



INSIDE DIRT



President's Message

David Bickerstaff, Master Gardener

We are anxious to begin meeting each month, but we will not have a meeting until we believe that it is safe for our members. 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 decided to delay the grand opening of our new Harvest Garden until the spring of 2021.



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 each month virtually, 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.

We recently attended a virtual awards presentation from the Texas Master Gardeners Association. We were happy to be presented the following awards for 2019 activity:

- **Outstanding Association:** 1st Place
- **Written Education:** 1st Place for our weekly articles written for the area newspapers
- **Project:** 2nd Place for Plant Stakes, Bench Cards and Website pages for plants at HCMGA's plant sale

We are now on the back half of 2020 (thank goodness!) which means our nominating committee is busy discussing with our members the open officer positions that will be available for 2021. I have served two years as President which has been very rewarding.

Stay safe and enjoy reading **Inside Dirt!**

"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

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A Tale of Two Landscapes ... or

Mishaps and Messes

By Lydia Holley, Master Gardener



“You’ll never get your garden back in shape,” my husband said. I had a sinking feeling that he was probably right. You see, I fractured my ankle six weeks ago and have been on crutches ever since.

“No. Do not walk on the gravel,” the doctor ordered when I asked if that was possible. The majority of my garden surrounds a gravel path. Unable to work outside, the weeds have taken over. Asian jasmine scampers across its concrete border and over the brick wall, creeping fig is trying to smother one side of the house, ripe figs were lost to raccoons, hedges need cutting back, mowing and trimming are desperately needed, deadheading and pruning have been neglected. In six weeks, my landscape has turned into a no-man’s land.

I had great hopes that during this time of quarantine, I would be able to beautify my landscape to the best it’s ever been. Instead, I’ve been stuck inside, peering outside to a growing problem. If you want to see what your garden would look like should you ever get too old to work in it, or be unable to for a while, just stop for six weeks. Do nothing. You may be discouraged.

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.

On the other hand, you may be overjoyed. I designed a landscape for our church. Even though we have not had services for months, and the landscape is tended to by volunteers, I drive by (well, I can't drive right now, but I sit in the passenger seat) and see a landscape that has a few weeds but no other true problems. The difference between this and my garden? Plantings.

You see, I have an abundance of perennials and reseeding annuals. My landscape was designed as a mid-to-high-maintenance garden because I enjoy being outside and working with plants. I wanted to have something to do. I crave time outdoors. The church's landscape was designed for low maintenance, filled with shrubs that will not need any pruning or other special attention for years. Watering is done by an irrigation system on a timer. At my home, watering is done on a manual system. Mulch was applied at the church, which stopped a majority of weeds, while I tend to keep bare soil so annuals can freely reseed. Unfortunately, that also gives the weeds spaces to grow.

The lesson? I'm not getting any younger. It's time for me to re-design my garden from its high-maintenance needs to a low-maintenance one. There are several steps I can take, and I will begin doing those as soon as I can step outside once again.



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 the [Inside Dirt](#) for celebration details



Resources for Natives Plants

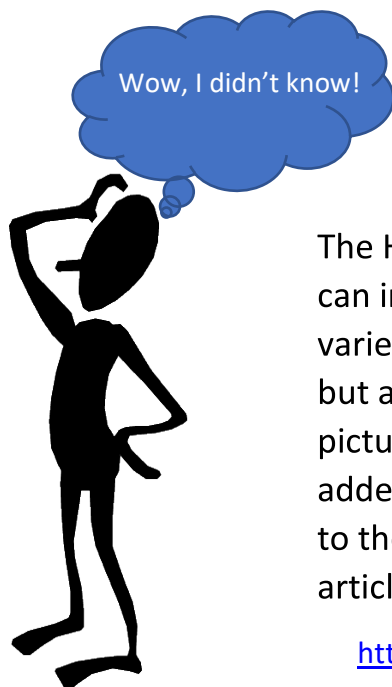
Filling your garden with native plants may seem like quite the challenge. Which plants are native? Where do you find them? How do you care for them? The HCMGA *Monthly Gardening Guide* has an article on Earth-Kind from Texas A&M AgriLife Extension. In that article are listed many native grasses, groundcovers, 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://agrilifeextension.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/>

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/>



Did you know?

