



INSIDE DIRT



Editor's Message

Susan Skommesa, Master Gardener

Hello Friends, and Happy Spring! Welcome to another edition of *Inside Dirt*. In this edition, we find out that not only is the HCMGA's **Harvest Garden** having a grand opening in June, but it's also holding hands-on educational opportunities, **free for the community**, nearly every month! In addition, in this this issue, we'll get a glimpse of the results of the plant sale, learn about raised bed gardening, be treated to a ton of helpful information about pests and water testing the easy way, what tasks your garden needs for you to do during May and June, the connection between your garden and your table, and so much more.



In March, the **Harvest Garden** kicked off it's 2022 season with an educational opportunity about the care, propagation and correct methods of pruning fruit trees. It was a cloudy and windy day, with a very short ever so slight misting shower. The strong breeze felt dramatic against the dark skies.

Thirty-six members of the community attended, and at least 3 couples that I talked to personally, being new to the area, said they want to learn how to successfully grow in their new land.



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Our speaker was Master Gardener **Robert Selman**, a dynamo from Cherokee County. He has been a Master Gardener for 8 years, teaches pruning in his county, and is a certified propagation specialist. His propagation knowledge and skills proved very interesting in the hands-on portion of his presentation, as he talked about how to propagate peach trees from the pruned branches.

Robert grew up on a peach farm in Northern Louisiana, which well-equipped him for the topic. He interspersed his knowledge with humor about growing up on a fruit tree farm. He discussed getting peaches/fruit trees started, pruning, propagation, care, fertilization, and pest management.

In the building of this demonstration garden, the dream was to give people a hands-on experience to garner knowledge they can take back to their gardens. It was startling to go from Robert's lecture to his pruning demonstration. The tangible takeaways gained from the hands-on approach was delightfully evident! The garden was living its purpose as Robert walked through our fruit trees and shared why certain branches needed to be pruned, and then demonstrated the best pruning methods, for all to see.

The feeling in the crowd as he demonstrated, was that the information he gave during the lecture became usable and made sense. There was a mood shift during the demonstration as he showed just how easy it is to prune trees.

After the trees were pruned, Robert picked up some branches and shared 2 ways to propagate those cut branches into new trees. Robert clearly has as much knowledge about propagation as he does about pruning. What a fabulous windy morning.

HCMGA Projects

- **Children's Programing:** HCMGA is available for consultation on school or teaching gardens.
- **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.
- **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.

Our speaker, Master Gardener **Robert Selman**





Harvest Garden

Butterfly Gardens & Herbs

Saturday May 28, 2022

10:00 am



- Hands-On Learning Opportunity
- All about Butterfly Gardens and Growing Herbs
- Master Gardeners will be available to answer your questions



Bring your own camp chair - seating is limited!



→ Find the Harvest Garden at Henderson County Regional Fair Park ←



A Vision for Veggies: The HCMGA Harvest Garden

Lydia Holley, Master Gardener



2022 Co-chair and Master Gardener **John Maloch** holding a portion of the carrot harvest grown in the **Harvest**

When Spencer Perkins came to Henderson County as the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Agent, he shared a vision for the Master Gardener program: a **demonstration garden** showing community members how to grow vegetables in their own backyard or even become self-sufficient.

He asked Master Gardeners Lynn Stroud, John Maloch, and me to start the process of implementing this vision. We came up with a plan and assembled a team of Master Gardeners. I am sorry I cannot list them all for fear of forgetting someone, but they were invaluable in their knowledge and enthusiasm in constructing this new project and in managing their designated areas. Several people gave tremendous amounts of time and labor to see this project take shape. It was and still is a group effort.

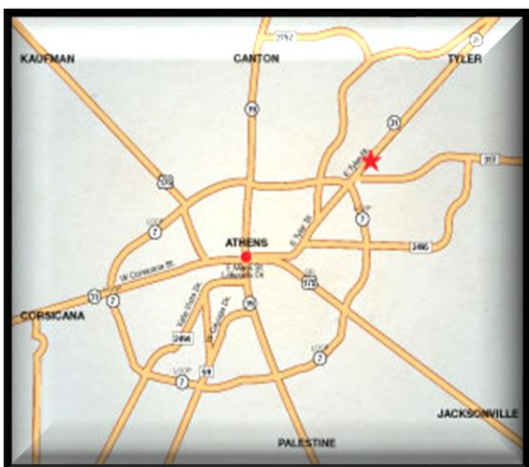
herbs, and the plantings around the education area. A cutting garden area was added when additional Master Gardeners volunteered their time and talents. This, too, was a part of the vision—a dynamic garden ever-changing as new volunteers joined the Master Gardener organization. So, while the leadership and the Master Gardeners over each area in the Harvest Garden may have changed, the vision has not.

