

Henderson County Master Gardeners Association (HCMGA)



INSIDE DIRT

November & December 2021

President's Message

By Yvonne Sparks, Master Gardener

Closing Message from Yvonne...

As I write this message, it is with some sadness. My term as Henderson County Master Gardener Association (HCMGA) President is coming to an end in December. I have enjoyed "Chapter 2" of being president mainly because I got to work with some really great gardeners and people. It was an interesting year as we worked through Covid restrictions and protocols.



The 2022 slate of officers to be voted on at the November meeting are exceptional people who are very dedicated to this organization. I know they will do a good job.

Highlights of 2021 are:

- Supporting member projects like the DREAM Garden, Harvest Garden and Greenhouse allowed those projects to continue to grow and flourish throughout the year.
- Purchasing a computer program that enabled HCMGA to conduct an online plant sale in April brought many members out to help and introduce Master Gardeners to new people.
- Planning an online Plant Sale forced HCMGA to get out of the box of a traditional face-to-face sale and discover new ways to share plant information with residents of Henderson County.
- Expanding the delivery method of the Master Gardener class by offering online and in person classes in the Fall to 11 gardeners is expanding our ability to offer a class that meets the needs of a variety of learners.

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- Researching new ways to propagate plants for the Plant Sale educated many members on the different methods available.
- Using the Hoop House at the Harvest Garden to grow 75 strawberry plants in pots and hanging baskets was a great experience in what to do and what not to do to get fresh, fat, red strawberries,
- Demonstrating how to build a rainwater catchment system at the Harvest Garden to emphasize the importance of preserving our natural water sources and how to use water wisely in our gardens,
- Resurrecting the Library Series and Summer Series presentations when health restrictions were eased up during the summer.
- Hosting a workshop by the Intern class for Home Schooled children to demonstrate how to grow vegetables in elevated beds to young new gardeners.

WOW...the Master Gardeners and Interns have been very busy.

In closing I would like to say goodbye to three long time members of HCMGA. Lora Tomlinson, Lynn Stroud and Lois Mallette have moved or will be moving away from Henderson County. Lora is moving to the Gulf Coast near Bay City, Lynn is moving to Kingwood NE of Houston and Lois is moving to the Hill Country. These three members have been involved in many ways for several years. Their time and expertise have been invaluable to many projects, events, By-law revision task force, attendance at state Director's meetings, and help in providing native plants for sale. These MG are great individuals to have around at many activities through the years. Each of them will be missed.

In closing, I will still be around at many future Master Gardener events. My focus is working in the TVCC Greenhouse growing plants from seeds, plugs, division and bulbs for the Plant Sale. Please come by the Greenhouse and view the many hours of work by the Greenhouse committee and Master Gardener volunteers. Thank you for your support in 2021.



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



HCMGA Projects

Education to Enrich the Community



- **Children's Garden:** HCMGA is available for consultation on school or teaching gardens.
- **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:** 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 Has Returned!

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



November 9th Prepare Your Gardens For Winter: Lydia Holley and Bob Erickson will jointly discuss preparing our gardens for Winter. Bring your questions and we will try to help you prepare.

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!

First Student-Focused Event at Harvest Garden a Great Success

Deb Pascoe, Master Gardener

When ground was broken for the Harvest Garden in October 2019, it was envisioned as a place to bring the public to learn all about gardening. By the time construction was complete, Covid had hit our shores, shutting down access to many things in our community, including the Harvest Garden.

Each class of Interns takes on a project of their creation. As the community began opening back up, the Intern class of 2020 decided to bring the Harvest Garden vision to life.

They delivered on that plan on Tuesday October 19, hosting 17 home school students from the ages of 6 to 17, where they taught the students how to plant, grow and preserve herbs and how to use herbs in a butterfly garden to serve as the nursery for butterfly eggs and caterpillars.



