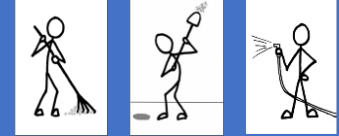




# INSIDE DIRT



## INSIDE THIS ISSUE



### President's Message

Yvonne Sparks, Master Gardener

Hello to all gardeners!

Summer has arrived even after we thought Spring would last forever. This year has given East Texas one of the most pleasurable Springs we have had in a very long time. The weather allowed us to work in our gardens without fainting. We could clean up after the "snowmagedden" of February. I know at my house,



there are still some trimming and pruning that should be done. Most of my perennials have returned (except Confederate Jasmine on a trellis) and the azaleas that we cut back are leafing out beautifully.

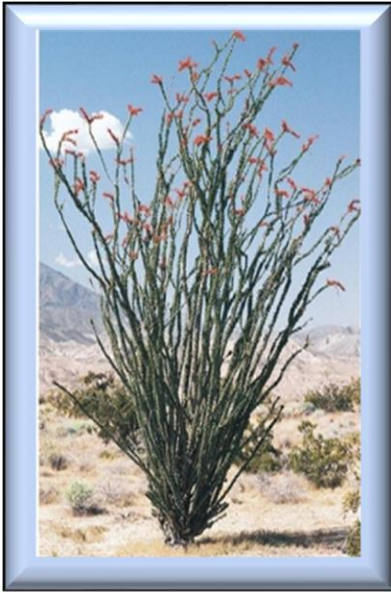
In late April, Danny and I went to Big Bend after rescheduling our trip due to February's bad weather. That is a part of Texas everyone should visit. The 7-hour jeep tour around the park was like a rolling science class. Our tour guide was very knowledgeable of plants, geology, animals, climate and history of Big Bend. The Creosote bush, *Larrea tridentata*, was everywhere in the park. It is the most drought resistant perennial plant in North America. It can go at least 2 years with no water at all by shedding leaves and even branches. It was used by Native Americans as an antiseptic to prevent infection and to induce vomiting. The picture shows it is not a pretty plant but has adapted to survive in the harsh climate of Big Bend. In the distant is a view of Santa Elena Canyon on the Rio Grande River.



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Harvest Garden Grapes!



Another plant in the park and surrounding area is Ocotillo cactus, *Fouquieria splendens*. I tried to buy one but there were none to be found. It provides contrast and architecture interest in a garden. This plant can have as many as 75 stems in a cluster. Locals will sometimes use ocotillo stems as fence pickets or create a porch canopy for shade. Apache Indians soaked and boiled roots to extract herbal ingredients. Native Americans would bathe in the water containing herbs to relieve fatigue. They would also powder the roots as a topical treatment

for swelling. The crimson blooms show up from March to July. I am still looking for one to buy although the owner of the only nursery in Terlingua said it would never grow in East Texas. HA HA oh ye of little faith!

Time to close this road trip for now. Stay cool and call the Ag office if you have any horticultural questions.

**Yvonne Sparks, President**



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

~ Unknown



Eagle perches overlooking my land.  
~ Susan Skommesa

## 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.

# Applications Being Accepted for Master Gardener Program

By Lydia Holley, Henderson County Master Gardener



Henderson County Master Gardener Association (HCMGA) is accepting applications for those wishing to become certified as a Texas Master Gardener. The deadline for application is August 11, with classes starting August 19. Cost is \$150. There will be a mix of online and in-person classes held on Thursday mornings.

If you are interested in becoming a Master Gardener, please contact the Henderson County AgriLife Extension Office at 903-675-6130.

The Master Gardener program was started in 1972 in Washington State. Six years later, Texas began its own Master Gardener program. Henderson County Master

Gardener Association (HCMGA) formed in 2000.

The Master Gardener program is a volunteer organization. Members share their passion and their knowledge about growing plants. To become certified, participants must attend a 50-hour course, then complete 50 volunteer hours. Yearly continuing education and volunteer requirements are required to retain certification.

HCMGA is a 501-c-3 non-profit organization. The mission to share horticultural knowledge with the community is achieved in numerous ways. HCMGA's Dream Garden is an ornamental demonstration garden. The Harvest Garden is a demonstration garden for fruits, vegetables, herbs, and flowers for cutting.

