

Henderson County Master Gardener Association

March – April 2023



INSIDE DIRT

THIS ISSUE



President's Message

Susan Skommesa, Master Gardener

January and February have raced by at blinding speed, but no one I know is sorry that these months drive us right into spring!

This is the time to kick off, clean up, and get gardens going. The average last frost date is March 15th, so keep frost blankets handy and get ready to sow seeds and plant starters.

Whether we are talking about flowers, grass, shrubs, trees or vegetables, this edition has lots of ideas for you. In addition, extra Master Gardener help can be found at our events and through our social media, website, articles and Gardening Guide.

At our events we teach on horticultural topics you want to know more about. After the presentation, there is time to ask questions on any topic for which you need horticultural information. Our newspaper articles, website and social media are important so you can find our events as well as read interesting short articles on similar topics. I'll put links to all of these on the next page.

We have a **Harvest Garden** in the **Henderson County Regional Fair Park Complex**. Just look for the hoophouse off to the right of the driveway This is where we grow the flowers, herbs, fruits, vegetables, and berries we talk about in our educational events.

During the summer months, when outdoors at the Harvest Garden is just too hot, come find us on Saturday mornings at our booth at the **Athens Farmer Market**. In addition, we host 3



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fabulous horticultural **Summer Series** events held at various locations throughout Henderson County.

Now for the drum roll and the big news: the **Library Series returns!** The **Library Series** needed to shut down due to covid, but it is time to bring it back. Held at the Athens Library, at 12 noon the 2nd Wednesday of the month, **it is free and open to the public**. So...



Library Series

MARCH 8th: **Square Foot Vegetable Gardening**, presented by Master Gardener Susan Skommesa

APRIL 12th: **Details coming soon** – watch the website for details
<https://txmg.org/hendersonmg/events/>

TIME
12:00 pm Noon

Location

Henderson County Clint W. Murchison Memorial Library
121 S. Prairieville
Athens, TX 75751
903-677-7295



Plant Sale

Save the Date and see page 3 for more details!

Online start time: April 7, 9:00 am

Online end time: April 15, 8:00 pm



Learn About Upcoming Events

- In each issue of *Inside Dirt*
- Our Facebook page, [Henderson County Master Gardener - Home | Facebook](#)
- Our website <https://txmg.org/hendersonmg/>
- Our newspaper articles in **Athens Review**
- and through announcements delivered to your inbox. (To sign up for our emails contact us at: hendersonCMGA@gmail.com)

HCMGA Projects

- **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.
- **Inside Dirt:** The mission of HCMGA newsletter, *Inside Dirt*, is to educate the community on gardening topics. In this free newsletter, we feature educational articles, events the public can attend, and an inside look as to what it means to be a Master Gardener. Past issues are kept on file on our website at: <https://txmg.org/hendersonmg/resources/inside-dirt/>
- **Weekly Newspaper Articles:** HCMGA contributes gardening articles to local newspapers. You can find back articles on our website at: <https://txmg.org/hendersonmg/publicity/>
- **Library Series:** Educational presentations are hosted by the HCMGA on the second Wednesday of each month. These programs are open to the public at the Clint W. Murchison Memorial Library in Athens. For up to date information <https://txmg.org/hendersonmg/events/>

Announcing

Henderson County Master Gardeners



2023 Plant Sale



Judy Haldeman and Elizabeth Crowe, Master Gardener Co-Chairs 2023 Plant Sale

The Henderson County Master Gardener Association is hosting its third annual online Plant sale starting April 7. An email containing all plants available for sale will be distributed in late March. The Plant List will provide a photo, common name, scientific name, and general information about the plant including growing conditions. Information on selected plants is displayed throughout this newsletter. See an example of a plant card at the bottom of this article.

Persons already receiving emails from the Texas AgriLife office will receive the Plant List email and future updates. Anyone wanting to receive Plant Sale information and future updates may request to be added to our email list by sending a message to hendersoncmga@gmail.com.