The HCMGA Website has a lot of good information. As you can imagine, we have a treasure trove of articles on a variety of gardening topics. This newsletter (*Inside Dirt*) is but an appetizer for the depth and breadth of topics, pictures, and practical information you will find, which gets added to every week by member writers. For the direct link to the location on our website where you will find these articles, click on:

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

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

* September 16th

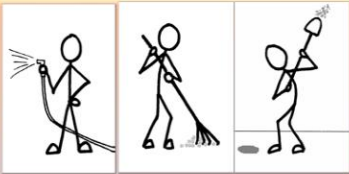
* October 21st

* November 18th

* December 16th

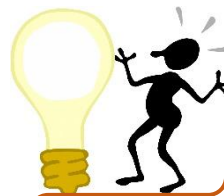
For information on how to become a Master Gardener

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



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 and get **plugged** in.



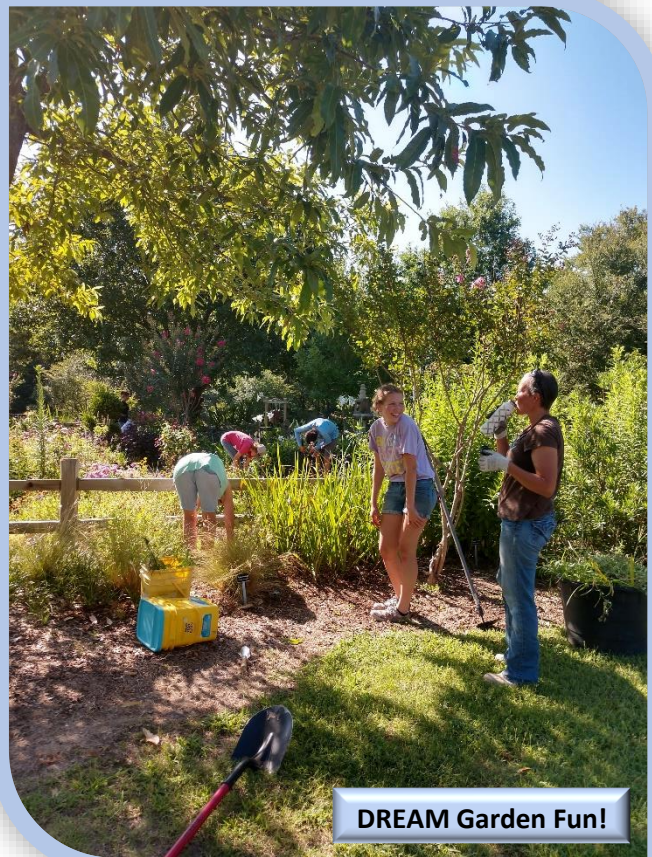
*Master Gardeners,
remember to
record your hours!*



~~ Members Page Continued ~~

Still Available, Continuing Education Hours

- ✓ **Virtual Tour:** 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.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rfpH0vOoDqk&feature=em-uploademail>
- ✓ **Free Online Gardening Course: Gardening 101 | Texas A&M AgriLife** You have a unique opportunity to sign up for free for the Texas A&M AgriLife's online gardening course. If you register prior to the end of 2020 the course is free and you will have access for a year. <https://agrilifelearn.tamu.edu/product?catalog=HORT-005>
- ✓ **Texas A&M Gardening Online Courses**, most of which are free:
<https://agrilifelearn.tamu.edu/catalog?pagename=Plants-and-Garden>
- ✓ **Denton County video:** They put together another great video "**Gardens Gone Wild**". This provides you 1 hour and 25 min. of continuing education. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uZ9r0wK3K0Q&feature=em-uploademail>
- ✓ **HCMGA Projects:** The *DREAM Garden* and *Harvest Garden* provide opportunities for volunteer hours, as well as writing for the *Inside Dirt*. Your research and time spent writing count as hours.
- ✓ **Member and Intern Requirements:**
 - Members need 12 hours of **volunteer service** and 6 hours of **continuing education**.
 - President David Bickerstaff said, "We plan to adjust the **attendance requirements** (5 meetings) when we know more about our ability to have face to face meetings in 2020".
 - **INTERNS** need 50 hours of **volunteer service**. How do you do that? Jayla Fry, State Coordinator of the Texas Master Gardener Program provided a list of ways that you might consider to earn your volunteer hours:
 - Assist answering questions via phone or email
 - Research topics that can be useful for answering questions, giving presentations, or even something you are interested in that could be used to educate someone else
 - Write articles for blog posts or news columns
 - Build PowerPoint presentation and write a script so that anyone can give the presentation
 - Take pictures to share in your articles, presentations, websites, etc.



