



# INSIDE DIRT



## Editor's Desk...

Susan Skommesa, Master Gardener

Welcome to the dead of summer gardeners!

Have you already forgotten the dreamy mild weather of spring? Hang in there because summer heat does not last forever! Look forward to our nice fall weather by seed starting your fall and winter garden. In this edition we'll explore preparing that garden, as well as many of the summer activities that Henderson County Master Gardeners have sponsored thus far this summer and those still to come. In addition, we share with you the state-wide recognition awarded to Henderson County Master Gardeners Association for last year's achievements in 4 categories of horticultural education (*page2*), the fun being had by the newest class of Master Gardener Interns (*page7*), and sooooo much more.

Lastly, it is in this edition every year that I take a moment to remind us all of garden safety. Heat stroke is a real thing, and gardeners are famous for wanting to *"just finish this one last thing so I don't have to come back out for a while"* (...or is that just me?). Be sure to check out that information on page 14 in the **July/August Gardening Tips** article for the prevention, signs and symptoms of heat exhaustion and heat stroke. In the meantime,



Humor Contribution by Sherry Sorrell, Henderson County Master Gardener

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE



- Editor's Desk ..... 1
- Master Gardeners Receive Awards ..... 2
- HCMG Projects ..... 2
- Harvest Garden Grand Opening Celebrated ..... 3
- Granddaddy Long Legs ..... 6
- Master Gardener Intern Project Day .... 7
- Popular Summer Series Returns .....9
- Monthly Gardening Guide ..... 9
- Preparing a Fall & Winter Garden .....10
- Members Page/ Meeting Dates .....13
- Butterfly Gardens, Herbs, & Pollinators ..... 14
- HCMGA's New Plant Library ..... 16
- July /August Gardening Tips ..... 17
- Reports on Plant Sale Purchases .....19
- Vacationing With a Gardener ..... 20
- Connect With Us, Contact Info, HCMGA Officers ..... 21



Harvest Garden Grapes!

# Master Gardeners Receive Awards

Lydia Holley, Master Gardener



On Tuesday, May 10, Texas Master Gardener Association announced the winners of the annual **Search for Excellence** awards. The awards recognized the projects and programs of Master Gardener Associations throughout the state during the 2021 year.

According to the state association's website, "Texas Master Gardener Association, in cooperation with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and Texas A&M University System, recognizes and presents awards for exemplary achievement." Henderson County Master Gardener Association (HCMGA) received awards in several categories.

In the Education Program category, HCMGA won first place for its Rainwater Harvesting Presentation. Master Gardeners Bob Erickson, Dub Hirst, John Maloch, Kelly McDowell, Sherry Sorrell, and Anne Wood organized and/or gave the presentation. During the program, a rainwater harvesting system was erected at the Harvest Garden, HCMGA's demonstration garden. The presentation was free and open to the public.

HCMGA's email newsletter, *The Inside Dirt*, won first place in the Written Education category. Susan Skommesa is the current editor and various Master Gardeners contributed to the newsletter. This email publication is free and available to anyone who wishes to receive information about gardening in East Texas. If you do not currently receive the newsletter, call 903-675-6130 or email [HendersonCMGA@gmail.com](mailto:HendersonCMGA@gmail.com) to sign up.

In the Youth Group category, HCMGA received second place for its Home School Herb Event. Pat Calderon, Michelle Crocker, Beverly Crow, Elizabeth Crowe, Alex Madison, Deb Pascoe, and Anne Reese put on this fun event aimed at introducing gardening to children.