Schedule for the 2023 Online Plant Sale:

Online start time:	April 7, 9:00 am
Online end time:	April 15, 8:00 pm
Early Pick-up Dates:	April 12-14 and April 17, 18, & 20, from 9:00-11:30 am 518 Cardinal Dr. (Greenhouse on the west side of the TVCC campus)
Final Pick-up Date:	April 22, Time is TBD TVCC Pavilion, located west of the TVCC gym

A wide variety of plants are available for sale, including Perennials, Annuals, Bulbs, Indoor Plants, and Texas Native plants (some plants are native to East Texas). Many plants in the sale attract pollinators, bees and are host plants for various butterflies.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS for the opening of the online sale. A link for the online shop will be sent prior to April 7.

More information is on our website:

<https://txmg.org/hendersonmg/>

and Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/HCMastergardener> page.

Candy Lily *Pardancanda*



- Type: Perennial
- Zone: 5 to 9
- Height: 12-18" Spread: 9-12"
- Bloom Time: July to August
- Blooms: Yellow, orange, pink, purple and red
- Maintenance: Low Flower: Showy
- Tolerate: Dry Soil, Shallow-Rocky Soil
- Sun: Full sun to part shade
- Water: Dry to medium

Take Time to Dream

...The HCMGA April Plant Sale Can Help...

By Lydia Holley, Master Gardener



New growth is spurting out of the ground. Little leaves are appearing on previously bare branches. Soon, the garden will be full of blooms. So, what should you be doing right now? In addition to numerous chores, take time to dream. Think about your plan. And compare the garden you have to the one in your mind.

Make note of the plants which died over the winter. Consider what you will replace them with. Take a good look at your established plants. Do some of them need to be cut back, pruned, trimmed, or lowered? Have some of them increased so much they need to be divided?

Take a moment to look overhead. Have your trees grown so much they have shaded previously sunny areas? Or do you need to

add more trees to your landscape? Do you have sufficient companion plantings? Do they all fit with your color scheme?

You may have plantings which are sickly or not thriving. If so, you may need to consider replacing them. Make certain your new plantings keep within your overall plan for your garden.

But even if your plants are thriving, they may need to be replaced if they do not reflect the vision of the garden in your dreams. Even if plants are healthy, if they do not give you pleasure and get you closer to the garden in your mind, get rid of them. That is one of the hardest things for gardeners to do—to get rid of plants which are healthy. However, you may be able to salvage them. Move them to containers. Move them to another area, again making certain they are within the goals of that particular area. Or, give them to a friend. Your friend will be thankful and you will be a step closer to the garden you truly want.

Sometimes we have to remember it is not the amount of money we spent on a plant which makes it valuable. It is the way the plant integrates into your landscape and harmonizes with your vision.

Do not settle for a garden that is just alive. Work toward your ideal landscape. And to do that, you have to take time to dream.

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

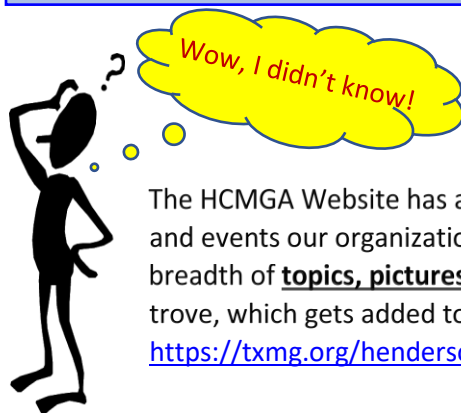
Resources for Native Plants

Filling your garden with native plants may seem like quite the challenge. Which plants are native? Where do you find them? How do you care for them? The HCMGA **Monthly Gardening Guide** has an article on Earth-Kind from Texas **A&M AgriLife Extension**. In that article are listed many native grasses, groundcovers, perennials, shrubs and trees of all sizes, as well as vines. The index lists about 325 plants, trees, shrubs, and vines, by both their common name, as well as their scientific name. The natives all have stars next to them. Here are a couple more awesome resources:

- Henderson County MG Plant Sale: <https://txmg.org/hendersonmg/> Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/HCMastergardener>
- Native Plant Society of Texas: <https://npsot.org/wp/>
- Ladybird Johnson Wild Flower Center: <https://www.wildflower.org/magazine/landscapes/natural-accents> - click on "South Central Plains"
- Texas A&M AgriLife Extension: <https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/earthkind/> and <https://agrilifeextension.tamu.edu/solutions/best-plants-trees-grow-texas-landscapes/>
- Texas A&M Agriculture Program: <https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/ornamentals/nativeshrubs/>
- Texas A&M East Texas Gardening: <https://easttexasgardening.tamu.edu/east-texas-home-gardening/plants-for-east-texas/>

Members and Friends Raising money for HCMGA

HCMGA heartily thanks all who have contributed to our organization through **Amazon Smile**. **Amazon** is terminating the program. If you would like to continue to contribute, **join us for our plant sale**, and let your family and friends know too.



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/>

Have you seen our videos on Facebook? Go check them out at

<https://www.facebook.com/HCMastergardener>

A New Green HouseWith Hoophouse Tendencies

By Susan Skommesa, Master Gardener

In the previous article, *Take Time to Dream*, Lydia Holley talks about taking time to dream about what you want your garden to look like. In her article she talks about making changes if what your garden looks like does not fit your vision, even if what you are growing is healthy and doing well. I heartily agree with Lydia, as I have made huge changes along

the way. Sometimes gardening is trial and error. Making changes is just what gardeners do. I have always loved raised bed gardening. I am on my 3rd generation of raised beds.

When I moved here, my first in-the-ground garden was ravaged by gophers. It maddened me that I couldn't plant directly in the ground, as my property in Van Zandt County has rich sweet-potato soil. Be that as it may, one must do what one must do. So, for the next season, in my fight against the gophers, my husband and I made raised beds. I laid down hardware cloth, weed cloth, painted the outside of the boxes my favorite yellow, and tackled another

growing season.

The boxes worked well for almost 4 years and then needed to be replaced as they were falling apart from rot. At about that time my knees had gotten very bad and I was in desperate need of knee replacement surgery. In anticipation of this, I took apart the rotting yellow raised beds and my husband and I built 2 new beds that are 3 feet wide, 14 feet long, and sit 3 feet high. The purpose of the height was to accommodate how difficult it had become for me to bend at the knees. Sometimes change in the garden is needed to facilitate physical limitations.



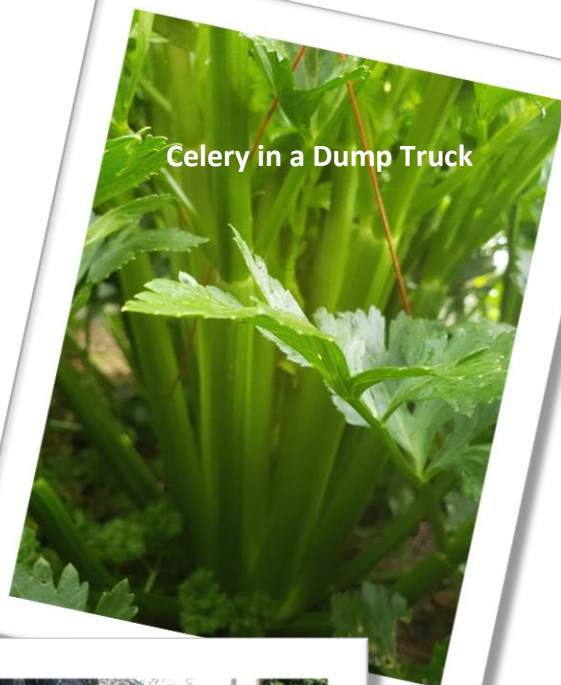


We nicknamed the boxes “The dump trucks”. They work well. Veggies grow great as you can see in the pictures. The arched structures on the far box support shade cloth and plastic, accommodating the intense sun of summer and the frosts of spring and fall.