DREAM Garden Fun!

~~ Members Page Continued ~~

- Take pictures of plants in your demonstration gardens, at different stages of growth (flowers and vegetables), of harvest time and even how to use the plant (floral design or recipe).
- Schedule time to work in demonstration gardens where social distancing and safety requirements can be met.
- Prepare for Junior Master Gardener lessons
- Video yourself (or get help videoing yourself) giving a presentation or doing a hands-on activity (e.g. propagation or making hypertufa pots)



Master Gardeners! Rachel Bayless was able to obtain a donation of seeds from Walmart! The seeds are now stored at The Harvest Garden. There is an amazing variety veggies, herbs, wildflowers, annuals and perennials.



Members, Please Consider Serving in Leadership

The nominating committee is looking for a few good people to step up to fill the **upcoming vacancies in the HCMG executive board**. The terms will expire at the end of 2020 for the position of President, VP of Programs and Administration, and Treasurer.

Current interns who will certify at the end of this year will be qualified to serve in these positions.

We know that many of you would be excellent choices for these positions and ask that you contact us about your willingness to serve. Please give this serious consideration. Contact either Lora Tomlinson at tomlinsonlora@gmail.com or Sharon Barrett at barrettseb@aol.com



Members & Friends, want to help us raise money as you shop?

Your impact can make a difference in a big way. Please consider using Amazon Smile when you order from Amazon, and designate Henderson County Master Gardener Association as the charity of choice.

Set up is easy peasy. Sign into Amazon Smile instead of Amazon. Your account information can be seen just as if you signed into Amazon. In the far left upper corner, on Amazon Smile, click on "Your Charity" and then **search for Texas Master Gardener Association Inc.** A list of Texas Master Gardener associations will come up by chapter. Scroll down till you find Athens TX. Click on it and *voilà la!* When you make a purchase, log in through Amazon Smile, and you are helping HCMGA raise money as you shop!

Do I hear Christmas knocking on the door?



September & October Gardening Tips

By Susan Skomma, Master Gardener

In General:



Relief from the heat arrives in September as fall makes its entrance. The cool weather facilitates preparation for spring as bulbs are bought, wildflowers are sown and new shrubs and trees are planted or transplanted. For most of us with major projects sitting untouched over the last few months (and who doesn't have one), we'll find ourselves back out there. The reward comes with sitting on the porch and basking in the fruit of our hard work, which is once again pleasurable.

Please share your fall project. What's on deck for you once the weather cools?

Include photos if you can and you'll be published in the next edition of *Inside Dirt*. Send submissions to the editor, Susan Skomma, at susanloves1life@gmail.com.

Let's start with veggies and herbs

You may not be prepared to think about planting fall vegetable as you pickle your 50 pounds of cucumbers and make sauce out of your abundant harvest of tomatoes. It is however, time to do so, for the window will soon draw to a close.

But, do not despair! For it certainly is not too late to plant that Fall garden, especially using transplants. Cool-weather loving vegetables are plentiful: beets, broccoli, brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, collard, English peas, garlic, kale, lettuce, mustard, parsley, radishes, spinach, Swiss chard, and turnips. **SEPTEMBER 20th** is the optimum last day to transplant veggies like broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage and cauliflower, many salad makings can continue to be sown thru **OCTOBER**. Consider beets, collards, garlic, kale, lettuce, mustard, radishes, spinach and swiss chard.



Even though the weather is cooling, we still have plenty of heat in the middle of the day. Take good care of tender transplants and seedlings. You will probably need to water transplants daily and seeds may need extra help germinating. Thought the soil is warm enough, the surface dries out easily. Here is an experiment you may want to try to help seeds germinate in the Texas heat. Before seeding, watering the soil very well. Place the seeds on the wet soil and cover with dry soil to the proper depth. Cover the soil with boards or wet burlap to keep the soil from crusting over. Check it every day and remove the cover as soon as the germinated plants appear. Keep the tender shoots well-watered, and consider draping shade cloth until the plants are well developed. This tip also works for tiny or shallow-planted seeds like

carrots, lettuce, and radishes, which tend to get blown away in the wind or move around while being watered.