In the Outstanding Association category, HCMGA came in second place in the Medium group size with 25 to 49 certified Master Gardeners. According to Texas Master Gardener Association, "the Outstanding Association category recognizes a Master Gardener Association that has completed at least one or more programs and/or projects of importance to the community" with at least two or more certified Master Gardeners contributing to the project or 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)

## 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.

# Harvest Garden Grand Opening Celebrated

Lydia Holley, Master Gardener



On Thursday, June 2, a crowd of people attended the Grand Opening celebrating the Harvest Garden, the Henderson County Master Gardener Association's demonstration and education garden.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Agent Spencer Perkins told those in attendance how he came up with the idea of a demonstration garden for the community after receiving numerous phone calls asking about information on growing fruits and vegetables in East Texas. Henderson County Judge Wade McKinney and Henderson County Regional Fairpark Manager Howard Calloway also delivered brief statements about the cooperation between the Extension Service, the Master Gardeners, and County Officials. They also expressed their delight at having such a project which will benefit the community.

As people strolled through the garden, Master Gardeners explained the various sections of the garden. Fruit trees, grapes, herbs, and vegetables are grown at the Harvest Garden, and there are areas for a cutting garden and a butterfly garden. Master Gardeners have already been giving demonstrations and educational lectures at the garden and have more planned soon.

Door prizes were given during the Grand Opening. Some people went home with fresh vegetables. Others inquired about becoming certified as a Master Gardener, and some picked up a Monthly Gardening Guidebook. All left with a smile. *(Editor's note: See the next page for information on the Monthly Gardening Guidebook.)*

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



Spencer Perkins,  
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Agent



Wade McKinney,  
Henderson County Judge



Howard Calloway,  
Henderson County Regional Fairpark Manager

More Pictures from the Harvest Gardening Grand Opening



More Pictures from the Harvest Gardening Grand Opening



# Granddaddy Long Legs

Lydia Holley, Master Gardener



Granddaddy long legs are one of the easiest creatures to identify, with lengthy appendages on a round, tick-like body. The “grand” part of their name is usually left off and most people just call them daddy long legs, although they are also known as harvestmen.

Even though they have eight legs, and people call them spiders, they are not spiders. They are related to spiders but daddy long legs do not have the segmented bodies spiders have, nor do they weave webs. They belong to the Opiliones order.

You may have heard the tale of their being the most venomous spider around, but in reality, they secrete only enough toxin for a small predator.

The most interesting fact about daddy long legs is

that they smell and breathe through their legs with specialized holes called spiracles. Which is odd placement, because daddy long legs can lose their legs but they do not grow back. (They cannot live if they lose both of the two legs which hold the spiracles, however.) Sometimes the detached leg will continue to twitch, a mechanism used to confuse its predator. Daddy long legs will actually drop their legs—no need to pull them off—as a means to escape predators.

If you watch daddy long legs closely, you will see that they always keep three legs on the ground as they are walking. This is called the alternate tripod gait. However, they can modify their stance to walk even when they are missing up to three legs. According to entomology researcher Ignacio Escalante at the University of California, Berkeley, daddy long legs have a 60% chance of losing a leg during its lifetime. Scientists are studying the way daddy long legs uses its legs for enhanced prosthesis and robotics.

Mostly eating dead insects and worms, daddy long legs are scavengers. I once saw one very gingerly approach a dead brown recluse spider. When the daddy long leg was certain the spider was dead, he proceeded to eat it. By the next morning, there was nothing left of the spider, although I did not actually witness the daddy long leg eating the spider’s entire skeleton.

You may find daddy long legs clustered together. Scientists do not know why they do this. They hypothesize it has something to do with warmth, humidity, or predator avoidance. I suppose they believe there is strength in numbers. Another type of predator avoidance is the up and down dance they do—possibly to look larger or scarier.

Just to confuse people, there really is a spider commonly called daddy long legs. This particular spider is also called a cellar spider or a vibrating spider. Despite using the same common name, you can instantly spot the difference between the two types of daddy long legs because the spider kind is segmented and it weaves a web. It also has fangs and venom, and can bite, but is supposedly not toxic enough to kill people.

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

# Master Gardener Intern Project Day



Master Gardener Interns, in conjunction with their mentors, met up with the Master Gardeners who weekly care for the Harvest Garden. As a team, their mission was to take care of those last-minute weeds, pruning, and plant labels that would finalize tidying up the Harvest Garden in anticipation of the **Grand Opening** event held on June 2<sup>nd</sup>. (See page 3 for the article on the Grand Opening.) In addition to their main goal, the interns also had a picnic, fun, lots of bonding with each other and other Master Gardeners, and gained volunteer hours toward their internship.