The **Harvest Garden** can be enlarged at some point, but right now it is the size of the average suburban lot. Anyone could add one, several, or all of these features to their own front or back yard. The best part of the Harvest Garden? It is designed to be a true demonstration garden. Participants will hear, see, and in many cases, actually do what is needed to grow fruits and vegetables. They will go home confident they can repeat the process at home.



2022 Co-chair and Master Gardener **Sherry Sorrell** holding an enormous beet grown in the **Harvest Garden**.

Various Master Gardeners now supervise areas such as grapes, fruit trees, vegetable beds, hoop house,




After delays due to Covid, the time has finally come for the **Harvest Garden** to hold a **Grand Opening**. The vision Spencer shared and the Master Gardeners adopted and implemented can finally be celebrated. I hope you'll come out for the Grand Opening on June 2. Take a few minutes to walk through the garden and ask questions. It is not just a place to learn. It is a gift to the community.

Editor's Note: The **Harvest Garden** is located at the **Henderson County Regional Fair Park Complex**. As you enter the Complex from 31, take the drive as it winds toward the right and you'll see the hoop house. The previous page and next page features events coming up at the **Harvest Garden**, including the **Grand Opening** and the Educational opportunities scheduled for May and June. **Mark your calendars and join us!**




Harvest Garden Grand Opening

- A Light Snack
- Planting activity for kids to take home
- Individual Tours of the Grounds
- Question and Answer with Master Gardeners


June 2, 2022
4:00pm – 7:00pm

Harvest Garden Presents a Learning opportunity

Pollinators


June 16, 2022
1:00pm

Come learn about honey bees & other amazing
pollinators from an actual beekeeper!!!



Sample some honey,
make a craft,
have lots of fun!!!



A New Garden Adventure: Chapter 2

Janelle Cole, Master Gardener

In our last *Inside Dirt* newsletter, you might have read the first chapter of my 2022 adventure. Instead of tilling or not tilling, or preparing a place in the ground for our garden, we chose to invest in some raised beds. I shared the steps we took to get our beds ready for irrigation and plants! (**Editor's note:** Read the first chapter of this story on page 15 in the [March/April](#) edition of *Inside Dirt*.)



Since then, my son Peter, who was also a Henderson Master Gardener before heading off to college, helped me install my irrigation. We used drip tape in each bed and have two strips going down each side. I love the simplicity of it and how it makes watering easier with our timer all set up.

We already had a main line of irrigation tubing running through our garden, so it was a quick set up. Now that we are using this throughout the week, I plan to add a few drippers in other areas to add some water to certain plants too. It really helped with a cucumber I planted next to our trellis. I have Sweet Autumn Clematis on the other side and I thought I would enjoy some cucumbers and green beans opposite that. Having irrigation in place makes watering so much easier!!

Once we had the water set up and working, it was time to start planting. If you remember my son made a few frames with chicken wire to keep the cats out. I used those until the plants were growing through the chicken wire, and they worked great! We also used those when we had those cold nights in March, but leaning them against the beds and draping sheets across the frames - this kept the sheets from laying on the plants.

We have one bed with onions, broccolini, kale, chard and strawberries. The other bed has peppers, tomatoes and two squash plants. Sprinkled in both beds are herbs to help with pests. Before planting I also did a quick search on companion planting, to make sure I was not putting two plants next to each other that would not get along. So far everything is looking really good!

Every week or two I go in and drench with a fertilizer blend of liquid sea weed, Garret Juice and Orange Oil. The orange oil is supposed to help keep ants away. The sea weed and Garret Juice both are nutrient dense fertilizers!