Educational programs for the public include the "Learn at the Library" Series, held on the second Tuesday of each month. The Summer Series and Fall Conference highlight local experts with programs on various horticultural topics. Members grow plants for the Plant Sale in a greenhouse. This annual sale allows the public access to Master Gardeners to answer individualized questions. Master Gardeners are also available at booths in various events throughout the county.

An e-newsletter, *The Inside Dirt*, offers information monthly. Email [hendersoncmga@gmail.com](mailto:hendersoncmga@gmail.com) to sign up to receive this free source. HCMGA also maintains a website ([txmg.org/hendersonmg](http://txmg.org/hendersonmg)), and a Facebook page ([facebook.com/hcmastergardener](https://facebook.com/hcmastergardener)).

HCMGA publishes a monthly gardening guide book specific to East Texas. Members consult with schools and give programs to gardening groups and civic organizations. If you like to garden, HCMGA would love to have you join the program.

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



## Gift of Appreciation



Pictured are Master Gardeners, Yvonne Sparks, Henderson County Master Gardener President, and Dub Hirst, First Vice President, with Trinity Valley Community College President, Dr. Jerry King. Yvonne and Dub present a replica of the TVCC's mascot, Cardinal, as thanks for Dr. King's and TVCC support of HCMGA.

For many years, MG have collaborated with the college by designing an indoor landscape atrium in the TVCC library and members are working with staff to design landscaping around the new Clock Tower and park on campus. In exchange for our gardening and landscape expertise, TVCC gives us full use of the greenhouse to propagate plants for the MG plant sale, a classroom to host students of the Master Gardener class, and use of the Recreational Court for the HCMGA annual plant sale. It has been a great partnership through the years. Thank you TVCC!



## Texas Spider Lily

By Susan Skomma, Henderson County Master Gardener.

Texas Spider Lily, *Hymenocallis lariosme*, can be found in ditches, ponds or other wet areas. It also loves my north facing garden. As you can see in the picture, it thrives despite the weeds. Two years ago, this cluster started as 2

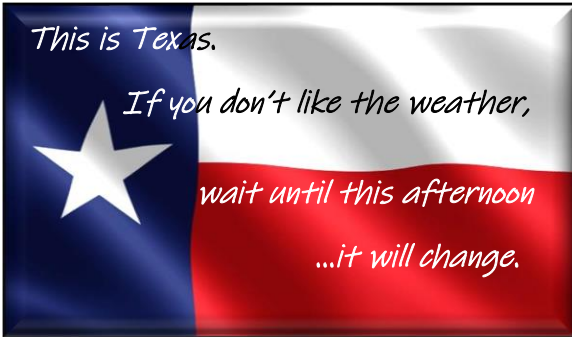


plants and has multiplied to at least eight. It is a fast-multiplying bulb with broad leaves that seem immune to the critters that chew through most by the dead of summer. The clusters provide a grand display of lacy paper-thin blossoms. This plant attracts birds, provides nectar for insects and offers soil stability.



# Weather Update

By Robert Erickson, Henderson County Master Gardener



How have we fared in the weather department so far this year? Anyone remember our February deep freeze? Actually, other than that the temperature has been relatively normal and mild. We've had some days in the 90s in our area but haven't cracked the century mark except in isolated areas.

But as gardeners, our major concern is rain. Free water falling from the sky is better than paid water from a pipe any day. So how have we done so far in the rain department?

The broad answer is: Fairly normal. After six months, we've exceeded half our annual average total by about 10%. So far, so good. But when you look at the monthly totals, it shows more variability...like usual.

For the record, I've been keeping records on daily and monthly rainfall at my place for the past ten years. I live almost exactly on the county line between Henderson and Van Zandt counties or about halfway between Athens and Canton. As expected, my numbers are similar to but not exactly what you may experience in other parts of the area but they are representative of our recent conditions.

So, here's a summary of the first six months of 2021 based on my numbers with some thoughts about the next six months. As a baseline, we typically average 42 inches of rain a year in this area although the average has increased slightly during my time keeping data.

**January:** On average, we expect about 3-3.5" in January. This year, I recorded almost 5" in the first month of the year.

**February:** On Average, February is about the same as January. This year, in spite of the snow and freeze, I only recorded 2.25".

**March:** March begins our Spring rains and we typically get between 4.5 and 5 inches. This year, I recorded 3.25" A little light for the month.

**April:** Typically, we can expect around 4" of April showers. This year, I recorded right at the average with just over 4".