According to the Intern Coordinator and Master Gardener Claudia Durham, “This was so much fun. Interns were able to bond with each other & mentors & learn a great deal.”

This year, a new intern class begins August 19<sup>th</sup>. The deadline for application is August 11<sup>th</sup>.

If accepted into the Master Gardener program, applicants will receive over 50 hours in specialized training courses. The program offers instruction in lawn care; ornamental trees and shrubs; insect, disease, and weed management; soils and plant nutrition, vegetable gardening; home fruit production; garden flowers; perennials and annuals; and water conservation. The cost is \$150 and there will be a mix of online and in-person classes held on Thursday mornings.

Since the Master Gardener program is a volunteer organization, once the coursework is finished, interns then complete 50 volunteer hours to be certified. The mission for members, besides always learning and enjoying new friendships as they work together on projects, is to share their passion and horticultural knowledge with the community.

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



Enjoy more pictures from the Intern’s picnic work day.







# Popular Summer Series Returns

Yvonne Sparks, Master Gardener



The very popular Summer Series presented by Henderson County Master Gardeners is returning in July. Due to the pandemic, the three-part series was suspended. Presentations will be held in July, August, and September in various parts of the county.

The July presentation is focusing on **TURFGRASS MANAGEMENT**. All gardeners know it is hard to maintain a lush, green lawn during the hot, dry months of a Texas summer. Michael Potter will share his expertise in Turfgrass Management. Mr. Potter holds a B.S. in Plant and Soil Science from Texas A&M University Kingsville and a M.S. in

Agriculture Science from Texas A&M Kingsville. He assumed the role as County Extension Agent for Horticulture in Montgomery County in September of 2012. Prior to that, he served in as a Demonstration Assistant for 6 years and then as the Horticulture Agent in Nueces County since 2006.

From 1991 - 1997, Michael worked with the U.S. Department of Agriculture on the Big Island of Hawaii as a Plant Protection and Quarantine technician. Michael has worked in both the retail and wholesale nursery industry and self employed as a landscape designer from 1998-2001. His expertise lies in turfgrass management, environmental education, landscape design and water conservation.

Recently, Michael, was a presenter at the Texas Master Gardener Association 2022 State Convention. Master Gardeners are sure his insightful and knowledgeable expertise on turf will help Henderson County gardeners to learn the best way to maintain a sustainable and beautiful lawn throughout the year.

Join Master Gardeners on **July 14, 2022**, at The Library at Cedar Creek, 410 E. Cedar Creek Pkwy, Seven Points, TX 75143. The presentation will begin at **5:00 pm** and last an hour. Door prizes and Q & A with Mr. Potter and Master Gardeners will follow the presentation. For any questions, call the Henderson County Texas A&M AgriLife Extension office at (903) 675-6130.

Speakers and locations for the August and September presentations are TBD. Information about these presentations will be forthcoming as soon as possible.



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.

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)



# Preparing a Fall and Winter Garden

Susan Skommesa, Master Gardener

As November 15<sup>th</sup> rolls around in East Texas, gardeners everywhere will rush to harvest their produce. After all, November 15<sup>th</sup> is the average date for the first frost in Henderson County. The concern is that all will be lost once the first frost strikes. Despite frost, cold temperatures and even snow, your vegetable garden does not need to be a goner. You can extend the life of your garden with simple precautions. If you know the vegetables that actually like the cold weather, and give them a bit of extra protection, you can have a successful fall and winter garden.

Now is the time to plant starter plants, seed start, and direct sow your fall and winter vegetables in Henderson County. There are vegetables you'll want to harvest by the middle of November, and vegetables that will keep producing for you into the winter. I approach this subject from the perspective of raised beds as that is what I know. I will share how to prepare the bed, what and when to plant, and how to protect the plants at every stage.



