

February 2019

Volume 11, Issue 1



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Meetings are the second Thursday of each month, 6pm in the Extension Office Auditorium

Upcoming Meeting Dates:

February 14- Greg Bostwick

March 14 — TBD

April 11— TBD



Official Newsletter of the Jefferson County Master Gardeners

A Message From the President Brenda Beadle, JCMG President

Happy New Year! Hopefully, the winter of 2019 will bless us with just enough cold weather to chill our plants ensuring beautiful thick turf, bountiful vegetables and glorious flowers this spring.

I am looking forward to a productive year with our group of Master Gardeners. We are excited to welcome 20 new interns to the program. This year will be one of new adventures and programs. Our plans for this year include community service in school gardens, increasing educational opportunities, discovering native plants in our local area, educating the public through participation in the Farmer's Market and various garden club events, and participation with the Beaumont Botanical Gardens. Additionally, we will expand our message via social media utilizing Facebook and Instagram.

If you haven't visited the Test Garden lately, you will be pleasantly surprised at the progress Dorothy Norris and her crew have made. There is still much to

be done, and all are invited to participate. Our spring plant and vegetable sale is scheduled on March 16 from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Jack Brooks Regional Airport hangar. If you are able to work the sale, it is appreciated. If not, please spread the word about the sale. This is our major fundraiser, and we want it to be successful.

JCMG contributed over 4,000 volunteer hours in 2018. Our new online reporting system has made recordkeeping much easier for both our Master Gardeners and David, our Extension Agent. JCMG is a great organization with many knowledgeable Master Gardeners. The majority have been in the program for 10 to 20 years, and they have so much knowledge to share with the new members. Good luck to our interns, and let us all have an adventurous and prosperous 2019.

**We are now on Instagram
@jeffersoncountymastergardeners**

Agent's Two Cents

By David Oates, Horticulture Agent

A great percentage of the pruning done to crape myrtles annually is either unneeded or done incorrectly. What has taken Nature years to produce, we can ruin in mere minutes through improper pruning. As I drive home each evening, I cringe at the sight of more and more Crape Myrtles trees being “pruned” by individuals who are promoting this unnecessary task. Beautiful trees with graceful shapes and forms are ruined each year unnecessarily by this winter time activity. Here are a few guidelines and tips that will help to ensure that your Crape Myrtles will be the highlight of your landscape in the following months without extreme pruning. Feel free to share with your neighbors and others who may be considering “pruning their Crape Myrtles”.

- * Always prune with a purpose. Know exactly where and why you are making each cut on your crape myrtle.

- * Never use pruning as a means of height control for crape myrtles. It is never proper “to prune standard crape myrtles back.” In other words, never “top” any large crape myrtle at any time for any reason.

- * All crape myrtles are, by their nature, shrubs. As landscapers taught us beginning in the 1950s and early 1960s, we can remove lower branches of taller types so that they will look like small trees. However, they will continue to send up sprouts around their bases. If you do not remove those sprouts as they develop, your plant will revert to growing shrub-form.

- * Crape myrtles flower on new growth. That

is counter to most other flowering shrubs that produce their buds and blooms on the prior year’s growth.

- * You can often stimulate additional new growth and second, third and even fourth rounds of flowering by removing spent flower heads as soon as the last petals have fallen. Allowing them to go to seed will slow or halt further flowering for that growing season.

- * You can remove old, dried seed heads during the winter if you wish, but it is only cosmetic. Crape myrtle branches will always die back by 6 to 8 inches each winter. Even if you do not remove the seedpods, the new growth will begin at the bases of the dead twigs. That new growth will quickly overtake the parts that have died back.

When pruning, make each cut flush with another branch or with the main trunk. Never leave stubs larger than a pencil-width in diameter when cutting any part of a crape myrtle. That rule alone will prevent topping of crape myrtles, known by many as “crape murder.” It is singly the worst and most threatening practice in routine crape myrtle maintenance.

Prune above buds and twigs that face out from the center of your crape myrtle. Those will be the new shoots that will develop. Your goal is to encourage open and spreading growth so that limbs won’t rub together and so that air will circulate through the centers of the plants. Powdery mildew is a threat to crape myrtles, and overly dense canopies encourage its development.

Master Gardener of the Year:

Marianne Kirkpatrick

By Melissa Starr, JCMG

Marianne Kirkpatrick is a great asset to the Jefferson County Master Gardeners. In 2018, she held the office of Treasurer, which includes lots of paperwork, writing checks, balancing budgets, making budgets, filing taxes, and many other responsibilities. In addition to these responsibilities, she was co-chair of DIG Fest and helped coordinate the “Weed and Feed Crew” at the demonstration/test garden.

