uploademail>

~ David Bickerstaff, President

Northern Sea Oats

By Lydia Holley, Master Gardener



If your trees have become so dense that grass will not grow underneath, you may wish to plant Northern Sea Oats as a non-mowing alternative. Native to East Texas and much of the eastern portion of the United States, Northern Sea Oats (*Chasmanthium latifolium*) is a delicate-looking ornamental grass with seed heads that droop as if hanging by a fishing line. These seed heads flutter in the breeze and give Northern Sea Oats its unique appearance.

Growing two to three feet high, this grass can multiply by both rhizomes and seed, so if you do not have space for it to spread, consider placing Northern Sea Oats in a container. I have seen this grass used in front of a modern building in a planter the length of the building. It was glorious. But you can add just a bit to a mixed planting either in pots or in the

ground. It also looks lovely in flower arrangements, both fresh and dried.

Northern Sea Oats goes dormant in winter. The leaves, stems, and seed heads will turn a lovely bronze before fading to a light parchment color. In spring, cut it back. It will return year after year.

Not only is Northern Sea Oats valuable as an ornamental grass, it is the host plant for at least three butterfly species and the birds love to eat the seeds. It is considered deer resistant.

Although it will grow in full sun, it prefers a partly to mostly shady site. It will grow in sand or clay and likes to be kept moist. I've been quite pleased with mine placed under a tree and given room to multiply. It has spread a bit in size, but has not been aggressive. Not a true oat, this grass is also known as Indian Wood Oats, Inland Sea Oats, Upland Sea Oats, Flathead Oats, Upland Oats, River Oats, Wild Oats, and Spangle Grass.

For more information, call 903-675-6130, email hendersonCMGA@gmail.com, or visit txmg.org/hendersonmg



July & August Gardening Tips

By Susan Skommesa, Master Gardener

In General:

"Fall Gardening begins about now!"

"Whahoo!", you say. "Does that mean the heat is almost over?"

I burst your bubble with: "Nope!"

So, as you mow, weed, water and harvest, be careful not to over do it. Heat exhaustion is a real thing. The Mayo clinic offers first aid advice for the range of heat related illnesses at <https://www.mayoclinic.org/first-aid/first-aid-heat-exhaustion/basics/art-20056651>

They say that the signs and symptoms include:

- Cool, moist skin with goose bumps when in the heat
- Heavy sweating
- Faintness
- Dizziness
- Fatigue
- Weak, rapid pulse
- Low blood pressure upon standing
- Muscle cramps
- Nausea
- Headache

If left untreated, heat exhaustion can lead to heat stroke, which is a life-threatening condition. If you suspect heat exhaustion, they recommend you take these steps immediately:

- Move the person out of the heat and into a shady or air-conditioned place.
- Lay the person down and elevate the legs and feet slightly.
- Remove tight or heavy clothing.
- Have the person drink cool water or other nonalcoholic beverage without caffeine.
- Cool the person by spraying or sponging with cool water and fanning.
- Monitor the person carefully.

The article goes on to encourage contacting a doctor if signs or symptoms worsen or if the person doesn't improve within an hour. If the person's condition deteriorates Call 911, especially if he or she experiences:

- Fainting
- Agitation
- Confusion
- Seizures
- Inability to drink

Being a gardener, I know how we are. We're almost done so we push it just a bit more. We see how much we've gotten done, feel great about it, and think we can get that last stretch done as well. We don't want to stop, go in and get ANOTHER drink of water.

Heat exhaustion and heat stroke sneak up on you. When you start to feel symptoms, it is already to late. Take precautions. There are so many common sense actions that will make our time in the garden satisfying, productive and safe.

- Bring a big 'Igloo' of ice water out with you and drink plenty.
- Have a place to sit in the shade. If you don't have shade, make shade with an umbrella.
- Garden earlier in the day when it is a tad bit less hot.

- Set a realistic goal before you go out, as heat exhaustion/stroke can cause confusion. Stop when you meet that goal.
- Bring your cell phone out with you. If no one is nearby, text a friend to let them know what you are up to, and let them know when you are done.

Be safe and have fun!

Ok, so what to do while out there...

Let's start with veggies and herbs

Continue to harvest regularly. Throughout July, replace spent plants with transplants of Tomato, Pepper and Eggplant, as well as Southern Peas, Pumpkin, Watermelon, Winter Squash, Cantaloupe, Lima Beans and Summer Squash.

In July, start to prepare for your fall garden as well. Planning your fall garden in July allows you to ensure crops are harvested by November 15th, which is the average first frost for Henderson County.