2020 Harvest Garden: Frost Cloth

Once you've cleaned your beds of spent plants, refresh the nutrients in the soil with compost and organic fertilizers. Mix the compost and fertilizers into the top half foot of soil. Be sure to water the soil well before planting or sowing seeds. This allows the nutrients to travel deeper into the soil. In addition, moist soil is best for direct sowing and the well-being of new transplants.

Plan ahead to map out where your plants will go into your beds. The goal is to NOT plant vegetables from the same family, in the same location they occupied in the Spring/Summer Garden. For example, winter squash will draw squash bugs just like the summer squash did. Plant the winter squash in a different location. Cabbage worms that tried to destroy your cabbage crop in the spring, will eat cauliflower and broccoli this fall. In addition, diseases build up in the soil over time, and can cause significant problems later. Crop rotation reduces disease. If you were disappointed in crop production last season, have the soil tested. Once you understand your soil's Ph and mineral levels, you can correct for excesses or deficiencies.



Author's 2021 Garden: Kale

This summer heat has probably spent your tomato plants and maybe even the pepper plants. Start fresh. Replace all your spent plants with transplants. For example, fill your garden with transplants of tomato, pepper and eggplant, as well as southern peas, pumpkin, watermelon, winter squash, cantaloupe, lima beans and summer squash. There is still enough time to seed start these plants and transplant them when they are strong.

Some plants don't do well as transplants, but do best with direct seeding. For example, sweet corn and carrots like to be sown directly into the ground. In Henderson County, there is plenty of time to sow into your garden bed, since there are more than 120 days left until that highly anticipated first frost on

November 15<sup>th</sup>! 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, such as carrots, lettuce, radishes, etc.

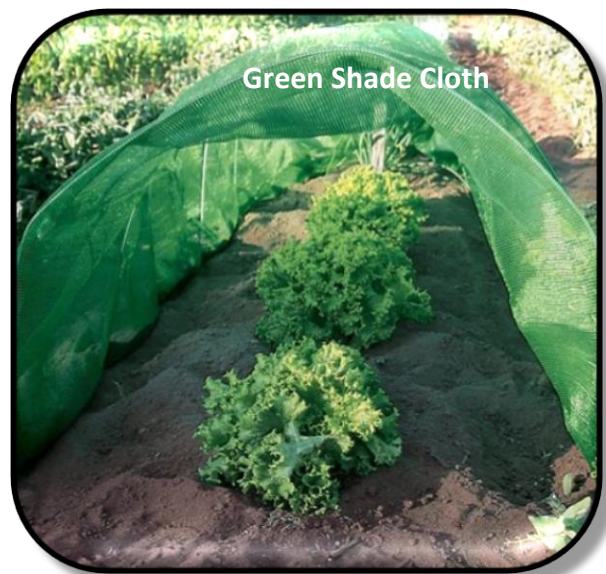
As mentioned earlier, sweet corn can be planted by August 15<sup>th</sup>. Transplant Cole plants such as broccoli, brussels sprouts, cabbage and cauliflower. You can sow the seeds now, and have transplants ready for mid-August. Before the end of August, plant the last set of bush and pole beans as well as cucumbers. In the middle of August, start sowing seeds for carrots, collards, English peas, and kale. They will love the cool weather of fall and early winter. During September and October plant chard, lettuce and spinach. They too love the cold.

Don't forget the root vegetables such as carrots, radish, beets, turnips, parsnips, and rutabaga. During cool to cold weather, these root vegetables can be stored right where they are growing in the ground. Harvest them as you need them, to make those warm and wonderful soups and stews that are so welcome in the winter. Don't know what to do with root vegetables? The internet is a great place for recipes. Root vegetables have long been the staple of many civilizations during famines and wars, since soup goes far to feed a lot of mouths for very little money.