To build the boxes, we used metal roofing scavenged from some structures I took down when we first moved in, and framed each box out in 4”X 4”s. The boxes are deep, so they are loaded on the bottom two-thirds of the box with

decaying tree stumps, branches, leaves, etc. I made soil from the compost pile in the henyard, enhanced with manure contributed by my neighbor’s cows. The only real ‘mistake’ I made was to not put weed cloth between the logs and the soil as each season I need to add at least another foot of good growing soil. To finish off the soil in the boxes, I mixed in the rich well composted soil from the 5 yellow 4’x4’ raised beds that I’d been growing vegetables in for the previous 3-ish years.

I discovered though, that 2 boxes weren’t enough real-estate for me. I suppose that’s the hazard of being a veggie-loving-grower. Soooo, I again, planted in the ground near the boxes. And again,



my plants got killed not only by gophers, but also by a goat and bunnies! The goat is not even mine!

The solution was clear. It was time to build a greenhouse.

We built the greenhouse over the same plot of land where I'd planted the garden. The total dimensions of the greenhouse are 14'x22'.

Inside the greenhouse I have two 22' beds going down either side, with a planting table down the middle. Cow panels hang on the studs that make up the walls, which will be used for trellising and plant support. We still

need to run electricity and irrigation, but in the meantime, an extension cord and a hose work great.

I wanted to build a combination of functions found in both the greenhouse and the hoophouse, in order to grow all year long, seed start early, and protect my garden from bunnies, goats and gophers. The walls have strips of wood screwed down over the plastic at each stud, holding the plastic in place. In the summer, I can unscrew the strips of wood on the long walls, fold up the plastic and store the wood strips, screws and plastic till winter. I have plenty of ways I can hang shade cloth as needed.

Here is how it was built. First, we laid a cement foundation. Every few years during the rainy season, this area of our property floods out, as the gophers periodically connect our yard with our neighbor's pond.



First, we created wooden forms in which to pour concrete. We did a lot of leveling (using a 6' level) by adding or taking away dirt and grass. The wood cross braces holding the inner boards from the outer boards provided stability for the form.

In this picture you can see the concrete base, as well as the studs framing out the walls and door.



The main beam for the roof and a few rafters are up. The door frame is complete leaving a vent area at the peak.



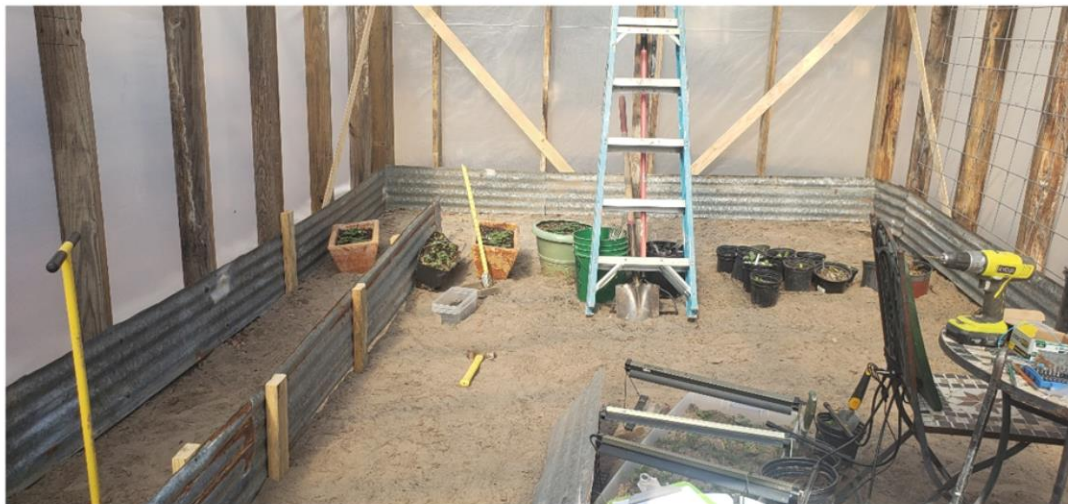
All the rafters are up and framing is complete.