Plan on moving crops to a different location from the season before. Diseases build up in the soil over time, and can cause significant problems later. Add compost and fertilizers before tilling. If you were disappointed in crop production last season, have the soil tested.

To help seeds germinate in the Texas heat, try this: Water the soil before adding the seeds. Place the seeds on the wet soil, and cover with dry soil to the proper depth as indicated on the seed packet. Cover the seeded area with boards or wet burlap to prevent the soil from developing a crust. Check every day and remove the cover once the germinated plants appear. This tip also works for tiny or shallow-planted seeds that may get blown away in the wind or move around while being watered; such as Carrots, Lettuce, Radishes, etc.

Come August, remove determinate types after harvesting. Remove old or dead plants to keep the garden tidy. Plant Sweet Corn before August 15th. Also, by Mid-month, transplant cole plants such as Broccoli, Brussels Sprouts, Cabbage and Cauliflower. Before the end of the month, plant the last set of Bush and Pole Beans as well as Cucumbers.

Do you like to sow seeds? In the middle of August, start sowing seeds for Carrots, Collards, English Peas, and Kale.

How about Flowers?

In July, sow seeds of the following annuals for late summer and fall: Ageratum, Angel's Trumpet, Asters, Celosia, Cosmos, Joseph's Coat, Marigold, Periwinkle, Petunia, Portulaca, Wisteria, and Zinnia. As late as August, plant Asters, Celosia, Marigold, Mums, Portulaca and Zinnia for good fall color.

Don't forget to order Wildflower seeds by August for sowing in late September through November. Order spring-flowering bulbs, and chill the Tulip bulbs if they were not bought pre-chilled.

Let's not forget about trees and shrubs...

Throughout July and August, continue to water as needed. Harvest your fruit and clean up the fallen fruit.

In August, cut back on fertilizer so that new growth has time to harden off before winter weather arrives. Prune back Hydrangeas right after they bloom, prune Blackberries, and most Rose bushes may be trimmed and shaped in August.



..And lawn and ground cover

As landscapes mature, shade trees do what they were planted to do – they shade. Lawn grasses may eventually receive more shade than they can tolerate. A great alternative is to consider planting ground cover that thrives in shady areas.

Be mindful of when your lawn needs watering. Wait 7 to 10 days after a good rain before watering. If the grass is not showing signs of drought stress, and there is moisture in the soil, wait a while longer to water.

Areas of the lawn that still need to be renovated should be finalized this month.

Happy, productive, and safe Gardening!



The ***Henderson County Master Gardener Association's Monthly Gardening Guide***, features monthly gardening tasks, tips, and amazing resource lists. Each month features some special article important to successful gardening, or planning for the migration of butterflies, or tips for pruning plants like roses or hydrangeas. All guidance is specific to East Texas, and every month has a page for making notes.

As an example, the month of May features a great article on effective watering, while June gives you details on HCMGA projects. Both months are filled with a ton of helpful information in the ***Tips and Tricks*** section.

If you would like this guide, call 903-675-6130, email hendersonCMGA@gmail.com, or visit txmg.org/hendersonmg



Sara Drummond's

Water Saving Tip #3:

Scan and see all the ways you can conserve water

AND create a beautiful landscape



Water conservation does not mean planting a harsh cactus and rock garden. It means common sense landscaping to protect water quality and quantity. Water is a limited and fragile resource.

Check out the information from Texas AgriLife Extension Service to see how you can preserve this precious natural resource and create a beautiful landscape.

Information from Earth-Kind Texas AgriLife Extension Service:

<https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/earthkind/files/2010/10/waterconservation.pdf>

In Deep Fertilizer

By Shannon Greene, Master Gardener



When I was a teenager a hundred years ago, I grew up on a farm. We raised turkeys for Purdue Agriculture which supplied chickens and turkey meat for Louis Rich Meat Company. We had a 500 foot grow-out building. That meant we raised baby turkeys from hatching to 6 months old. They were then shipped to the grow-out building, then free ranged. My family took care of 23,000 to 25,000 baby turkeys at a time. That many turkeys produce an abundance of turkey poop. This poop mixed with their bedding, which was soybean hulls, made for a great fertilizer. It had to be cleansed out of the building on a regular basis and between flocks. This created many large hills about 15ft high. We kept these sheltered downwind until they could be used.