In all of this talk of vegetable gardening for a fall and winter crop, don't forget to plant the Garlic in the ground, though it won't be ready for harvest until the leaves dry up in the spring. Go to a health food store and buy an organic garlic or two. Plant each clove separately, sprout side up. One year I planted 2 elephant garlics and got a hundred plants. In the spring, once the leaves were yellowed, I dug them up and laid them out on the grass to dry. Once dry, I wove their leaves together and hung them up from a hook. We had fresh garlic for 9 months before they started to wane.

### Special Garden Tips to Make It Through Tough Weather:

Blazing sun and intense heat make July and August tough months for sown seeds, seed starts and starter plants. The solution is to establish shade over the plants and water often. In the height of heat, take into consideration how well your soil holds water. You may need to water as often as every day. Check the moisture content of your soil by sticking your finger into the soil a good 2", or up to your knuckle. Be sure to water the soil at the base of the plant to make sure the plant is getting the water, and not the soil between plants where there are no roots. The easiest watering method is an automatic watering drip system on a timer. To keep careful watch over your new babies, be sure to visit daily if you are not watering with a hose. Remember to back off on the frequency with which you water as the temperature starts to drop. See the section in this article on **Helpful Resource Guides from Texas A&M University** for an article on the water requirements for different vegetables.



As we travel deeper into fall and winter, it is from frost and harsh cold temperatures that vegetable plants need protection and added help. As long as water droplets don't freeze and thaw on leaves, your vegetables are pretty safe from frost. To protect against early frost, consider keeping frost blankets on the ground alongside your vegetable beds, ready for when the frosty nights take you by surprise.

Longer term, if you want to grow salad greens, cruciferous and root vegetables through the winter, the garden will need more than a frost blanket. Consider making some kind of arched cover that seals the warmth into your garden as the sun hits the cover. Inexpensive

covers can be constructed from PVC pipe, clips, and greenhouse plastic, making an arched cover that can easily be taken off and put back on. Make sure it is constructed in ways that can be secured down to withstand wind and is manageable to remove and replace by yourself.

A fancier method is to make a glass windowed wood framed cover on hinges. These are called cold frames. You can find plenty of internet resources on how to construct them. Regions that experience deep winter snow, can grow greens, cruciferous and root vegetables very successfully in cold frames.



If you have never winter gardened before, consider tackling one bed, to give yourself fresh salad makings through the winter. Below, I have included links to resource guides that cover in more detail, most of what I've talked about in this article. Happy fall and winter gardening!

#### Helpful Resource guides from Texas A&M University:

- **Texas Home Vegetable Gardening Guide:** <https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/vegetable/files/2013/09/EHT-077.pdf>
- **Fall Gardening Guide:** <https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/vegetable/files/2013/09/EHT-056.pdf> (note that we are zone 3 on the maps in this guide.)
- **Compost in Vegetable & Fruit Production:** <https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/vegetable/guides/composts-vegetable-fruit-production/>
- **Planning a Garden:** <https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/vegetable/files/2013/09/EHT-074.pdf>
- **Planting Guide:** <https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/vegetable/files/2013/09/EHT-074.pdf>
- **Recommended Vegetable Varieties for Henderson County:** [https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/publications/veg\\_variety/select.php](https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/publications/veg_variety/select.php)
- **Information Sheets for Each Vegetable:** <https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/vegetable/easy-gardening-series/>
- **Watering Your Vegetables:** [https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/vegetable/files/2013/09/eht\\_024\\_watering\\_your\\_vegetables.pdf](https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/vegetable/files/2013/09/eht_024_watering_your_vegetables.pdf)

# Henderson County Master Gardener Association

## ~~ Members Page ~~

**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 Skommesa at [susanloves1life@gmail.com](mailto:susanloves1life@gmail.com).