I do have a small ant colony in one of the beds and plan to mix some baking soda with powdered sugar and see if that encourages them to move. Tune in to our next newsletter and I will let you know how it worked! I am trying to keep chemicals out of the vegetable beds if I can help it!



If you are trying something new in your garden, please share with us on our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/HCMastergardener> we'd love to see it and celebrate your success!!

Pests in Your Garden? Try Birds and Insects

Judy Haldeman, Master Gardener



As soon as you sit back to enjoy the fruits of your garden labors, you begin to notice unwelcome guests. Grasshoppers, crickets, stinkbugs, aphids, whiteflies, and many more. Rather than spraying chemicals that may or may not have long term effects on you, your garden and any beneficial insects, let nature help.

First Birds...

According to *eBird*, there are 673 species of birds in Texas. Of course, not all of them will visit your landscape. But there are many who do visit and they can act as pest control warriors. Most backyard birds eat a combination of seeds, berries, and insects. When hatchlings open their mouths for food, a favorite is a meal of freshly caught insects. The good news is that the insects that birds are seeking are abundant in our gardens from late spring to early summer.

But first you have to attract the birds to your home...

1. **PROVIDE COVER:** Birds need places where they can hide, take cover from the weather, establish nesting sites. If your yard is tidy, you might designate one area that can be allowed to develop more naturally. Leave small twigs on the ground. Set out a Bluebird Nest Box to attract bluebirds.
2. **WATER:** Birds are attracted to water for drinking and bathing. Check the water level daily and clean the birdbath at least every two weeks. Many birds are attracted to moving water-add a bubbler or install a fountain.
3. **FOOD:** Don't put away your bird feeder when weather turns warmer. Even insect eating birds will visit your feeder. Use a quality seed blend that will appeal to chickadees, grosbeaks, and cardinals. Suet cakes that will keep titmice and woodpeckers in your area will entice them to look for insect larvae.
4. **BUG EATERS:** Below is a list of common backyard birds and some of the insect pests they eat. Next time you see or hear a bird in your yard, remember that more nesting birds means there will be more hungry mouths to feed and more doting parents searching your yard for food.

- **Bluebirds:** grasshoppers, crickets, beetles, larvae, moths
- **Cardinals:** beetles, grasshoppers, June bugs, leafhoppers, stinkbugs, snails
- **Chickadees:** aphids, whitefly, scale, caterpillars, ants, earwigs
- **Grosbeaks:** larvae, caterpillars, beetles
- **Hummingbirds:** aphids, beetles, mosquitoes
- **Mockingbirds:** caterpillars, grasshoppers, ants, bees
- **Nuthatches:** tree and shrub insects such as borers, caterpillars, ants and earwigs
- **Oriole:** caterpillars, larvae, beetles, grasshoppers
- **Sparrows:** beetles, caterpillars, cutworms
- **Swallows:** moths, beetles, grasshoppers
- **Titmice:** aphids, leafhoppers, caterpillars, beetles
- **Warblers:** caterpillars, aphids, whitefly
- **Woodpeckers:** larvae, beetles, weevils, borers



Resources: <https://www.birdadvisors.com/backyard-birds-texas/>

Then Insects... Control Insect Pests: Learn Which Are the Good, The Bad, Or Merely the Ugly...

The good news is that in Nature, every pest has a predator and you can use that natural food chain to your advantage. Attracting beneficial insects to your garden can keep pests at bay but what exactly is a beneficial insect? It is an insect or [arthropod](#) that helps keep plants healthy and thriving. Some insects [eat pests](#); some form parasitic relationships with pests (eventually killing their hosts); others help pollinate crops to ensure a good harvest.

Ideally, you should try to attract all three kinds of beneficial insects to your garden: predators, parasitoids, and pollinators. These four tips will arm you with the winning strategy you'll need to win the battle of the bugs.