In addition to turkeys, we raised cows, soybeans, corn, and timothy for hay. Our small hills became fertilizer for our fields, saving money on commercial fertilizers, as well as using up the hills of turkey waste. We had double and triple yields after we started spreading it on our fields. For 2 years straight the summers were dry with very little rain. Our neighbors bought hay from us then started buying turkey fertilizer.

I'm telling you this to give you some background into what was to come. As one of 5 children in our household my father did not believe in hiring extra help for much of the everyday chores on our farm. He had 5 kids that could mow the yards, plant, bale hay, and put in my mother's very large garden every year.

After one brother disked up the soil for the garden, I was tasked with putting tractor bucket loads of turkey fertilizer onto the garden and spreading it out all over. It was then disked in before planting. Being a teenager, I had other things that I wanted to do and rebelled against this nasty duty. My father informed me that parties would wait until I accomplished this chore.



So being the good kid that I was, I would get this done as quickly as possible then get ready for a party. I loaded the bucket and dumped several loads on the garden. For speed I bucked the tractor as I drove backwards to make the fertilizer fly out of the bucket spreading the fertilizer as far as possible without physically raking it evenly. Besides it would be disked and no one would be able to tell. So, when I was asked if I had done this work, I emphatically answered yes.

Every year my mother planted the perimeter in sunflowers then next 2 rows in bush beans. Every one helped plant and water. Mid growing season, my parents called me to the garden to explain an anomaly. Sure enough, it was a sight to behold. Every place that the fertilizer had sort of been spread, the plants were twice the size as its neighbor. The sunflowers were already 5 feet tall and would eventually reach over 9 feet with stems as big around as

a soup can. The bush beans were huge looking like hedges. The corn stalks however looked like jagged teeth: some tall, some short.

In a guilty voice I lied and said it was not the fertilizer but that some of the seeds were from last year's garden, which by the way, had produced top grade veggies. Needless to say, I was grounded for a month and it was to be my job alone to clear the garden for next year. It was a big job. I ended up sawing the sunflower stems and digging up each one, taking up an entire weekend. Dang that fertilizer!



My Garden in the Heat

By Lydia Holley, Master Gardener



July and August. Those words are just as disheartening to the Texas gardener as December and January. What blooms in high heat? What brings joy in an East Texas garden during the hottest months of the year?

In my garden, figs ripen. My Brown Turkey fig tree is old and large. Every day I'm outside working, I snatch a few ripened figs for a sweet treat. When the tree is filled, I preserve the figs to savor on toast. Jars of fig preserves also make a nice gift during the holidays. My grandmother grew a fig tree. She would make homemade fig newton-like cookies for us to gobble after supper.

Some ornamental grasses begin to bloom. Hamlyn dwarf ornamental grass perks up, kicking its bottlebrush plumes in the air, an overture to the ballet of muhly grasses' pink plumes swaying in the September breeze.

Daylilies are still in bloom. Lantana is a butterfly favorite. Pretty in pink, pavonia has spread to dominate one area of the garden. Crape myrtle blooms hang from branches. Walk nearby and you can hear the sound of buzzing, an indication the bees are working to gather nectar from each miniature flower. Hosta blooms offer a drink of nectar to passing hummingbirds. Balls of hydrangea blooms beg to be watered.

Tops of ornamental gingers bloom on stems of dramatic foliage. Miniature bells form on abelias. Indigofera hangs its blooms close to the ground, reminding me of all the years I tried to rid my garden of this particular groundcover. It won that war,



and now I let it spread where it wants, thankful it is a pretty plant. Milkweeds are a popular butterfly hangout. Unfortunately, sometimes the orange seen from afar is not from blooms but the large milkweed bugs that congregate on immature milkweed pods.

Although the garden may not be at its peak during the hottest summer months, there is plenty for a gardener to appreciate. Go outside and look around your own garden. You may be surprised to see an abundance of plants in bloom.



Did you know?

The HCMGA Website has a lot of good information. We have articles on a variety of gardening topics and events our organization hosts. This newsletter (*Inside Dirt*) is but an appetizer for the depth and breadth of topics, pictures, and great practical information you will find in that treasure trove, which gets added to every week by member writers.

<https://txmg.org/hendersonmg/welcome/our-impact/publicity/>

Please Share with Us!



There is so much creativity amongst our readers, that I'd like to invite you to share your projects, ideas, clever quotes, humor, pictures or the interesting and beautiful things happening in your gardens or landscaping. You can send a blurb, a quote, an article or contact me to interview you. Photos are always worth a thousand words. Send submissions to the editor, Susan Skommesa, at susanloves1life@gmail.com.



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