**May:** May has been a transition month for rain. On average, we get about 5" but in the past ten years, we have seen four months with over 6" in the month and six months with less than 4". This year, we had a wet 8.25".





Free use photo by [Bibhukalyan Acharya](#) from [Pexels](#)

**June:** Historically, June has been an enigma. The average is between 3.5-4 inches but only three months exceeded this average with seven months having less. This year, we had a dry 1.75" for the month.

Once again, these are averages and may or may not represent what you actually got on your garden.

What's coming up for the next six months? I'd be telling you a lie if I said I knew. But here's what the past shows.

**July:** Normally, we see just over 2" in July. In 2020, we got over 6".

**August:** The average for August is about 2.5". Having said that, we've had two months in the last ten years which August had over 4".

**September:** The September average bumps up to over 3" again, but in five years we average less than 1". The other four months had over 5" with 2020 having 10".

**October:** Halloween season averages over 5" but 5 months have had less than 4".

**November:** Once again, the average is around 3.5" but three of the last nine years have shown well over 5" in November.

**December:** Our year-end season averages just over 4". But, again four months of the last nine have been well over 4".

That's the problem with averages; every month is different but the average balances out the extreme highs and lows.

As a general statement, we haven't experienced the extreme drought conditions which have plagued West Texas and the Far West...but the weather changes regularly. It is a wise gardener who monitors their water usage.



**Harvest Garden:** The HCMGA's newest project, the Harvest Garden, is a teaching garden on growing flowers, herbs, fruits and vegetables with hands-on demonstrations. It is located inside the Regional Fairpark Complex.

# Library Series Has Returned!

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month at 5:30 pm  
at the *Clint W. Murchison Memorial Library* 121 S. Prairieville St. Athens

**July 13<sup>th</sup>** “Meet the Master Gardeners.” Are you curious about how to become a Master Gardener? Come to the library and get your questions answered. The presentation will provide information about the Master Gardener program, how to become a Master Gardener, and details about the Master Gardener training that begins in August.

**August 10<sup>th</sup>** Master Gardener Bob Erickson will provide answers to the bits and pieces which can confuse people in gardening. He will clarify things like the difference between hybrid, heirlooms, and GMOs; the difference between fertilizers and plant foods; the difference between seed starting mix, potting soil, compost, mulch, and soil; and much more.

Wow, I didn't

## Did you know that the Library Series...

Is always open to the public – for FREE! To find the most up to date information on the Library Series, go to <https://txmg.org/hendersonmg/free-horticultural-presentations/>

The **Library Series** is a partnership effort between **HCMGA** and the **Clint W. Murchison Memorial Library**, in Athens, TX. Each month, HCMGA Master Gardeners present from their expertise to the public for free. There is always a wealth of information to take home to your garden.

*We Look forward to seeing you soon!*



Activity in the Harvest Garden. See more pictures on the bottom of the previous page.

# Soil: Much More Than Dirt

By Lydia Holley, Henderson County Master Gardener



*License purchased for use of photo*

Good soil is the secret to large blooms, bountiful harvests, and green, disease-free foliage. But do you know what lives in it? Earthworms, nematodes, and mites call the soil their home. Also underfoot are algae, bacteria, fungi, and protozoa, collectively called microbes.

Although each one is microscopic, the soil has so many microbes in it, just one acre of land can contain thousands of pounds of them. The soil is held together by their secretions. Some of them are thought to give the soil its earthy smell.

Most gardeners are aware of the benefit of earthworms and their role in feeding on organic materials such as compost, mulch, or manures. But once those particles are small enough, microbes go to work. It is the microbes which help plants take up nutrients. Without them, plants cannot utilize the fertilizer you throw out or the nutrients already contained in the soil.

Ever wonder why plants seem to grow better after a rain? It is the soil microbes which take the nitrogen available in the air and break it into a source plants can use. Some live along the plant's roots, helping to feed the plant. Without the protozoa present in the soil, it would be hard for a plant to take up the nitrogen it needed to live.

It is no coincidence that most plants grow best in an environment where microbes thrive. This is what is meant by the saying, "feed the soil." You are not feeding the soil, you are making an environment conducive for soil microbes.

The most important factor for increasing soil microbes is organic carbons such as mulch, compost, etc. The more organic matter present in your soil, the more soil microbes you will have.

Some other factors which affect the amount of soil microbes are temperature, moisture, and soil pH. The best environment for microbes is a moist soil. Perhaps when you water the plants, you are really making certain the microbes are happy.