1. **USE PESTICIDES WISELY:** Broad-spectrum pesticides eliminate the good guys just as effectively as they wipe out the bad guys. **Remember:** You're trying to attract *more* insects to your garden, not kill them all. Whenever possible, choose a pesticide that targets the pest. In most cases, botanical pesticides kill fewer beneficial insects than longer-lasting synthetic pesticides. Horticultural oils, insecticidal soaps, and botanical insecticides (such as products derived from pyrethrums or neem) will get your pest problem under control without causing long-term damage to your beneficial insect population.
2. **PLANT AN INSECTARY:** An insectary is a garden plot just for insects. Insectaries can be separate landscape beds planted in close proximity to your garden, or several small plantings interspersed among the veggies. Choosing the right variety of plants will attract beneficial bugs. Start with some early bloomers to attract beneficial insects at the start of the season, even before the pests arrive. Many important beneficial insects, such as hoverflies and lacewings, feed on pollen and nectar as adults. By providing flowers early in the season, you'll be inviting these insects in time to unleash their predatory offspring on aphids and mites. Include plants of varying heights. Low-growing herbs such as thyme and oregano give ground beetles a place to hide. Taller flowers, such as daisies or cosmos, beckon to hoverflies and parasitic wasps looking for nectar. Praying mantids are big pest eaters that like to hide between plants that give good cover. Use plants that have tiny clusters of flowers that offer exposed nectar and pollen to smaller pollinators like parasitic wasps. This group includes yarrow, dill, fennel, and wild carrots. Composite flowers including garden favorites such as zinnias and sunflowers, attract larger pollinators like robber flies and predatory wasps.

These five plant families will pack the most punch when it comes to attracting beneficial insects to your garden:

- **Aster Family (*Asteraceae*):** ageratums, asters, chrysanthemums, cosmos, dahlias, marigolds, and zinnias
- **Carrot family (*Apiaceae*):** Angelica, caraway, carrot, celery, chervil, cowbane, cumin, fennel, parsley, parsnip, Queen Anne's lace
- **Legume family (*Fabaceae*):** green bean, lima bean, scarlet runner bean, chickpea, fenugreek, lentil, lupine, pagoda tree, smoke tree, soybean, tamarind, wisteria
- **Mustard family (*Brassicaceae*):** arugula, bok choy, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, collard, kale, kohlrabi, rutabaga, turnip, horseradish, rocket, shepherd's purse, watercress, white mustard, wild radish
- **Verbena family (*Verbenaceae*):** Verbena (also known as vervain) family, includes 31 genera and nearly 920 species including lemon verbena, blue vervain, lollipop, meteor shower, Greystone Daphne, homestead purple, and Texas rose.



3. **PROVIDE A WATER SOURCE:** If you use a sprinkler to water your garden, the puddles that form should suffice to keep your bug population hydrated. Between waterings (or if you use a drip irrigation system), the insects will require another source of water. You can make a simple watering hole using a saucer and some rocks. Be sure to replenish it on dry days. Remember, most beneficial insects have wings. If water isn't close by, they'll take off in search of what they need. If you want them to keep working in your garden, don't let their water source dry up.

4. **GIVE THE GROUND DWELLERS SOME COVER:** Some beneficial insects keep low to the ground, searching for soil-dwelling pests. Ground beetles, for example, rarely climb foliage looking for something to eat; instead, they patrol the soil at night, munching on slugs and cutworms. During the day, these nocturnal mini-beasts need shelter from the heat and sunlight.

Keeping your garden beds mulched allows ground beetles and other earthbound insects to find a safe haven during the hottest daytime hours. Mulch also keeps the soil moist and prevents beneficial bugs from losing hydration. Stepping stones are another good source of friendly bug cover. Many insects thrive under flat surfaces and stones when they aren't hunting pests.

Finally, remember the good bugs need time to locate their living cafeteria. For instance, once [lady beetles](#) (aka lady bugs) set their sights on havoc-wreaking aphids as a food source, they'll mate, lay eggs, and soon, they'll be picking your garden clean of pests.

Ten of the top predatory insects are: (Learn to recognize the larvae stage of these predators so you don't mistake them for pests.)