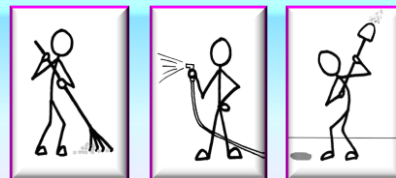
Harvest Garden Grapevine

### 2022 HCMGA Meetings

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

July 20 <sup>th</sup>	October 19 <sup>th</sup>
August 17 <sup>th</sup>	November 16 <sup>th</sup>
September 21 <sup>st</sup>	December 21 <sup>st</sup>

**July 20<sup>th</sup> Meeting Change of Location:**  
St. Edwards Catholic Church  
800 E. Tyler St. Athens TX 75751



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.

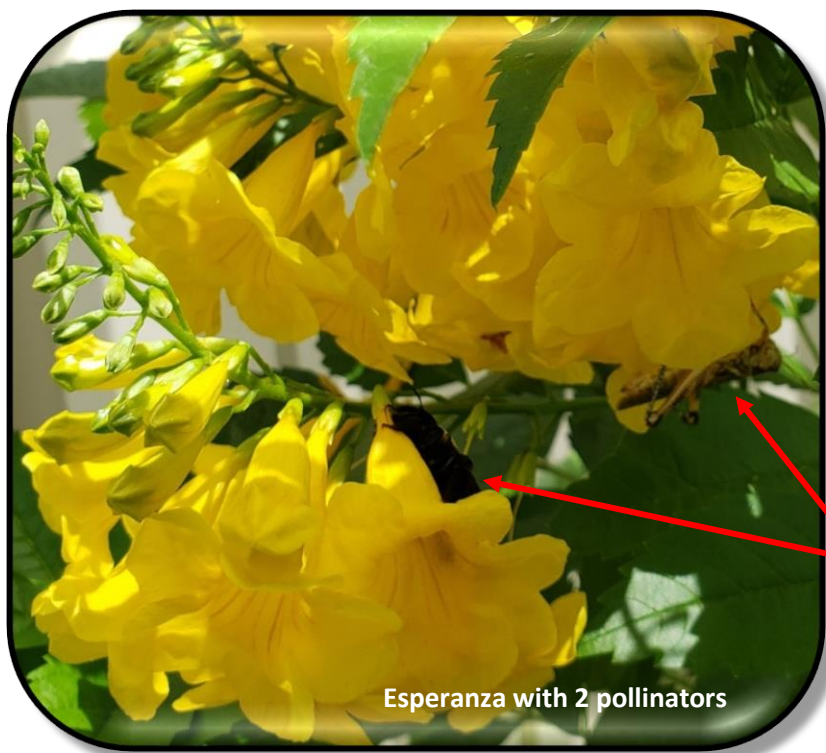


*Master Gardeners,  
remember to record  
your hours.*



# Butterfly Gardens, Herbs and Pollinators

Susan Skommesa, Master Gardener



Esperanza with 2 pollinators

Two recent events drew a nice crowd to the Harvest Garden in the months of May and June. In May, Brenda Clark, a 3<sup>rd</sup> year Smith County Master Gardener spoke on **Herbs**, and Ellen Sokolovic, a Henderson County Master Gardener, spoke on **Butterfly Gardens**. Brenda brought out interesting facts on growing herbs and how to use them, both dried and fresh. Ellen was truly mesmerizing as she taught about the body parts of the butterfly, their stages of life, and the types of plants they need to feed on at those various stages. In June, Master Gardener Janelle Cole spoke on **Pollinators**, focusing on bees. She was also tremendously fascinating. She talked about bee's body parts and how they procreate different bees for different jobs: the queen, drones, and worker bees. Who would have thought that bees and butterfly bodies could be so captivating?

One of the interesting aspects, that all three topics had in common, was the need for large swaths of color to draw the pollinators. Herbs need the pollinators to bloom and the butterflies, bees and other pollinators need colorful ribbons of nectar rich flowers to feed off of, which spreads pollen around and brings out the blooms.