Plastic is being rolled out on the roof. The plastic is pulled tight rafter by rafter. A wood strip is screwed on each rafter, securing the plastic as we go.

A similar process secures the plastic to the studs on the walls. Again, the plastic is pulled tight stud by stud and a wood strip is screwed on each stud, securing the plastic as we go.



2 ½ foot wide metal siding was cut down the middle to make beds 1 ¼' deep. This is more than enough depth for carrots.

Metal was secured to the 2"x4" that sits on top of the concrete foundation that frames the bottom of each wall, as well as to the studs, all the way

around the interior on all sides. An opposite wall was created to complete the bed, using 2"x4 stakes that the metal was secured to. These stakes also hold the top rail. The beds currently go down both sides, but not across the back. A bed on the back wall can be created later if wanted. At this time, that space will have shelving for starter plants, outfitted with grow lights and heat mats.



This view is from the back of the green house toward the door. The beds are complete but not yet filled with soil. A potting bench runs down the center of the room.




This view is from the front of the green house toward the back. The beds are filled with potting soil. There are some lettuces, chard, beets, carrots, cabbage growing on the left side. You can see the baby plants have broken through the soil. The nearest side of the potting bench that runs down the center of the room has 2 trays of potatoes ready for planting. The ants have already found their way in. The white powder along the base of the right bed is diatomaceous earth.



In this entrance picture to the left, you can see how the beds are along the front wall as well, right up to either side of the door. There are 2 fans, one at either end of the greenhouse. They slightly face opposite walls so air will circulate. You can also see that I've installed lighting along the beam and a power strip is attached to the potting table where I can plug in heat mats and charge my cellphone and speaker. As mentioned earlier, we'll be installing a watering system and electrical so we don't have to run a hose or cord from the house as we currently do. Ultimately, we'll install gutters and collect rainwater to nourish the plants.



Coleus 'Fairway Mix'
Solenostemon scutellarioides 'Fairway Mix'



- Type: Annual
- Zone: 10 to 11
- Height: 10-15 Inches
- Spread: 10 Inches
- Bloom Time: Flowers not showy
- Bloom Description: Mixed depending on variety
- Sun: Part shade to full shade
- Water: Medium Maintenance: Low

Plant Sale Information Cards





**April 7 - 15
2023**

Online Plant Sale



Scan this!

For updates, check our website or call us:
<https://txmg.org/hendersonmg/> **(903) 675-6130**

Cashmere Bouquet
Clerodendrum bungei



- Type: Perennial
- Zone: 7 to 10
- Height: 3'-6' Spread: 3'-6'
- Bloom Time: July to October
- Bloom: Pink (Showy, Fragrant)
- Sun: Full sun to part shade
- Leaf: Fragrant Tolerate: Drought
- Water: Medium
- Maintenance: Medium

Rain Lily- Pink
Zephyranthes grandiflora-pink



- Type: Perennial
- Zone: 7 to 11
- Height: 9-12" Spread: 12-18"
- Bloom Time: July to August
- Bloom: Pink with white throats
- Sun: Full sun to part shade
- Water: Medium
- Flower: Showy Maintenance: Medium

Plant Sale Information Cards

March & April Gardening Tips

In General:

As of this writing we are in the midst of beautiful “get-the-gardens-ready” weather. We had a few short freezes this past winter. The question is clearly: “Were there enough chill hours for the fruit trees this year?”

The status of blossoms we cannot answer at this point, but chill hour data for our region is available at <https://etweather.tamu.edu/chill/>.