1. **Green Lacewing:** Larvae can feast on about 200 aphids per week.
2. **Lady Beetles:** Larvae eat about 50 aphids per day. Adults also eat aphids, scale insects, thrips, mealybugs, and mites. The larvae look like tiny, colorful alligators.
3. **Assassin bugs:** Will eat a wide variety of pests from caterpillars to beetles. (They will bite humans)
4. **Praying Mantis:** Eat a wide variety of good and bad insects.
5. **Minute Pirate Bugs:** Aphids, mites, thrips
6. **Ground Beetles:** Larvae eat slugs, root maggots, cutworms, and others
7. **Syrphid Flies (Hover Flies):** The maggots eat aphids
8. **Predatory Stick Bugs:** Feeds on over 100 species of insects
9. **Big-Eyed Bugs:**
10. Mites, aphids, and insect eggs.
11. **Damsel Bugs:** Aphids, thrips, caterpillars, leafhoppers, and other soft bodied insects



Resources:

- A&M has an extensive library of common insects: <https://texasinsects.tamu.edu/>
- And another list of beneficial insects: <https://texasinsects.tamu.edu/?s=beneficial+insects>



Events Around Town

Below are some websites you may comb through to find events to attend.

- ✓ 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/>



From the Garden to the Table

Susan Skommesa, Master Gardener



I'm growing beautiful Collards this spring. Ususally I don't know what to do with collards unless I juice them. I used to juice a lot, and would juice collards with carrots and beets. A nice all around cup of nutrients, vitimins and minerals. I haven't been juicing lately, so when my collards matured, I wasn't sure what to do with them.

I also noticed the collards were bolting earlier than usual. Since bolting causes the leaves to grow bitter, I cut off the flowering stems to prevent the plant from channelling all it's energy into creating flowers. I put the flowering stems in a vase on my table. The little yellow fowers are beautiful.

Then I started exploring collard recipies. No point growing it if you don't eat it. I discovered a delicious, simple and quick dish I'd like to share with you. All that's needed is:

- Fresh Onions
- Fresh Garlic cloves
- Olive oil
- Salt
- Collards

Pour several tablespoons of oil into a fry pan. Slice up as many onions as you want. I cut 2 in half, and then side cut them into very thin long slices. I added them to the fry pan with a sprinkling of salt and turned on the heat. I pressed the juice of 4 garlic cloves into the onion, also tossing in the skin and fiber caught in the press.

As the onions were cooking, I prepared the collards. After wrinsing them, I folded the leaves in half, cut the main stems out, then diced the stems very fine. Keeping the leaves folded, I stacked the leaves, and cut them all simultaneously into thin ribbon like lengths. I added the diced stems to the onion mixture, cooked for a few minutes, and when tender but crispy, I added the leaves. I stirred to blend the entire concoction, until the leaves wilted but were still slightly crisp.

That is all there is to it. It is delicious, nutritious, and even a hard core veggie critic will have a hard time resisiting the sweet taste of onion and garlic. I bet the dish would also make a great meat-lovers version by adding sliced sausage.

Bon Appetite!

Plant Sale Results & Master Gardeners, Thank You for your Support

Judy Haldeman, Master Gardener



If you lost any plants again this year, I hoped you logged into our second annual online plant sale and found the perfect plant to replenish your garden or plants to add to an existing space. The plant pick-up was completed on April 23th at the Trinity Valley Community College Recreational Court. We had almost 220 plant orders and sold almost 1,800 plants. Your support will help fund many of the educational programs we have planned for the rest of this year. We know you will enjoy the plants you purchased.

A new addition to our website this year was the ability to search the *Information Sheets* for a more detailed description and care of your plants. All of the plants in this year's sale can be found on our website at www.txmg.org/hendersonmg/. Just click on the Plant Sale tab. If you wanted to know which plants in the sale were a Texas Native, a Texas Superstar plant, or a plant that attracts butterflies, bees, or hummingbirds, you will be able to input that in the search box. The plants from that search will have links to more information about them. The team working on that task will spend many additional hours populating our Plant Library with plants

that we have sold in earlier sales or plants that have been planted in one of our Master Gardener Projects.

If you have questions about your plants and if the website doesn't answer your questions, please feel free to send us an email at hendersoncmga@gmail.com. We will answer your questions as soon as possible.



A special thank you goes to all of the Greenhouse volunteers who spent months caring for the plants through freezing weather and scorching heat. They planted hundreds of seeds and spent hours up-potting plugs and seedlings. A special thank you is due to those involved in inputting data into the plant sale program and keeping track of the plant inventory. Thank you also to the people involved in Inside Dirt articles, Facebook posts and videos, and those involved in the radio interviews. We also owe a debt of gratitude to the members who shared wonderful plants from their personal gardens.



