

Inside Dirt



A Note from our President

By Susan Skommesa

Wow. The year is drawing to a close. If you are working on a winter garden you are probably pretty busy. If you like to take a winter break and are cleaning your tools, you may be sad to think that in several weeks most of your garden color may be gone. Not to fear! HCMGA is selling pansies! If you miss our online sale, come to our **Fall Family Flower Festival** to buy your winter color, hear speakers on the topics of **Wild Flowers** and **Winter Garden Color**, while your kids enjoy bounce houses, face painting and origami workshops. A variety of food trucks will offer sustenance while your family has fun. **See you there!**



Find us online! <https://txmg.org/hendersonmg/>

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

Upcoming Events

Fall Family Flower Festival

11/04/23 @ 9am-2pm

Don't Miss It!
Details on Page 3

Regular Meeting 11/15/23 @ 11am

Awards Meeting 12/20/23 @ 11am

El Niño Winter Predicted for East Texas

The effects of El Niño in East Texas during the winter months can vary. In general, it tends to bring certain predictable changes:

- Warmer and Wetter Conditions: El Niño often leads to milder and wetter winters.

The increased sea surface temperatures in the Pacific Ocean can influence the jet stream, causing it to shift southward. This shift can result in more frequent and stronger low-pressure systems, which can bring increased rainfall and relatively mild temperatures to the region.

- Increased Risk of Flooding: The combination of above-average rainfall and milder temperatures can elevate the risk of flooding in East Texas. Soil becomes saturated more easily, and rivers and creeks may overflow their banks.
- Reduced Risk of Freezing Weather: El Niño tends to suppress the occurrence of freezing temperatures and winter storms in East Texas. While cold snaps can still occur, they are generally less severe and less frequent during El Niño events.
- Impact on Agriculture: The milder winter conditions can be both advantageous and challenging for agriculture in East Texas. While reduced risk of frost damage can benefit some crops, excessive rainfall can lead to waterlogged fields and increased disease pressure.
- Tornadoes: In some El Niño years, there is an elevated risk of severe weather, including tornadoes. The increased moisture and instability in the atmosphere can create conditions conducive to severe thunderstorms.



Inside:

Nov/Dec Gardening Hints • P2

Good Time for Pruning • P2

Fall Family Flower Festival • P3

Harvest Garden News • P3

Butterscotch & White Chocolate
Crunch Recipe • P4

Fresh Apple Bread Recipe • P4

Gift Ideas for Gardeners • P5

Poinsettias • P5

ICYMI • P5

HCMGA Contact Info • P5

Gardening Hints for November & December:

November gardening days are 'getting ready days' ...preparing for winter's cold, spading for winter planting and planning for anticipated spring.

December is the time to reflect on the past year, and plan for the new year.

- Continue to plant spring bulbs.
- Plant pansies.
- Clean-up the vegetable garden area.
- Mulch plantings.
- Select fruit and pecan trees for winter planting.
- Prepare food, water, and winter shelter for garden birds.
- Plant annual or perennial ryegrass.
- Protect tender outdoor plants from winter cold.
- Supply supplemental moisture to help prevent freeze damage.
- Plant woody landscape plants (trees & shrubs).
- Order seeds now.
- Compost fallen leaves.
- Expect yellowing and leaf drop on tropical plants.
- **Shopping suggestions for that gardening friend:** a new gardening book, a subscription to a garden magazine, a plant, a nice container, good labor-saving tools, or even a promise of a rooted cutting from a plant in your yard.



Did you know? Mistletoe will remain fresh and hold its decorative berries if you dip the end of the stem in wax to seal off possible moisture loss. Remember though: mistletoe berries are poisonous.

For a complete list of Fall Gardening Tips, [click here to view our monthly Gardening Guide](#).

November/December is a Good Time for Pruning

In East Texas, November and December are considered late fall and early winter months. Several plants and trees can be pruned during this time to help maintain their health and shape.

- **Deciduous Trees and Shrubs** - Late fall and early winter are ideal times to prune deciduous trees and shrubs since they are dormant, and you can better see their structure without foliage. Prune for shape and to remove any dead, diseased, or damaged branches.
- **Fruit Trees** – Prune apple, peach, and pear trees during this period to maintain their shape and encourage proper fruit production. Remove any crossed branches, water sprouts, or deadwood.
- **Roses** - Prune roses in November and December to remove spent flowers, improve air circulation, and shape the plants. Cut back to just above an outward-facing bud.
- **Crepe Myrtles** - Prune Crepe myrtles during late fall or winter to remove any crossing branches and to shape the tree. Avoid "crepe murder" by not severely cutting back all branches to stubs; instead, selectively remove undesirable growth.
- **Evergreen Shrubs** - Trim evergreen shrubs like hollies, boxwoods, and azaleas to maintain their shape and size. Be careful not to prune too late in December, as new growth may be vulnerable to frost.
- **Ornamental Grasses** - Cut back ornamental grasses to a few inches above the ground to rejuvenate and remove dead foliage.
- **Vines** - Prune and train vines such as wisteria and climbing roses to encourage healthy growth and support structures.

TIPS

- Always ensure your pruning tools are sharp and clean to make clean cuts.
- Be conservative in your pruning. It's generally better to do light pruning during this time to avoid promoting excessive new growth that may be vulnerable to frost damage.
- Be mindful of local climate variations in East Texas, as some areas might experience milder or colder conditions, which can affect pruning schedules.