Gardeners know that organic material breaks down fastest in temperatures between 60 to 85 degrees F. Those temperatures are also optimal for soil microbial growth. That is why gardeners in hot climates such as East Texas must refresh their mulch more often than gardeners in colder climates.

Optimal soil pH for most microbes is between 6.0 to 8.0. Seems most of the advice given to gardeners—keep your soil moist but not wet, mulch well, and adjust your soil pH for the plants you are growing—could also be intended for soil microbes.



Because microbes actually breathe, taking in oxygen and exhaling carbon dioxide, the plants have an additional source of carbon dioxide, which increases their photosynthesis ability. Microbes also excrete ammonia. Plants can use that as a source of nitrogen.

To increase the soil microbial activity in your soil, add mulch, compost, or manures to your garden. This gives them more to eat. If their food runs low, their numbers will decrease.

Want beautiful plants? Take care of your microbes.

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



## Angel's Trumpet

By Susan Skommesa, Henderson County Master Gardener.



Angel's Trumpet (*Burgmansia solanaceae*) grows on a woody stem, and can reach to 8-10 feet high. If left unpruned, it can spread from 4 to 12 feet wide. However, don't hesitate to prune to the height and shape you'd like. It is beautiful as a shrub or a small tree.

Angel's Trumpet, a native to Central and South America, is a perennial in warm climates, and grown as an annual in cooler climates. This hardy plant can handle most Texas sunny days, though it would certainly enjoy minor

partial shade. Angel's Trumpet is a heavy feeder that prefers moist, fertile, well-drained soil. To encourage blooming, fertilize every four-ish weeks in the spring and summer. Though the pests attracted to this sweet-smelling blossom filled evergreen is white fly and spider mites, humming birds, bees and butterflies will certainly lavish their love. In the winter it will die to the ground, but have no fear, for in East Texas, it should return in the spring.

The large leaves frame long trumpet shaped flowers that hang like bells that can reach 8 – 10 inches long. They come in pink, yellow, gold, peach and white. The quantity and size of the blossoms make this a very impressive addition to the garden. Interestingly, Angel's Trumpet blooms from late evening through dawn, when their very sweet and distinct scent is strongest.

The down side to Angel's Trumpet is that, except for its seed pods, it is a poisonous plant. If consumed in quantity it can cause illness or even death. Though deer would not be interested, your pets may be. Since it is very toxic to them and small children who may be drawn to the flowers, you may want to fence off a portion of your garden where you feature your Angel's Trumpet with other accent plants and garden art.



# Join us Become a Master Gardener

## 2021 Master Gardener Training

Training starts August 19  
Deadline for submitting application: August 11, 2021  
Class Fee: \$150  
Day & Time: Thursdays beginning at 9:00 am  
Training is a mix of in-person and online classes

Have questions or want an application?  
Contact Ariel at the County Extension Office  
Email: [ariel.conway@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:ariel.conway@ag.tamu.edu)  
Phone: (903) 675-6132

### Is the Master Gardener Program for Me?

To help you decide if you should apply to be a Master Gardener, ask yourself these questions:

- Do I want to learn more about the culture and maintenance of many types of plants?
- Am I eager to participate in a practical and intense training program?
- Do I look forward to sharing my knowledge with people in my community?
- Do I have enough time to attend training and to complete the volunteer service?

If you answered yes to these questions, the Master Gardener program could be for you.

### “Meet the Master Gardeners”

July 13, 5:30 pm  
Clint Murchison Library, 121 S. Prairieville St, Athens, TX.  
Program will include all information about the class along with short presentations by officers, project chairmen, and current interns.



Scan the QR code or visit <https://txmg.org/hendersonmg/> for more information about Henderson County Master Gardeners

Individuals with disabilities who require an auxiliary aid, service, or accommodation in order to participate in this activity are encouraged to contact the Henderson County Extension Office at 903-675-6130 for assistance.



Texas A&M AgriLife Extension provides equal opportunities in its programs and employment to all persons, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, or gender identity. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating.

# Rose of Sharon

By Lydia Holley, Henderson County Master Gardener



If you are looking for a tall shrub which blooms in summer, consider the Rose of Sharon, aka Althea (*Hibiscus syriacus*). This shrub grows to 12 feet tall and spreads to 10 feet wide. It has an erect, vase-like shape because the branches grow upright. In summer, blooms cover the tree with large-petaled flowers that attract hummingbirds, butterflies, and bees.