OCTOBER is a good time to separate perennial herbs. Herbs in this category are Catnip, Chives, Lavender, Lemon Verbena, Marjoram, Mint, Oregano, Rosemary, Sage, Salad Burnet, Sorrel, Texas Tarragon (Mexican Mint Marigold), Thyme, Yarrow. Remember, when harvesting herbs, don't cut more than 1/3 of the plant at a time. The best time to harvest is mid-morning and just before the plants flower. You can use any of these spices fresh. You can also dry them for storage and all year use.

For more specifics about herbs see the **SEPTEMBER** article in the **Henderson County Master Gardener Association Monthly Gardening Guide**. If you do not have this guide, call the **Henderson County Extension Office** at (903) 675-6130. For more information about the guide, visit our website at txmq.org/hendersonmq.

How about Flowers?

On cooler mornings, the motivation returns to dig, divide and transplant the fading oxblood and spider lily bulbs. Similarly, divide and transplant any overcrowded bearded irises, daisies, daylilies, ground covers, liriopes, peonies, and phloxes. It's hard to plan right now, but for Henderson County Master Gardeners, don't forget to set some of these aside for the **2021 Plant Sale** this spring. Worst case scenario, you gift the cuttings you propagate for the plant sale to friends.

Time to pick up the bulb magazines and visit the master gardener clubs featuring bulb sales. Plant spring bulbs like daffodils, crocus, Dutch iris, hyacinth, and narcissus. Tulip and Dutch hyacinths bulbs should be selected now so they can be stored in the refrigerator for 45-60 days prior to planting in December and early January. Don't freeze the bulbs or remove them from the refrigerator until it's time to plant them. Also, don't store your bulbs next to fruit as the ethylene gas emitted from the fruit will damage the bulbs.



Round out your gardens with cool-weather and sun loving annuals like pansies and violas. Pansies are beautiful with spring bulbs. The Crystal Bowl, Imperial and Universal series, all tolerate the heat well and flower longer in the spring. Other great cool-season flowers are English daisies, flowering cabbage, pinks, poppies, and snapdragons.

Sow wildflowers like bluebonnets, cornflower, larkspur, phlox, and poppies.

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

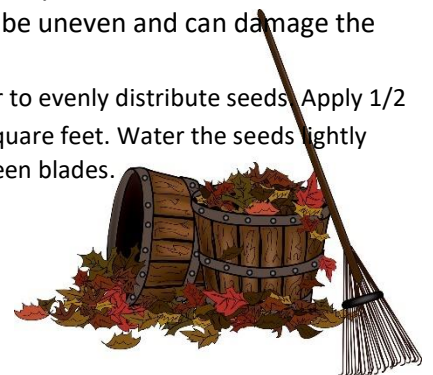
Through **SEPTEMBER**, keep watering your trees and shrubs as needed. However, transplanting and planting new trees and shrubs in **OCTOBER** gives their roots months to grow and become well established before new growth begins in the spring and summer heat and drought arrives.

...And lawn and ground cover

SEPTEMBER: If you have been fertilizing your grass, you probably begin fertilizing in June, after you had several good mows. From there the rule of thumb is, every six weeks up until September, when the last application of fertilizer is applied. Well, it's September. Try to fertilize right before a rain, or be certain to water very well afterwards. This is important so that you don't burn your lawn. Don't fertilizer by hand as the results will be uneven and can damage the grass.

OCTOBER: If you choose to over-seed with Ryegrass, now is the perfect time. Use a spreader to evenly distribute seeds. Apply 1/2 of the seeds walking east to west and the other 1/2 north to south. Use 5 to 10 lbs. per 1000 square feet. Water the seeds lightly every day for 7 to 10 days. Do not mow until the Ryegrass seed germinates and you can see green blades.

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 *September* features a great article on effective watering, while *October* 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



Master Gardener Association Receives Awards

By Lydia Holley, Master Gardener

Texas Master Gardener Association (TXMGA), in cooperation with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and the Texas A&M University System, recognizes and presents awards each year to county Master Gardener Associations for their outstanding achievements. This year's annual award ceremony was postponed due to Covid-19.