Fall Family Flower Festival



Don't miss our upcoming event:

HCMGA's Fall Family Flower Festival!

Saturday, November 4 from 9 am to 2 pm

At the *Harvest Garden*

Food Trucks - Bounce House - Face Painting

Origami Workshop

2 Speakers share Fall Gardening Tips

Plan to bring the kids!

☛ Bring your own camp chair - seating is limited



What's new at the Harvest Garden?

Hey MG John Maloch! What's happening at the Harvest Garden?

We have added compost to the hoop house and raised beds; and now we are just getting our fall transplants up and growing.

Our onions and garlic have been ordered and we will plant next month.

We are getting ready to convert one of our beds into a permanent asparagus bed.

A hearty thank you to all our MGs that come out every week and make the HG the amazing place that it is.



Butterscotch & White Chocolate Crunch

6 oz. Butterscotch Bits
 6 oz. White Chocolate Chips
 ¼ cup Crunchy Peanut Butter
 4 cups Nuts
 4 cups Cereal & Pretzel Sticks

Makes a great gift - be warned, it's addicting!

In double boiler, melt butterscotch and white chocolate chips. Stir in peanut butter. Add nuts and cereal, and stir until well coated. Pour onto waxed paper. Let sit until cool (about 2 hours). Break apart, place in wide-mouthed jar, and seal.

Makes two 1-quart jars or four 1-pint jars with a little left over to nibble on.



Fresh Apple Bread - Easy as 1-2-3

1 cup + 3 tbsp Sugar	1 tsp Baking Soda
½ cup Butter	½ tsp Vanilla
2 Eggs, beaten	1½ tbsp Buttermilk
1½ cups Apples, grated	1 cup Pecans, chopped
2 cups Flour	1 tsp Cinnamon
½ tsp Salt	

1. Cream butter and 1 cup sugar; add beaten eggs and apples. Mix in flour, salt, baking soda, vanilla, buttermilk, and pecans.
2. Pour into a loaf pan. Sprinkle top with mixture of remaining sugar and cinnamon.
3. Bake at 350°F for 1 hour. Yields 12 servings.



Gift Ideas for Gardeners

For that loved one who is passionate about gardening, finding the perfect gift can be a challenging task. Here are a couple of thoughtful and practical suggestions that will make any gardener happy!

- One of the most popular gifts for gardeners is a high-quality pair of gloves. Another great gift idea is a set of gardening tools such as shears, trowels, and pruners.
- For the gardener who enjoys growing their own fruits and vegetables, a local gardening book or magazine can be a great gift.
- If you are looking for a sentimental gift, consider gifting them with a garden stone, plant marker, or a personalized garden sign.
- Overall, there are many gifts that will make any gardener happy. By considering your gardener's unique preferences and needs, you can choose a gift that they will cherish and use for years to come.

About Henderson County Master Gardeners Association

Our Mission is to educate the community about a broad range of gardening topics.

- Find us online: <https://txmg.org/hendersonmg/>
- Find us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/HCmastergardener>
- Interested in becoming a Master Gardener? <https://txmg.org/hendersonmg/about-us/>
- [Click here](#) to be added to our email distribution list.

Poinsettias - Some Fun Facts

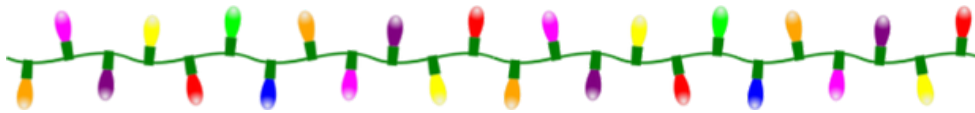
Did you know that poinsettias are the top-selling potted plant in the United States and Canada? This is partly thanks to Hollywood's role in popularizing them as an indoor holiday decoration in the early 1920s. However, the Ecke family, who sold poinsettias at roadside stands in Hollywood, are the true stars behind the plant's success. With their efficient growing and selling techniques, they were able to move their operation to Encinitas, California in the 1960s and cultivate millions of poinsettias each year. Today, poinsettias continue to be a beloved holiday adornment, with their vibrant red and green leaves bringing joy to homes and workplaces across the country.



Here are some tips to help you keep your poinsettia healthy and vibrant throughout the holiday season:

- **Keep in a Warm Spot:** Poinsettias are native to Mexico, so they prefer warmer temperatures. Keep your plant in a room that is between 60°F and 70°F.
- **Water Properly:** Over-watering is the most common mistake people make when caring for poinsettias. Only water the plant when the soil feels dry to the touch. Make sure to drain any excess water from the pot.
- **Give Enough Light:** Poinsettias need 6 hours of indirect sunlight each day; without it, their leaves will start to fall off.
- **Keep Away from Drafts:** Keep poinsettias away from drafty places including doors and windows that are frequently opened.

By following these tips, you'll be able to enjoy your poinsettia throughout the holiday season and beyond!



ICYMI (In Case You Missed It):

- [Adding Scents to the Garden – October 23, 2023](#)
- [Lilyturf and Look-Alikes – October 16, 2023](#)
- [Blooms are Back – October 9, 2023](#)
- [Planning for a Sensational Spring – September 25, 2023](#)
- [Birds Begin Fall Migration – September 18, 2023](#)

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