Another talented Master Gardener designed our *Save the Date* card and an additional flyer that was posted on Facebook, our website, and at various businesses throughout the county. Those items were also shared in an earlier Inside Dirt.

Enjoy your plants!



Easy Water Test for Your Garden



Lydia Holley, Master Gardener



After having several plants die in one area, a friend of mine questioned me about what she should do. I suggested two things to start with: a soil test and a water test. After doing these, she found that the problem was the water.

A water test is simple to do and can be eye-opening by what you find. Watering systems may not always give the same amount of coverage throughout the garden area, but if you are having problems like my friend, it might solve a puzzling situation with very little cost, effort, and time.

How do you administer a water test? It is easy. My friend simply placed small containers such as tuna cans in numerous places throughout her garden. This type of can is suggested because they are an inch high. That saves you from having to get out a ruler to measure the water collected and is an easy way to

get a number of containers which are consistent in size.

After placing the water catchers throughout the garden, she started the watering system. After it had gone through its cycle, she took measurements, adding a step I had not thought of. She drew a plan, numbering where she had placed the cans. Then, to the side of the drawing, she listed the numbers and noted the amount of water in each can.

To her surprise, the garden received a variety of measurements, with some areas receiving only one-eighth of an inch, one spot getting zero. Now that she knows the problem, she can start working on the solution.

If you have uneven growth or plants dying in certain areas, it may not be the water. But it might. Try giving your garden a water test. It is simple and easy to do. And you might be surprised by what you learn.

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



May & June Gardening Tips

Susan Skomma, Master Gardener



In General: Regular activities in May and June include weeding, fertilizing, and mowing. Seems like rain is at a premium this spring, so pile up that healthy mulch and water consistently. Several sunny days will dry out your soil fast. Not only does mulch help the soil hold water, but it slows down those weeds.

Remember that Texas A&M (TAMU) offers a great online *Magazine* packed with articles offering information on how to care for your garden and lawn, at:

<https://agrilifetoday.tamu.edu/category/lawn-garden/>. Also, a resource I love from

TAMU's AgriLife Extension program can be found at <https://agrillifeextension.tamu.edu/browse/featured-solutions/gardening-landscaping/>. This link will take you to helpful articles on topics like *How to Grow Vegetables* (with extensive details on each vegetable), *Vegetable and Fruit Resources*, *Small Acreage Horticultural Production*, *Earth-Kind Landscaping*, *AggieTurf*, and information on the Master Gardener and Junior Master Gardener programs. To become a Henderson County Master Gardener, please visit our website at <https://txmg.org/hendersonmg/about-us/>.

Veggie & herb Care: Harvesting the greens will come to an end as the temperature climbs. Oh, so sad, because my spring garden is beautiful. The cool temperatures is bringing forth an amazing harvest. Compost your cool-season crops that have nothing left to offer.

However, one cannot be sad for long, because other veggies will be reaching maturity. As Tomatoes and Peppers set first fruit, a light application of side dressing will keep plants robust while producing the maximum amount of fruit. Continue to harvest and weed as needed.

Keep an eye out for pests, especially aphids which are happiest on new plant growth. Look under the leaves, and watch for holes or yellowing of leaves to signal that you have visitors. Some beneficial insects that are natural enemies of aphids include ladybugs, lacewings, and parasitic wasps. You can order these online or inquire at your local garden center. Remember however, not all crawling things are pests. They are your friend if they eat what wants to eat your harvest. The goal is to keep your plants healthy, not eradicate all pests. If you are not sure what is a pest, contact the local AgriLife Extension Office for identification, and keep the good guys around.



Squash bug and eggs

The single, most important factor in a successful vegetable garden is water. Too much or not enough is never a good thing. Keep soil evenly moist. Add mulch to control evaporation and keep the ground cool. Make sure your water is getting past the mulch and into the depths of the soil. Do not mulch around Squash plants as mulch provides a hiding place for squash bugs.

If Tomatoes show signs of *Blossom End Rot* (BER), (sunken, brown, leathery bottoms where the blossom was), add calcium to the soil before the next crop is planted. BER results from cold ground, inconsistent water and wet weather turning dry so that the plant cannot take up and

distribute calcium throughout the fruit properly. BER usually affects the first set of tomatoes. Add calcium to the soil if you see signs of BER.