Plant Rose of Sharon in sun to part shade. Otherwise, it is forgiving, tolerating either drought or wet soil for short periods of time. It is also not particular about the soil's pH.

A deciduous shrub, its habit of leafing out late in spring is overlooked because it is so tolerant of summer's heat. There are cultivars available

which bloom in pink, white, red, and purple. Closely related but different species are the Confederate rose (*Hibiscus mutabilis*) and Texas Star Hibiscus (*Hibiscus coccineus*).

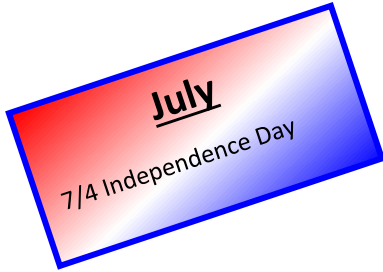
Plant Rose of Sharon as a specimen or focal point. It can also be used in shrub borders or planted as a tall hedge. Rose of Sharon blooms on new wood, so its branches can be pruned in early spring. Light pruning will help Rose of Sharon keep its shape and the blooms will be larger. If left unpruned, the branches may arch downward, and the blooms will be smaller, but more numerous.

Native to Asia and India, Rose of Sharon's blooms close at night, so it would not be a good plant for a moon garden. But during the day it will delight you either up close or from afar.

Many times, I see Rose of Sharon without any underplantings. Because of its upright shape, I think it would be greatly enhanced surrounded by companion plantings. Consider caryopteris, dwarf crape myrtles, veronicas, stokesias, dwarf crape myrtles, dwarf butterfly bushes, salvias, or short abelias. Any of these will flower alongside the Rose of Sharon and many of these plants come in various colors which could contrast nicely with your particular Rose of Sharon. If you are looking for a grass to go with your Rose of Sharon, consider 'Little Bunny' fountain grass. If you want to see the trunk of your Rose of Sharon, and would prefer a groundcover instead, leadwort (*Ceratostigma plumbaginoides*), with its bright blue blooms, would coordinate well.

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

# Calendar of Events



## Events Around Town

Here are some websites I usually comb through to find events for this section on **Events Around Town**. Feel free to visit these websites to see if there is something going on. I've highlighted a few events that I found on some of the site's events calendars.

- ✓ **Henderson County Master Gardener Association:** <https://txmg.org/hendersonmg/>
- ✓ **East Texas Arboretum and Botanical Society:** <http://www.easttexasarboretum.org/>
- ✓ **Dallas Arboretum and Botanical Gardens:** <https://www.dallasarboretum.org/>
  - **Learn to Grow Horticulture Presentation:** Presented by the Dallas County Master Gardeners and the Dallas Arboretum Horticulture Volunteers. Enjoy special tips and presentations on gardening. Presentations begin at 11am.
    - **July 9** Tons of Tomatoes
    - **July 16** Attracting Butterflies Into Your Garden
    - **July 23** Succulents and Cactus
    - **August 13** Pepper Palooza: All things peppers with the Learn to Grow team
    - **August 20** Plant Propagation
    - **August 27** Spring Flowering Bulbs – Time to Start Planning
- ✓ **Texas Parks and Wildlife:** <https://tpwd.texas.gov/>
- ✓ **Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center:** <https://www.wildflower.org/>
  - **VIRTUAL Gardening for Wildlife Series**
    - **Every Saturday in July**, Lady bird Johnson offers a Virtual Class from 2-4 pm that teaches how to use native plants to support robust ecosystems and provide habitat for birds, butterflies, bees and more.
    - **August 5 @ 12:00 pm - 3:30 pm NDAL Webinar: Lawns, Leaves & Laws:** “Many now recognize that the dominance of manicured lawns in many of our landscapes is environmentally harmful. That said, many homeowner’s associations and municipalities are regulating front yard plant heights and store shelves are still stocked to the brim with pesticide products composed of harmful chemicals. An environmental law professor, two ecologists, and an organic turf expert will share practical ways to overcome these hurdles and create more ecologically beneficial landscapes.”
    - **August 12<sup>th</sup> 12:00 pm - 1:30 pm NDAL Webinar: Native Meadows:** “By planting site-adapted native perennials, managed according to the ecological processes that govern open field vegetation in the wild, long-lived vibrant meadows can be consistently achieved. In this presentation plant selection

criteria, planting procedures and management techniques will be illustrated through a series of residential case studies, including some over two decades old.”