There are two ways to calculate chill hours. Basically, the first method counts the number of hours between 32°F and 45°F, whereas the second method counts anything below 45°F.

Chilling Hours for the 2022-2023 Season October 1, 2022 thru February 28, 2023		
	Method 1 No of Hrs ≥ 32 & ≤ 45 F	Method 2 No of Hrs ≤ 45 F
Oct	35	38
Nov	214	231
Dec	180	290
Jan	236	269
Feb	149	180
TOTAL	814	1008

The counting of chill hours, completed on February 28th, are reflected on the chart from the Overton Center’s TAMU website <https://etweather.tamu.edu/chill/>

Are there enough chill hours for the fruit trees to produce fruit?

Texas A&M AgriLife recommends varieties for east Texas that require no more than 800-900 chill hours. If your fruit trees are among the recommended varieties, there may have been just enough hours.

A list of the recommended varieties can be found on pages 63-64 of the **Henderson County Master Gardener Association Monthly Gardening Guide**.

Fact sheets on how to care for fruit trees can be found on line at the TAMU website <https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/fruit-nut/>

If you do not have a **Henderson County Master Gardener Association Monthly Gardening Guide** in which to look up Texas A&M AgriLife recommended varieties for our area, contact the Henderson County Extension Office, 3rd floor of the Courthouse in Athens TX at (903) 675-6130 or email us at hendersonCMGA@gmail.com.

Plant Sale Card

Coneflower ‘Purple’ *Echinacea purpurea*

- Type: Perennial
- Zone: 3 to 8
- Height: 2.00 to 5.00 feet
- Spread: 1.50 to 2.00 feet
- Bloom Time: June to August
- Bloom Description: Purplish pink
- Sun: Full sun to part shade
- Water: Dry to medium
- Maintenance: Low



Veggie and herb Care:



Herbs: You can start herbs either through seed, division or propagation. When starting annual and biennial herbs, if not starting seeds indoors, start outside after the last frost. In general, you can propagate herbs via cuttings, by taking 4"- 6" cuttings in the spring for rooting. You can propagate perennial herbs via division. Simply separate the plants, in the early spring, into 3 to 4 clumps. If you grow more than you can use, you can always dry your fresh herbs. Doing so will mean herbs for the rest of the year.

Veggies: Cool-season crops should be in the ground by March 1. Sow seeds for summer vegetables and put in transplants after the average last frost date (March 15 for Henderson County). Again, be ready to cover them in case of a late frost.

Here are some general dates for planting veggies: Starting in **early March**, plant Bush Beans, Cucumber, Summer Squash, and Winter Squash. Starting in **mid-**

March, start planting Lima Beans (bush and pole), Pole Beans, Cantaloupe, Eggplant, Pepper transplants, Summer Muskmelons, and Watermelon. In **early April**, plant Pumpkin and Sweet Potato slips. In **mid-April**, plant Southern Peas and Okra. How is that for variety?

Flower Care:

This might sound silly, but though I love flowers, I didn't think they were worth planting - because you can't eat them! Oh, how wrong I was. Not only are they beautiful and mesmerizing when looking deeply at their details, but they bring pollinators. If you are a veggie gardener, you need your pollinator magnets planted all around your veggie garden. These visitors, that may be highly drawn to a vining South Carolina Jasmine, will stop by to enjoy your cucumber flowers. In so doing, you increase your cucumber harvest!

So let's talk flowers: How about planting Dahlia and Caladium tubers? Or Gladiolus? I bet your porch would love hanging baskets of Begonias, Impatiens, Petunias, and other annuals. Just be prepared to bring them indoors as weather dictates.



Bulbs like Crocus and Daffodils are awake! A tip on Daffodils: when they start to wear out, don't remove the Daffodil bulb foliage, as the foliage feeds the bulb; therefore, it should brown or "ripen" on the plant before removal. If Daffodil foliage interferes with neighboring plants or become unsightly, braiding the foliage is an old English tradition!