On Thursday, August 20, TXMGA hosted a Zoom meeting to present the 2019 awards. Henderson County Master Gardener Association (HCMGA) won awards in three categories. HCMGA is considered a Medium-Large organization with 50-99 certified Master Gardeners.

HCMGA placed first in Outstanding Master Gardener Association. This award is given to associations that have ongoing programs and/or projects of important to the community. HCMGA has numerous programs and projects. Two of the most popular programs are free to the public: the Library Series, educational presentations offered monthly, and the Summer Series which are presentations given by experts in their field. HCMGA projects include the Dream Garden, an ornamental demonstration garden located at the East Texas Arboretum, and the new Harvest Garden, an edible demonstration garden at the Henderson County Regional Fairpark Complex. HCMGA placed first in this category in 2018 also.

First place was received in the Written Education category for weekly articles written by a Master Gardener and published in local newspapers. This award recognizes any form of printed material written as a tool for education.



HCMGA received second place in the Project category. This category recognizes a project which is at a physical location. Plant stakes, bench cards and website pages created for HCMGA's annual plant sale was submitted. The plant sale is a major fundraiser for HCMGA.

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



Suspicious Seeds Arrive in US Mailboxes

By Sherry Sorrell, Master Gardener

What first seemed like a smattering of surprise seeds, started arriving last week mailed to people in three states and marked as jewelry. U.S. residents in all 50 states report receiving the suspicious packages. Information on the packages indicates they allegedly originated in China, and some seem to be from Uzbekistan.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is working with Customs and Border Protection as well as state partners to investigate these incidents. The USDA says they have no evidence this is anything more than a "brushing" scam. The Better Business Bureau reports brushing occurs when a foreign, third-party seller uses your Amazon information to generate a fake sale. They send unsolicited items to customers in order to post false positive reviews thereby increasing their sales. The USDA advises anyone receiving the seed packets to contact their state agriculture department and hold onto the packets for proper disposal instructions. Do not plant seeds from unknown origins.



Texas Department of Agriculture Commissioner Sid Miller issued a warning on July 27 advising residents not to open or plant the seeds as they could be harmful invasive species. He said, "An invasive plant species may not sound threatening, but these small invaders could destroy Texas agriculture." He also indicated his department is working closely with the USDA to analyze the seeds.

Henderson County Agriculture Extension Agent Spencer Perkins advises to not open the seed packets and to keep the seeds and the original mailing envelope. Contact the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) via email to the USDA-APHIS-PPQ State Operations Coordinator Carol Motloch at carol.m.motloch@usda.gov. Your email should include your contact email and phone number. A description or a photo of the package label and seeds would be helpful as well. If you do not have email access, their phone number is 512-916-5241.

Once again, please note: do not plant the seeds. Commissioner Miller says he is urging folks to take this matter seriously.

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

Show and Tell for Gardeners

By Sara Drummond, Master Gardener

Doesn't every gardener appreciate getting a good tip from another gardener? Recently, Henderson County Master Gardeners were asked to share their favorite gardening broadcasts, podcasts, radio and tv shows and videos. Here are some answers.

Susan Skommesa, Master Gardener



One of my favorite YouTube sites is **Self Sufficient Me**. The man who makes these videos, Mark Valencia, is an Aussie from Down-under. 😊

Mr. Valencia is full of great information and ideas. Of course you have to take into account the difference in seasons and weather conditions, but it is very worthwhile to check out. He just did a video called "**What Happens When You Bury Logs in the Veggie Garden Raised Bed?**" Very cool video as I'm getting ready redo my raised beds and this video is timely. His specialty is veggie

gardening in raised beds. Whether it's intentional or not, I notice he incorporates many of the principles of **Square Foot Gardening**, a model I follow pretty closely.



Mark Valencia , *Self-Sufficient Me*

I also love the regular emails sent out by Neil Sperry. As you know, he is chock full of great info...



David Bickerstaff, Master Gardener



Some of my gardening programs:

- **You Tube:** love **Gardening by the Yard** with Paul James. This was on HGTV until The show was cancelled.
- **TV:** **Central Texas Gardener** on PBS; **Growing a Greener World**, also on PBS.
- **Email:** Neil Sperry's weekly newsletter
- **Facebook:** **Gardening by the Yard Fans**; **Garden Naturally Group**; **Texas Gardeners**; **Joe Gardener- Growing a Greener World**



Joe Lamp'l, *Growing a Greener World*



Paul James, *Gardening by the Yard*

Kathi Mooney, Master Gardener



I listen to *Joe Gardener* podcasts.