Gardens and pollinators; they need each other, and we need them. As gardeners, it is important to know how to support the community of pollinators with water and nectar rich plants. In my first year of gardening, in my new home state of Texas, I was shocked at how beautiful my vegetable plants grew, yet set no fruit. In other locations I'd lived, I never "wasted" my time with ornamental plants, as over the years I'd never had a pollinating issue. I took the Henderson County Master Gardener course to find out what I was doing wrong. Pollinators were not on my radar; they never needed to be. After taking the class and realizing the problem, a farm up the street started selling honey. That year, all kinds of fruit set on my vegetables.





Speaker Janelle Cole,  
Master Gardener

I've wanted to have my own bees for years. Since the farm up the road is a bit over 3 miles, and we are at the edge of their radius, I drove to Dallas to take a class on beekeeping. I walked away from that class scared and overwhelmed, believing there was no way I was cut out to be a beekeeper.

Janelle Cole, the speaker on **Pollinators** in the June event, spoke so interestingly, clearly, simply, passionately on the subject, that my desire for my own hives returned. She did not intend to inspire me to become a beekeeper, but she did. This is the kind of reaction I've seen in others at all our Harvest Garden's educational events. At the start of the event, people may feel overwhelmed or intimidated at the prospect of pruning their fruit trees, managing garden pests, growing herbs, or starting a pollinator's (butterfly) garden. However, by the end of the event, I hear many express confidence that they can do this new thing they've always wanted to do.

The Harvest Garden is living out its purpose, as is the organization of Henderson County Master Gardeners. The passion is to convey what we know so that you know it too. If you want to become a Master Gardener, we have a class about to start in August. Give us a call at the number below. (See page 7 for more info.) If you want to learn more, but don't want to take the class, we have many more horticultural educational opportunities coming up. The next one is on **TURFGRASS MANAGEMENT**. (See page 9 for more info.) Visit our website regularly to see what is going on in the Summer Series and Harvest Garden. Nearly every month, we have something that just might inspire you.

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



Speaker Ellen Sokolovic,  
Master Gardener



Children Helping to plant  
the Butterfly Garden

# HCMGA's New Plant Library

Inside Dirt has an **ever-growing** plant library with information on hundreds of trees, shrubs, grasses, fruit trees, berries, vegetables and ornamentals. Follow the link <https://txmg.org/hendersonmg/plant-library/>, for access to the main index of plants. Find the plant you are looking for, and click on the link for a detail sheet that is similar to the one below. Each sheet contains the same topic categories: characteristics, culture, noteworthy characteristics, problems, and garden uses. This is a resource that continues to grow on a regular basis. Feel free to visit often.

## Beautyberry American

### *Callicarpa americana*



#### Characteristics

- Type: Perennial Shrub
- Zone: 6 to 10
- Height: 3 to 6 Feet
- Spread: 3 to 6 Feet
- Bloom Time: June to August
- Bloom Description: Lavender, pink
- Sun: Full Sun to Part Shade
- Water: Medium
- Maintenance: Medium
- Flower: Insignificant
- Attracts: Birds
- Fruit: Showy
- Other: Winter Interest
- Tolerate: Clay Soil
- Attracts: Birds
- Texas Native

#### Culture

Beautyberry American, a Texas native plant, prefers the soil of its natural forest floor habitat – a moist clay or sand enriched with organic matter. It will fruit most abundantly in full sun but may be grown in light shade. The plant needs minimal care once its roots are established. The foliage will be killed back to the ground in most winters. This will not affect the flowering as the plant blooms on new growth. In warmer areas, this shrub may be pruned back to about 2' less than the desired size. Propagate by cuttings or from seed.

#### Noteworthy Characteristics

*Callicarpa americana*, commonly called beautyberry, is a loose open shrub valued for its spectacular fruits. The relatively insignificant flowers develop into prolific bright violet to magenta berry-like drupes which encircle the stem. These fruits remain attractive for a long time although they are generally gone before severe winter weather.

#### Problems

Beautyberry is relatively disease and pest free.

#### Garden Uses

The size and loose open habit of beautyberry makes it best for the back of a shrub border where it may be massed in large landscapes or where it may be naturalized. Beautyberry plants are said to bear more fruit if several are planted together.