- ✓ **Smith County Master Gardeners:** <https://txmg.org/smith/coming-events/>
  - **July 22 @ 8:30 am - 1:00 pm 2021 JMG Teacher Training Workshop:** “Come join us for the 2021 Junior Master Gardener Teacher Training Workshop! This hands-on, professional development for elementary teachers wanting to teach more plant science, environmental science and/or implement school garden projects is coming soon! Please register by July 13, 2021. The workshop is located at the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service - Gregg County, 405 E. Marshall Ave. Suite 101, Longview, Texas 75604. LUNCH WILL BE SERVED. Cost is \$75. Click here to get the flyer with more information...”
- ✓ **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. 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/>

**Have you seen our videos on Facebook? Go check them out at**  
<https://www.facebook.com/HCMastergardener>

### 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.



Bees are vital for flowers becoming Fruits and vegetables.

# Henderson County Master Gardener Association

~ Members Page ~

## 2021 HCMGA Meetings

3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month

### New Time & Location

10:00am @ St. Edwards Catholic Church  
1310 S. Palestine St. Athens TX

July 21 <sup>st</sup>	October 20 <sup>th</sup>
August 18 <sup>th</sup>	November 17 <sup>th</sup>
September 15 <sup>th</sup>	December 15 <sup>th</sup>



*Master Gardeners,  
remember to  
record your hours!*



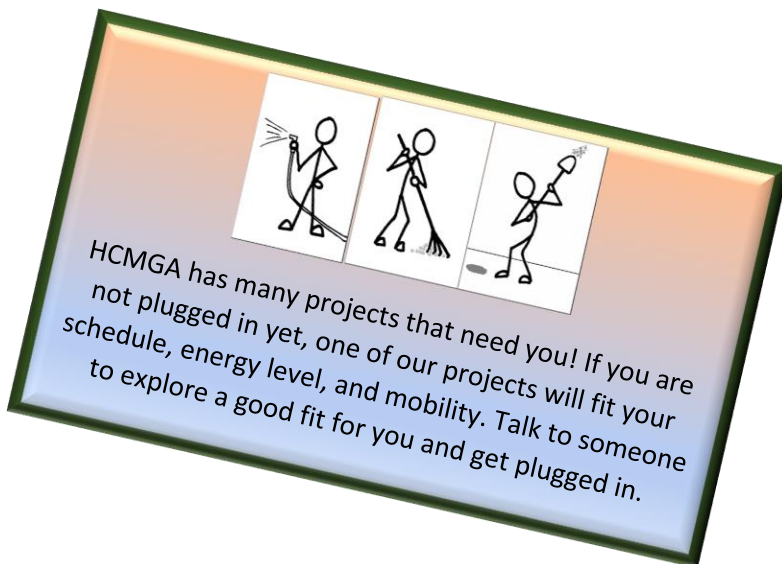
**Member and Intern Requirements:** Members need 12 hours of **volunteer service**, 6 hours of **continuing education**, and attendance at 5 **meetings**. Interns need 50 hours of **volunteer service**.

**Greenhouse:** Work days on hold until September

**DREAM Garden:** Member volunteers are welcome on Mondays 9am-12pm.

**Harvest Garden:** Member volunteers are welcome on Tuesdays 8am – 11am.

**Inside Dirt:** Member volunteers are welcome to contribute and send in articles, pictures, cartoons, gardening games, kid resources and upcoming events, to Susan Skommesa at [susanloves1life@gmail.com](mailto:susanloves1life@gmail.com).



# July & August Gardening Tips

By Susan Skommesa, Henderson County Master Gardener

## In General:

"Fall Gardening begins about now!"

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

I laugh out loud



So, as you mow, weed, water and harvest, be careful not to overdo it. Heat exhaustion is a real thing. 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 too 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!

## ...So what do we do while we are 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.

Start to prepare for your fall garden in July as well. Planning your fall garden in July allows you to ensure crops are harvested by November 15<sup>th</sup>, which is the average first average 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 tip: 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: 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 15<sup>th</sup>. 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.



*Cucumber plants in my raised bed*



## 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 color this fall.

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 under the trees. 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.

## 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.

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](mailto:hendersonCMGA@gmail.com), or visit [txmg.org/hendersonmg](http://txmg.org/hendersonmg)



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