The day was beautiful – 70ish temperatures, blue skies and wisps of white clouds. Many hours of work had been expended by the Harvest Garden Managers, Master Gardeners and Interns to make the gardens beautiful. The hoop house, with several rows of fall vegetables was an attention grabber. Some students really wanted to pick the vegetables, which are not quite ready yet. We loved their enthusiasm and welcomed their questions.

While parents toured the gardens, interns shared their knowledge, leading students through hands-on activities, including planting seeds and plants, and learning how to dry herbs and preserve them in oil or vinegar. There were lots of smiling faces with one student promising to give us a “one million” rating if we sent out a survey!

We are excited that the Harvest Garden is beginning to deliver on its vision and look forward to many more sessions with the community.





Hello Winter

Susan Skommesa, Master Gardener



Vistas of green turning gold
Sweat drench days becoming cold
Leaves adrift, piles on land
Amber fire rings, warm the hand

Butterflies, migrate along
Hummingbirds too, moving on
Gardens clean of plants long spent
Compost piles, hot to vent

Time to trim bushes and trees
Increase spring blooms, for the bees
Plant more bulbs, for spring surprise
Colors reflect, a sunrise

Boots and mud, hats, scarves and gloves
Snuggle, in sweaters you love
Breezes, bite your face silly
Warm-up with soups, teas, n-chili

Squash, gourds and sweet potato
Fall favorites on your table
Enjoy the holiday cheer
Knowing family time, draws near

Calendar of Events

November

11/7 ~ Daylight Savings Time (Fall Back)
11/11 ~ Veterans Day
11/25 ~ Thanksgiving
11/28 ~ Hanukkah Begins at Sunset

December

12/21 ~ First day of winter
12/25 ~ Christmas Day
12/31 ~ New Year's Eve

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/>
 - **Library Series 11/9/21 @ 5:30pm Prepare Your Gardens for Winter:** Lydia Holley and Bob Erickson will jointly discuss preparing our gardens for Winter. Bring your questions and we will try to help you prepare.
- ✓ **East Texas Arboretum and Botanical Society:** <http://www.easttexasarboretum.org/>
- ✓ **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/>
 - **Native Plants Propagation Workshop** 11/13/21 @ 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm. "Get the tips and tricks with hands-on experience for successfully germinating, transplanting and growing your own native plants from seed this fall."
 - **Winter Care for Native Plants** 11/20/21 @ 9:30 am - 11:30 am. "This gardening workshop will introduce tips and tricks for keeping Texas plants healthy through the winter."
 - **Beyond the Basics of Rakes and Brooms** 11/20/21 @ 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm. "Learn all about the various types of rakes and brooms and see first hand, the best techniques for using each tool in the garden."
- ✓ **Smith County Master Gardeners:** [Upcoming Events \(txmg.org\)](https://www.txmg.org/upcoming-events/)
 - **Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service presents for the first time, a *Viticulture and Enology Research Symposium*:** 12/3/21 @ 9am – 5:30pm's Wine Social
 - "Join us in College Station, TX on **December 3rd, 2021** as we share with you all of the major research we have conducted across the state that will help you find solutions to issues you are facing in the vineyard and winery.
 - "Our team of specialists, faculty, and graduate students are excited to share the results from over 18 research studies, ranging from a survey of Texas wine consumer attitudes towards Texas wine, managing acidity in the vineyard, and a 2021 update on the first organic treatment for Pierce's Disease. See the full agenda attached or on [here](#).
 - "Lunch is provided as well as a complimentary wine social afterwards.
 - "Please register today, we hope to see you there! **Download a document with more details here...**
 - "Register Here: <https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/organizationListings/163>
- ✓ **Kaufman County Master Gardener Association:** <https://www.kcmga.org/events-4/>
- ✓ **Free State Master Gardeners Association of Van Zandt County:** <https://txmg.org/freestatemastergardeners/>