The Caladium is a warm weather plant and does best when planted after the soil warms up to an average of 70 degrees or more, which could be within the next few weeks, or as late as May. To be safe you may want to wait until Mother's Day. Even though Caladiums like warm temperatures, they prefer cool, moist, and well-drained soils. The tubers should be planted approximately one and one-half to two inches deep and from 12 to 18 inches apart in loose, organic soil.

Be sure to plant spring and summer annuals after danger of frost and freeze.

Great ground cover plants include Confederate Jasmine, Dwarf Junipers, English Ivy, Liriope, and Vinca.

Come April, it should be safe to plant most ornamentals. Select and plant Mums for fall blooms. If planted now, Mums have time to develop deep roots before winter. However, the plant's tips should be lightly trimmed back through spring and summer to delay blooming until fall.



Trees and shrubs:

Once your trees and shrubs start to respond with new growth, finish pruning summer-flowering trees and shrubs. Prune evergreen shrubs and spring-flowering shrubs and trees after they have bloomed. Fertilize Azaleas and Camellias after they have finished blooming. Add more organic mulch underneath Azaleas and Camellias and other shrubs as needed. Begin fertilizing Roses every 4-6 weeks until September.

When fertilizing trees be sure to apply in the area beneath the ends of the tree branches and not against the trunk.

It is recommended not to use an all-in-one weed and feed product as they rarely coincide as to when it's time to weed and when it's time to feed.

Grass Care:

In March, while there is still the possibility of the temperatures dipping below freezing, hold off planting warm-season grasses. It may be a good idea to send in a lawn soil sample for testing, if it has been more than 2 years since you last did so.

Once your clover is big and plentiful, and you are without the advantages of cattle, it is time to mow...as soon as it is dry enough to do so. But really, mowing doesn't become a regular job until April. Did you know that there are recommended heights for your mower given the type of grass you have? Here they are:

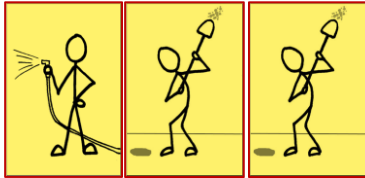
- ✓ **Common Bermuda** 1 to 1 1/2 inches
- ✓ **Hybrid Bermuda** 1/2 to 1 inch
- ✓ **Centipede** 1 to 2 inches
- ✓ **St. Augustine** 2 to 3 inches
- ✓ **Zoysia** 1/2 to 1 1/2 inches

Plant Sale Card



Henderson County Master Gardener Association

~~ Members Page ~~



Did you join HCMGA to meet people, belong and learn? There is no better way to meet people and learn than to join in and work on a project. If you are not connected 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 connected today!

2023 HCMGA Meetings

- 11:00 am 3rd Wednesday of the month
- **Location:** St. Edwards Catholic Church 1310 S. Palestine Athens TX

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



*Master Gardeners,
remember to
record your hours!*



Member and Intern Requirements:

Members need:

- ✓ 12 hours of volunteer service
- ✓ 6 hours of continuing education
- ✓ attendance at a minimum of 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.

Mark Your Calendars for Next Year

East Texas Fruit, Nut & Vegetable Conference

By Sherry Sorrell, Master Gardener

On Friday, January 13, 2023, Texas A&M Agrilife Extension hosted their annual **East Texas Fruit, Nut and Vegetable Conference** in Tyler. The conference was well-attended with over 170 gardeners eager to hear information on growing in East Texas. Last year's event had fewer than 100 attending, so it is clear that home food production is a fast-growing sector in horticulture education. Expert speakers gave humorous presentations, so the 7-hour conference kept all attendees engaged.



Dr. David Creech, Professor Emeritus at Stephen F. Austin University, spoke on **Growing Figs in East Texas**.