Flower Care: Continue to plant, water and deadhead flowers as needed. For fuller plants, pinch back Asters and Chrysanthemums. Establish new baskets for summer accents.

There are many flowers that can be seeded now through August, such as Cosmos, Marigolds, Ornamental Sweet Potato, Periwinkle, Portulaca, and Zinnias. Keep the old spent flowers pinched back to encourage reblooming.

There is still time to plant Mums for fall if you can obtain strong healthy container grown plants. Continue to pinch terminal growth on existing established plants to induce more branching.

Spider mites love hot, dry weather. Look for stippled leaves which may indicate the presence of spider mites. A strong stream of water or insecticidal soap should do the trick.

Don't cut back daffodil bulb foliage, as the foliage feeds the bulb. Let it brown or ripen on the plant before removal. If it is unsightly, try an old English tradition, and braid the drying foliage.



Trees and shrub Care: I love this time of year as trees take on a yellow hew one day, and seemingly the next, is full of leaves. Shrubs should be green and beautiful already. If a shrub had difficulty this past winter, have patients and give it time to really recover before cutting the dead branches back. Cut back no more than 1/3 of the shrub if you need to prune it back to health. Adequate organic mulch around trees and shrubs Helps conserve moisture and keep the soil cooler through the hot summer months. However, make sure the mulch does not touch the trunk so as to not produce rotting. Also, keep in mind that when watering, water as far out as the branches reach out.

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

Thin emerging fruit from trees in order to promote a healthy harvest. Remove fallen fruit and debris from beneath trees to eliminate sources of insects and fungus.



Grass Care: If your lawn has some low places in it, May is a good month for repair work. To repair your lawn, choose a soil which matches your native soil for the fill. Mow and fertilize the lawn prior to applying your selected soil. If needed, plant new sod or plugs. May is the last month to apply broadleaf weed killers before the weather becomes hot.

Once you have mowed your grass several times, and all the grass is in, you can start fertilizing. Continue to fertilize every six weeks in summer until September. Try to fertilize right before a rain or be sure to water well after fertilizing so you do not burn your lawn. Applying lawn fertilizer by hand is not recommended, as the results will be uneven and can damage the grass.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The *Henderson County Master Gardener Association's Monthly Gardening Guide*, features an amazing article in **May** on the topic of **Watering**.

Calendar of Events

May

- 5/05 – National Day of Prayer
- 5/08 – **Mother's Day**
- 5/16 – Full Moon
- 5/21 – Armed Forces Day
- 5/28 – Harvest Garden Event
- 5/30 – Memorial Day

June

- 06/06 – D-Day
- 06/14 – Flag Day
- 06/14 – Full Moon
- 06/16 – Harvest Garden Event
- 06/19 – **Father's Day**
- 06/21 – Summer Begins

Henderson County Master Gardener Association

~~ Members Page ~~



*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.

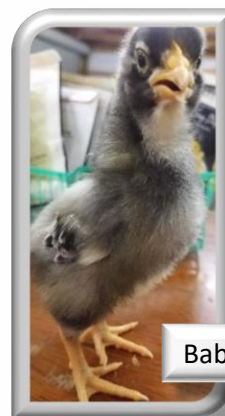
Harvest Garden: Member volunteers are welcome on Tuesdays 9am – 11am.

Inside Dirt: Member volunteers are welcome to contribute and send in articles, pictures, cartoons, gardening games, kid resources and upcoming events, to Susan Skomma at susanloves1life@gmail.com.

2022 HCMGA Meetings

- ✓ 10:00 am 3rd Wednesday of the month
- ✓ **Location:** St. Edwards Catholic Church 1310 S. Palestine Athens TX

May 18 th	September 21 st
June 15 th	October 19 th
July 20 th	November 16 th
August 17 th	December 21 st



Baby Bar Rock Rooster



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.

Amazon Smile Supports HCMGA while you shop!