One video I really enjoyed watching is *How to Prune Tomatoes for Maximum Yield*. The show is called *Epic Gardening* and it is on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q4IUhZMA900>.

I had never heard about pruning tomatoes and have always had huge bushy plants. I watched this video too late this year but look forward to pruning my indeterminate tomatoes next year.



Sherry Sorrell, Master Gardener



I LOVE *Central Texas Gardener* on PBS Saturdays. I record them all.

Each episode is hosted by John Hart-Asher from Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center and presents private area gardens. They also have an expert from various specialties each week (trees, natives, succulents, etc), plus gardening tips. Daphne Richards is the Travis County Agrilife Horticulturist and answers viewer questions. It's a very informative show in only 30 minutes!



Sara Drummond, Master Gardener



Someone recently recommended *Garden Answer* with Laura LeBoutillier to me. Now, I am a fan. You can find the videos on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/gardenanswer>.

Laura is energetic and enthusiastic about all things gardening. Her videos show how she goes about doing a wide range of daily gardening activities: pruning roses, propagating succulents, growing citrus trees in containers, ridding weeds from her gravel driveway, sharpening blades on a gardening tool, etc.

I am inspired and learn something from each episode.



Laura LeBoutillier,
Garden Answer



Check out this video on the Henderson County Master Gardener website. It's an interview of Brie Arthur, one of the leaders helping to shape the green industry and home gardening. Brie will be the speaker in October at the Henderson County Master Gardener Association's Fall Conference Fundraiser.

<https://txmg.org/hendersonmg/welcome/events/fall-conference/>



Brie Arthur, *The Foodscape Revolution*

Resources for Kids



This edition's featured resource is ***Kid's Gardening***, and can be found at <https://kidsgardening.org/>. They offer all kinds of educational resources such as books, curricula, lesson plans, and garden activities. They also have detailed articles on topics like garden basics,

plant families, hydroponics, soil, etc. They have ***Growing Guides*** in the ***Gardening Toolbox*** for more than 50 veggies and plants. Their team has an admirable range of education and experience. This is a resource worth checking out...even for big kids.

A Plant Twice Feared

By Lydia Holley, Master Gardener



Although I would now hate for my garden to be without narrowleaf mountain mint, I have twice been afraid of this particular plant.

I was first afraid of narrowleaf mountain mint when I purchased it. With mint in its common name, I was worried it might behave like a true mint. After all, it is in the mint family, has square stems, and its crushed leaves emit a minty scent.

Anyone that has grown mint can tell you it will spread throughout the garden, across the driveway, and into the surrounding subdivision. Well, maybe not quite, but close. My fear that narrowleaf mountain mint may be just as aggressive almost made me pass on purchasing it. Almost. Gardeners are brave like that.

Because of my concerns, I kept a close eye on my new plant. To my delight, it has not behaved like its distant cousins in the *Mentha* genus. Instead, it has slowly spread to a thick, nice-sized clump.

The second time I was afraid of narrowleaf mountain mint was this spring when it was in full bloom. That is because every flower was covered with pollinators. So many, I was uncertain of some of their identities. I avoided going near it, letting the various winged and buzzing creatures share a meal together in peace. Most in the crowd probably would not have stopped feeding to bother me, but I felt it best to play it safe.

Native bees such as sweat bees, miner bees, green metallic bees, bumble bees and carpenter bees along with European honey bees flocked to this plant. Wasps and yellowjackets also visited, and several syrphid flies, whose larva feeds on aphids. I have never seen such a diverse mix on one plant.

Now that its flowers are almost gone, I can once again enjoy its mint-flavored leaves in my tea. While there are several different species of mountain mint, narrowleaf mountain mint, *Pycnanthemum tenuifolium*, is native to East Texas. It is also easy to grow, since it is not particular about its growing conditions. It thrives in full sun or part shade, in wet or dry soil, and from rocky to woodland conditions. Because of its minty flavor, deer will usually avoid it. Or perhaps they are afraid of it.



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

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