- ✓ **Pineywoods Native Plant Center:** <https://www.sfasu.edu/academics/colleges/forestry-agriculture/research-outreach/sfa-gardens/facilities-resources/pineywoods-native-plant-center>
 - **Address:** 2900 Raguet St. Nacogdoches TX 75961. Check out all the adventures to be had.
- ✓ **NEWLY OPENED Longview Arboretum and Nature Center:** <https://www.longviewtexas.gov/4110/Longview-Arboretum-and-Nature-Center>
 - Free & Open to the Public, donations appreciated. 706 W. Cotton St. (44.14 mi) Longview, Texas 75608, (903) 237-1398 October



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.

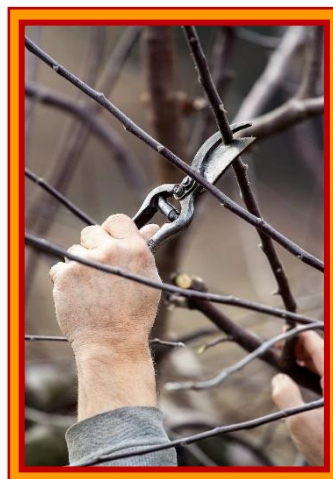
<https://txmg.org/hendersonmg/welcome/our-impact/publicity/>

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.



A Guilt-Free Lantana

Lydia Holley, Master Gardener



Although lantana is often thought of as a summertime plant, it continues to bloom until frost. The hybrid lantana 'New Gold' in particular sports numerous blooms in fall. It is designated as a Texas Superstar Plant.

New Gold is an especially important addition to the Texas Superstar program. Lantana camara, native to South and Central America, has a reputation for being invasive and is listed as such in Florida, Georgia, Alabama, and California. One of the best features of New Gold (*Lantana x hybrida*) is that it has been hybridized to set very few seeds. The lack of seeds keeps it from becoming invasive, so it is a lantana you can enjoy and feel guilt-free about planting, too.

New Gold is an improved lantana in other ways, too. Its lack of fruit allows it to bloom longer and more profusely, and is why it has more blooms in fall than other lantanas. Lantana

camara will grow to become a large bush, but New Gold has been hybridized to stay short, growing only to around two feet tall.

There are several lantanas native to Texas which you may prefer to grow. Be aware, however, according to Invasive Plant Atlas of the United States, native lantanas hybridize easily with Lantana camara. Since each fruit contains two seeds, and birds love the juicy fruit, you can see how lantana is spread so easily. That is why New Gold is often recommended even over native lantanas for use in an ornamental garden.

As these plants continue to be hybridized, perhaps in the future we will have other colors of sterile lantanas to choose from. For now, though, New Gold's bright color shows off well in the bright summer sunlight and coordinates well with autumn's colors. It really is a multi-season wonder.

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

Henderson County Master Gardener Association

~~ Members Page ~~



2021 HCMGA Meetings

New Time & Location

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

November 17th
December 15th



*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: Member volunteers are welcome on Monday 9am – 11am.

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.



HCMGA has 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.



Herbs: The Versatility of Rosemary

Lydia Holley, Master Gardener



As a gardener, rosemary is my favorite herb to grow. It is perennial, at least most years, although I lost mine in last year's freeze. It is also evergreen, so you have something beautiful to look at all winter. Its blooms are blue, which go well with almost any color scheme you may have in the garden. There are prostrate and upright forms. And, it smells delightful, so it is a joy to brush against or even to weed next to.

Rosemary is also useful. You can mix rosemary into butter for extra flavoring on breads, to spread over meats, or to use in sautéing vegetables. Make rosemary oil or dry it. Master Gardener Robert Erickson points out in his presentations that herbs are one of the most expensive foods to buy when price is compared pound to pound. By growing your own, you will not only save money, you will know what you are using is fresh, too.