From “what exactly is a fig?” to what are the best varieties for your area, and recommendations on planting, growing, and maintaining your fig, Dr. Creech has all the answers. He recommends the article “**Love the Fig**” by Ben Crair published in **The New Yorker**.

Dr. Tim Hartman, Assistant Professor & Extension Specialist – Fruit Crops, shared his expertise on **Growing Peaches and Plums**. What are the best varieties for East Texas as well as pests and diseases to watch out for were just a few of the topics he shared with the crowd.

Muscadines and Bunch Grapes were the subject of a presentation by Michael Cook. Michael is the Viticulture Program Specialist II at the Texas A&M North Texas Agrilife Extension Service. How did European grapes come to Texas? What is Pierce’s Disease, and which grapes are resistant to it? Best wine grape vs best eating grape. Michael Cook shared all these.

Four Generations of Selling Fruits, Nuts and Vegetables in East Texas was presented by Dr. Andrew King of King’s Nursery in Tenaha, TX. His family has been growing and selling fruit and nut trees since 1915. Dr. King spoke on how his family business has changed the nursery industry, and on the newest varieties of pears, persimmons, plums, peaches, figs, etc.

The day was wrapped up by Greg Grant, Senior Extension Agent – CEA Horticulture in Smith County. Mr. Grant gave a funny presentation on **Feeding a Family from a Home Vegetable Garden**. He had the crowd laughing at the end of the day, and he was serious about where, when and how to plant your garden. Did you know the same 3-1-2 fertilizer you use on your lawn is also good for your vegetable garden?

Breakfast nibbles and lunch were served too, and coupled with the fantastic learning, the day was well worth the \$25 registration fee. So, make a note in your December calendar to be on the lookout for the 2024 conference announcement. It filled up fast!

LIBRARY SERIES RETURNS!



MARCH 8th: *Square Foot Vegetable Gardening*, presented by Master Gardener Susan Skommesa (See Pictures below)

APRIL 12th: *Details coming soon* – watch the website for details
<https://txmg.org/hendersonmg/events/>

12:00 pm Noon

Henderson County Clint W. Murchison Memorial Library
121 S. Prairieville
Athens, TX 75751
903-677-7295



Square Foot Gardens
March 8th!

Monsters in the Garden

By Lydia Holley, Master Gardener



Forget about monsters hiding under the bed or in the closet. Worry about the monsters lurking in the garden. Although I have avoided some monsters, I have introduced others into my landscape. You may have them in your garden, too.

One of my monsters is 'New Dawn' climbing rose. What makes it a monster? Its vicious thorns. This rose reaches out and catches people as they walk under her arched support. She scratches and bites whenever I prune her. And she grows so quickly, she has to be pruned twice a year or she will take over. There are, of course, other climbing roses which are not monsters. Some are quite tame. I

absolutely adore 'Peggy Martin' climbing rose, which is considered thornless and is easy to take care of.

Sweet autumn clematis (*Clematis terniflora*) is another monster of mine. It is quite beautiful, and with the words 'sweet' in its name, I never expected it to become a monster. It is fairly easy to keep tamed, but it must be cut to the ground every spring or it, too, would overtake the support it is climbing on. I have seen this plant growing wild in the woods, so it is not something you want to let loose. Other, tamer clematis will grow and produce beautiful flowers and some do not need to be pruned often, if at all. Do your research if all you want is a companion plant to climb and bloom among other plantings.

Wisteria is another monster. Beautiful. Fragrant. And enticing. But beware. It must be pruned to keep it from reaching places you do not want it to go or becoming so strong it tears down its support. Left to itself, it will take over tall trees and spread across their canopies. American wisteria (*Wisteria frutescens*) is less vigorous than the Asian wisterias, even though it can grow up to 40 feet. Still, if you must have wisteria, American wisteria is worth looking for.

You may have different monsters in your garden. If you do, treat them with the respect and care they require and do not let them get out of control. You do not want to end up with a garden that gives you nightmares.

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

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