---

Courtesy of Missouri Botanical Garden Plant Finder



# July & August Gardening Tips

By Susan Skommesa, Henderson County Master Gardener

## In General:

Here is where I talk about Gardening safety in the heat. 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 of heat exhaustion 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 in the morning when it is a tad bit less hot.
- Set a realistic goal before you go out, as heat exhaustion or heat 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 needs to be done?

### 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.

With this heat, it may seem too soon to start to prepare for the fall garden, however July is the month. 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.



Cucumber plants in my raised bed day and

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.

### 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 and prune Blackberries. 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.

For more information on lawn care, be sure to attend the July presentation In the **Summer Series** on **TURFGRASS MANAGEMENT**. For more details on this event, see the article on page 9 of this issue of *Inside Dirt*.



## Reports on Plant Sale Purchases



Master Gardner Julie Yarber sent in this picture, noting *“this bee was enjoying my Henry Duelberg blue salvia that I bought from our plant sale in 2021”*.



Nancy Bruce, Master Gardener Intern, sent in this picture. She said, *“I used 4 of the plants I purchased at the Plant Sale to put in this container by my front door. I thought it turned out pretty nice. The plants I used were Canna Lily Peachy Melon, Sweet Potato Vine Lime, Moss Verbena, and Vinca Major Verigated”*.

# Vacationing With a Gardener

Lydia Holley, Master Gardener



If you will be vacationing with a gardener, here are a few tips to make them happy.

Botanical gardens are always nice to tour. Although non-gardeners may believe they are all alike, to a gardener, they will yield new plants to explore, research, and possibly acquire. There will be garden designs to imitate, pathway ideas, and edging options.

If you are bored with botanical gardens, take your gardener on an unusual farm tour. There are various ones around the country, and some can be quite surprising. For instance, organic vegetable farms may also offer a dinner option.

On a recent trip, I was delighted to find that Kentucky has several lavender farms. Looking for something romantic? Try a winery. You can also look for specialized farms such as daylily, peony, herbs, tropicals, or wildflowers.

National parks are a good way to appreciate nature. Many have hiking trails to explore. Do a little research beforehand and impress your gardener friend by pointing out some of the area's native plants. Boating or kayaking is another way to enjoy nature. Some parks may offer biking, horseback riding, snorkeling, rock climbing, or spelunking.

If you will not be near a national or state park, try to fit in a city or local park. Even taking a walk after dinner can allow your gardening friend to get close to plants.

A great souvenir to a gardener is a plant from the place you visited. No room to take home a plant? Purchase a pack of seeds from the local agricultural store. If you collect seeds or cuttings along your travels, however, be certain you are not introducing an invasive species. Identify the plant and check to see if it is listed on [invasiveplantatlas.org](http://invasiveplantatlas.org) or [invasive.org](http://invasive.org) for both Texas and the state the plant came from. You do not want to be introducing a monster like kudzu into your garden.

When you get back home, do not be offended if more plants are in your vacation photos than your family's faces. Even if you can only spare an hour or so out of your vacation plans to schedule in time to check out the area's plants, your gardener friend will be thrilled you thought of them.

Make a gardener happy. When on vacation, stop and smell the roses along the way.

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



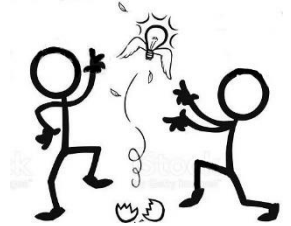
## Did you know?

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, Plant Library 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](mailto:susanloves1life@gmail.com).



## Connect with Us:



HCmastergardener



hendersoncmga@gmail.com



Texas master gardeners



[txmg.org/hendersonmg](http://txmg.org/hendersonmg)



### Henderson County Extension Office

Office: (903) 675-6130

Fax: (903) 677-7222

Courthouse 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, RM 300

100 E. Tyler St., Athens TX 75751-2547

[Hendersoncmga@gmail.com](mailto: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.