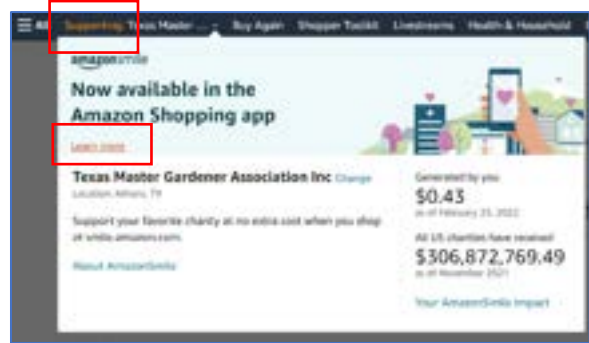
Amazon Smile How-To

Your donations help us provide free programs to our community.

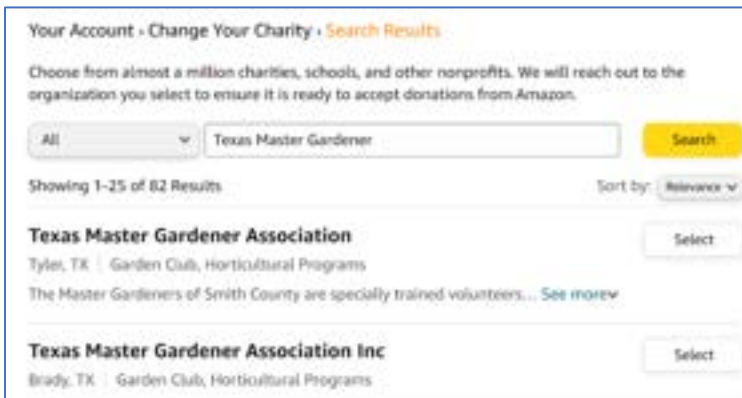
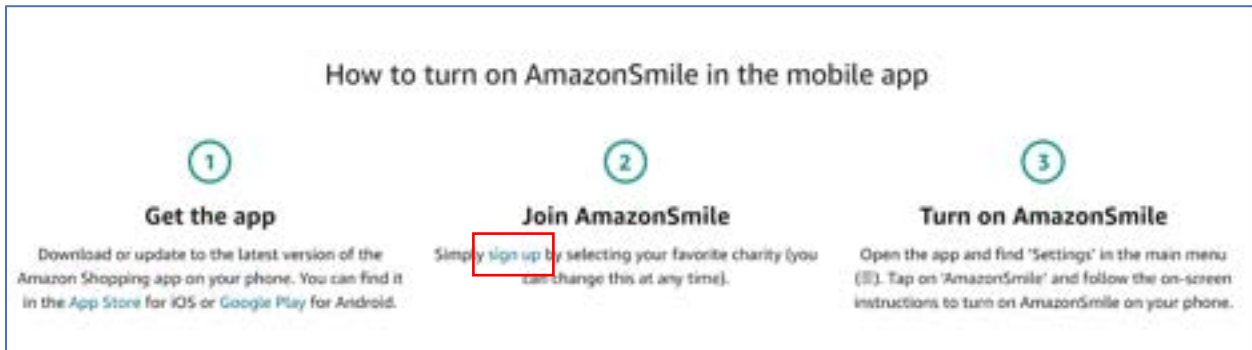
Go to the Amazon Smile site:

<https://smile.amazon.com/>

- In the menu bar, click “Supporting”,
- then in the drop-down box, click on “Learn More”



On the next screen, under number 2, click on “sign up”.



Search for “Texas Master Gardener” – in the search results, **scroll down until you see “Athens”** - click the “Select” button.

You did it!

Now, each time you shop, **shop from the smile.amazon.com site**. Five percent of all your qualified purchases will be donated to Henderson County Master Gardeners.





Did you know?

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

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

Please Share with Us!

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



Connect with Us:



HCmastergardener



hendersoncmga@gmail.com



Texas master gardeners



txmg.org/hendersonmg



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Hendersoncmga@gmail.com

2022 Officers

President, Dub Hirst

Past President, Yvonne Sparks

VP Program & Administration, Bob Erickson

VP Member & Community Ed., Deb Pascoe

Secretary, Sharon Barrett

Treasurer, Judy Haldeman

Historian, Barbara Thompson

Advisor, Spencer Perkins

Newsletter Editor, Susan Skommesa

Henderson County Master Gardeners Contact: Ariel Conway

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.