Giada De Laurentiis' recipe for rosemary oil is simple. Just heat one cup of olive oil with several springs of rosemary for about five minutes. After cooling, put in bottles and seal. She recommends you refrigerate the oil and use it within one month.

Use rosemary oil as a salad dressing, over pasta, and for roasting vegetables. Many use rosemary oil in their hair. And why not? A study on rosemary oil vs. minoxidil 2% showed both sets of participants had increased hair growth. If you try it, be patient. Both took about six months to show new growth.

Drying rosemary is easy, too. Hang bunches for a few weeks or bake small snips at 100 degrees for a couple of hours. Sprinkle dried rosemary over meats. It takes well to chicken, pork, or beef. Rosemary is often paired with garlic or lemon, so feel free to experiment.

You can also add rosemary to tea for extra flavoring. It's so versatile, consider adding it to honey and orange juice drizzled over cake. It seems there is nothing that might not benefit from a little bit of rosemary.

I am certain the Herb 'n Cowgirl, Ann McCormick, would have had more tips at Henderson County Master Gardener Association's Fall Conference. Unfortunately, McCormick had emergency surgery, so the conference has been cancelled. Still, rosemary is easy to experiment with. Whether you use it for cooking or just as an addition to your garden, you are sure to enjoy this lovely herb.

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

November & December Gardening Tips

Susan Skommesa, Master Gardener

In General:

No need to wonder when the first frost date will be. Bam - it already hit! A frost this early reminds me to enjoy any fall color I can find, as it will probably pass fast. Once the trees have lost their leaves, a different beauty emerges, and we can evaluate our landscape for changes. What do we look for? Check out the trees for shape, winter gardens for bareness, lawns for gopher and water damage, and shrubbery for overall impact.

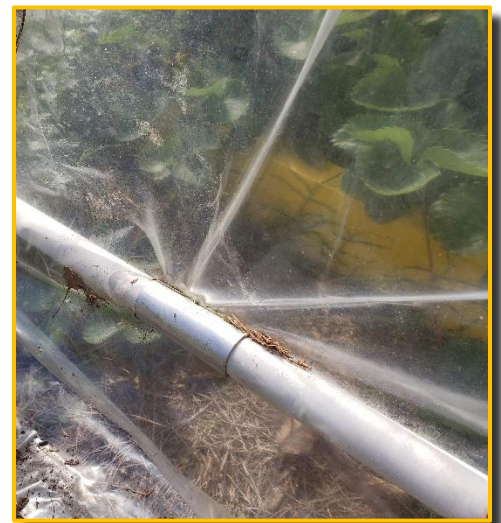
Veggies and Herbs



Cool season vegetables love this weather. Just keep the frost off them using frost blankets or domes of plastic. Don't forget to water your cool season veggies such as lettuce, cabbage, spinach, broccoli, brussel sprouts and leeks. Well watered plants have a much better chance surviving freezing temperatures. Many cool weather veggies taste better after a freeze, as they sweeten up. Keep in mind though, that growth and ripening slows down as the temperature drops.

Garden supply stores and online sources offer frost blankets that

lay over your rows or beds. However, protecting your hard work doesn't have to be expensive. pictured is an inexpensive example of keeping the frost off your veggies. The frame of this cover was made with PVC, to which a couple of \$4.00 clear shower curtains are clamped. The clips that clamp over the plastic and PVC were bought through an online garden center.



A clamp holds down the plastic

How about Flowers

My Carolina Jessamine (*Gelsemium sempervirens*) certainly prefers this cool fall weather over the scorching heat of summer. Likewise, my Oxblood Lilies (*Rhodophiala bifida*), rosebushes, and Mystic Spires Salvia (*Salvia balsalmispim*) are enjoying the cool weather.



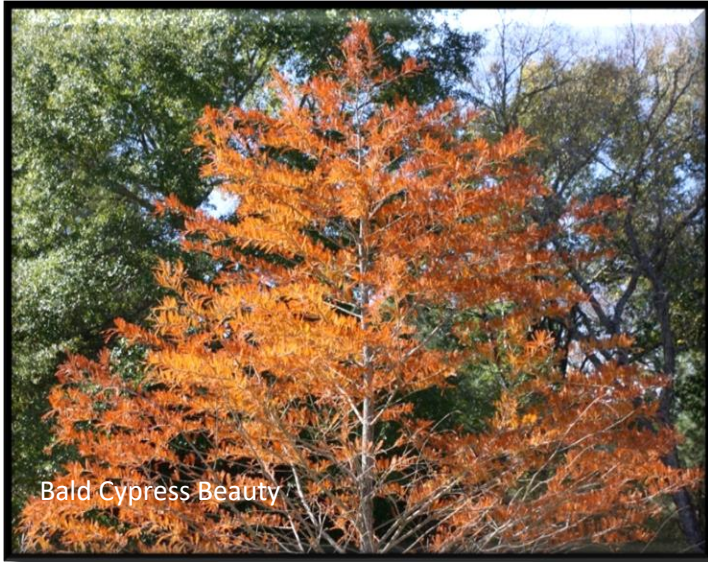
November and December offer perfect weather to finish planting spring bulbs like Daffodil, Crocus, Dutch Iris, Hyacinth, and Narcissus. Bulbs are such a big part of spring, but with planning, you can have an almost year-round display of flowers. Many bulbs return year-after-year and multiply on their own. Digging up the divisions gives you bulbs to transplant into other gardens. When purchasing or dividing to transplant, the bulbs should be firm, not mushy. Some varieties need to be divided every few years to prevent overcrowding.

Enjoy the blooms of Camellias and consider adding more to your landscape. Check your favorite nursery for a supply of colorful Mums to adorn your patio or add to your garden. Plant cool-season annual color directly into the soil as you buy them, including

Daffodils, Flowering Cabbage, Flowering Kale, Grape Hyacinths, Jonquils, Narcissus, Pansies, Pinks, and Snapdragons.

Trees and Shrubs

Shrubs provide greenery year-round. Many offer flowers in the spring and berries in the fall. They make the perfect backdrop for flowers, offer privacy, and help define yard-space. The right trees offer spectacular color during the fall. In the picture, notice the backdrop of greenery offsetting the blazing color of the Cypress.



Now is a good time to plant or transplant trees and shrubs. When adding shrubs to your landscape, choose carefully, keeping in mind their height and width when fully-grown. Newly planted or transplanted shrubs and trees need more water during the winter than do those that are well established.

This is also the perfect time to prune and shape trees and shrubs. Before pruning, look at the tree or shrub in the context of its surroundings. Notice any branches that overhang structures or provide more

shade than you want. Think about shape. I tend to like my shrub shapes to take on a natural or draped look. Others may enjoy the manicured round, cone, spiral, or flat-top look for their shrubbery. It all depends on personal taste and desired effect. A good rule of thumb when pruning trees and shrubs is to prune away suckers, as well as branches that grow downward. However, keep branches that grow upward. When your trees are bare of leaves, look at each tree individually from different angles. Notice branches that make the tree appear lopsided or out of balance. Trim these away with a solid clean cut.

Lawns

This may sound silly, but after you've cleaned up your lawn mower, replaced the blades, and stored it away, winter is actually a great time to plan your lawn care for next season. Pull out next year's calendar and schedule in when you will repair, seed and fertilize your lawn. Spring gets busy fast.

The months of April and May are a good time to seed a new lawn, repair any low places, or mend holes and messes made by gophers, pigs, dogs, and other beast that dare to fight you for that plush green carpet. In general, the first time you fertilize is in June. By then you should have been able to mow that new spring grass at least three times. Remember to fertilize just before it rains, or give your lawn a good watering afterwards. Plan to fertilize every six weeks until September.



Growing Ginger

Lydia Holley, Master Gardener



Do not be shy about growing ornamental ginger. It is a fun plant to include in your landscape if you are looking for a tropical-looking, low-maintenance option. Although some ornamental gingers are not perennial in East Texas, many will return year after year.

There are gingers which grow only to one foot tall and make a beautiful ground cover. Some have lush growth with leaves like those of a Hosta. Some have rounded foliage; others have foliage which is variegated. There are also tall varieties which have stalks that grow straight up, like a corn plant, with long, slender leaves growing opposite of each other. You can find

plants which grow as tall as ten feet. Some will grow in full sun, others prefer shade.

Some gardeners grow ornamental ginger for the foliage, but most grow it for its bloom. The flowers are exotic-looking, and many ornamental gingers have a scent reminiscent of perfume. Like orchids, ginger blooms vary. Some are a cluster of individual flowers, some are spikes of color, and some look more like a dahlia. As an added bonus, should you wish to cut the bloom and put it in a vase inside, it should last for several days to a few weeks.

Since gingers look tropical, you may wish to pair them with angel trumpets, banana trees, bougainvillea, bromeliads, cannas, cast iron plants, crinum, elephant ears, ground orchids, hardy hibiscus, passion vine, root beer plant, true lilies, or spider lilies. I think I've just decided what I'm going to do with a spot in my garden which needs changing.

Not all ornamental ginger roots can be eaten, so if you want to grow ginger for use in cooking, purchase *Zingiber officinale*. If you want to experiment, you can try growing ginger purchased at the grocery store. Some may be treated to keep it from sprouting, but those labeled as organic are more likely to put out growth from its buds. Once planted, edible ginger may flower for you, but the flowers will not be as showy as those grown for their ornamental qualities. The plant's stalk and leaves will be similar to the corn-like look of a tall ginger, but will only grow to around three feet.

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

Editor's Note: for more information on growing, harvesting, preparing *Zingiber Officinale* (the edible version of ginger), visit <https://agrillifeextension.tamu.edu/library/gardening/ginger/>

Hmmm...



Do You Know?

What is the difference between a spice and an herb?

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach website¹ delineates the difference between herbs and spices based on what part of the plant is in use. Specifically, herbs come from the leaves and/or stems of a non woody plant, whereas spices come from the plant's roots, flowers, bark, fruit or seeds.

Examples of spices that come from seed are cumin and nutmeg. Cinnamon spice is from the bark of the cinnamon tree. Cloves spice are the flower's bud. Saffron spice is from the stigma (*female reproductive part of a flower*) of the saffron crocus. Vanilla is a spice from the undeveloped fruit of an orchid.

There are some plants that provides us with both spices and herbs. For example, the herb cilantro comes from the leaves of *Coriandrum sativum*, while the spice coriander is from the same plant's seed. Dill, *Anethum graveolens*, is an annual herb from the celery family. When we harvest its leaves and stems, dill is an herb. When we use its seeds, we refer to dill seeds as a spice.

Based on this information, can you guess whether garlic is an herb or a spice?

1. <https://hortnews.extension.iastate.edu/2003/8-22-2003/herbsnspices.html>

~ Susan Skommesa, Master Gardener

Editor's Correction:



For the September/October edition of the *Inside Dirt*



This correction is for the article written by Lydia Holly titled ***Fabulous Fall Plants: What to Plant with Ornamental Grasses (or Other Style Gardens)*** on page 17 of the September/October edition. This editor labeled a picture in that article (see a copy of the photo on the left) Gregg's Mist flower. It's not, it's *Liatris aspera*, or Tall Blazing Star. My apologies to the author and our faithful readers.

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.

Connect with Us:



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Texas master gardeners



txmg.org/hendersonmg



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The members of Texas A&M AgriLife will provide equal opportunities in programs and activities, education, and employment to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation or gender identity, and will strive to achieve full and equal employment opportunity throughout Texas A&M AgriLife.