DIG
(Demonstrations
and Information for
your Garden) Fest

came about when Marianne approached the executive board with the idea to educate the community since we were not having a fall plant sale. She recruited volunteers to present mini workshops and demonstrations on Propagation, Texas Superstar Plants, Key-hole Gardening and Earth-Kind plants, Butterfly Gardening, and Herbs. She also made a display that included plants containing animal names and wooden animal figures. This was a hit with the children.

Marianne and Dorothy Norris were an integral part in getting the demonstration/test

garden looking beautiful for DIG Fest.

They began earlier in the year by encouraging other Master Gardeners to come out and work at the gardens. After the work was over, they would go and enjoy lunch together where everyone could get to know each other. Some of the many projects accomplished included pulling weeds, moving rose and azalea bushes, pruning roses and mulching all the main beds.

Marianne is a hard-worker and very dedi-

cated. She has been diligently aiding in the upkeep of the irrigation system at the garden. She has also been one of the team who has been setting up an irrigation system in the greenhouse.

This year, Marianne is still working hard as treasurer and is busy buying plants for Spring Market Day. If you want to meet an outstanding Master Gardener, she can be found at almost every event that we sponsor.



Cauliflower

By Tim Schreck, JCMG

I got a little late start on my raised bed garden a couple months ago planting cauliflower, several types of lettuce, and some Brussels sprouts. The lettuce has been doing wonderfully, but the cauliflower only produced a few silver dollar sized heads. I like cauliflower prepared most any way I can find it; raw, steamed, boiled with a little seasoning, grilled, or chopped up in a salad. In my disappointment with the cauliflower, I decided to investigate the vegetable in detail.

Cauliflower is part of the family Brassica Oleracea, which includes broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, and collard greens. The word cauliflower comes from the Latin words *caulis flōs*, cabbage flower. The first written documentation came from Pliny in 1 AD, describing a cultivated plant thought to be the cauliflower. In the Middle Ages, Arab botanists in Cyprus described early versions of cauliflower. Soon after, it was found in Europe and was sometimes known as Cyprus colewurt. Between 1600 and 1800, the seeds were traded as far away as India. The edible part of the plant is the head or “curd”. It is believed that in 1891, William F. Van Benschoten planted the first seeds here in America in the Catskills. He found a ready market in New York. The most popular variety has white heads, but you can find yellow and purple versions.

Cauliflower is finicky and not easy to grow. It is not a beginner’s plant. It is very susceptible to hollow stalk and small head size even in the best conditions. It needs well-drained, moist soil with lots of or-

ganic matter. Temperatures below 80 degrees are best. It also likes 6-8 hours of sun. Swings from warm to cool or cool to warm throw the plants systems off and can stunt their growth. I believe letting my plants get a little too dry and swings in temperature between Thanksgiving and Christmas caused my plants to stop growing and resulted in the small cauliflower heads.

When a normal cauliflower matures, it can produce heads 6-8 inches across. If the heads are left in the sun too long, they will turn reddish-purple. Some people cover the heads with bags to keep this from happening to prolong time to harvesting.

Cauliflower is high in vitamin C and a very healthy choice to fill you up. Boiling it for more than 5 minutes is discouraged since after 10 minutes, 50% of the vitamins are boiled out of the heads. Raw or steamed cauliflower has the most nutritional value.

If you care to save the seeds, you have to get creative since most are biennials. This requires you to keep the plant alive over a year. Most people dig the plant up during the winter, being careful to not damage the plant roots and then replant in the spring. Here in Southeast Texas, you may just have to cover it to keep it from freezing.

Cauliflower is an interesting plant and well worth a trying in your fall or spring garden.

The Scoop on Earth-Kind Roses

By Micah Leigh, JCMG

If you have been wanting to add more roses to your landscape, now is a good time to get them ordered. There are many companies such as Antique Rose Emporium that ship directly to your home and let you decide on the delivery date. Popular varieties sell out quickly, so don't dawdle.

If you are one of those gardeners who enjoys roses, but couldn't be paid to grow them because you think they are too high maintenance, you will be thrilled to learn about antique roses and Earth-Kind roses.

These are perfect roses for busy people. If you can grow weeds, you can grow Earth-Kind

and antique roses. Earth-Kind is a group of roses that have been rigorously tested in several sites around the country including here at our own test garden at the Southeast Texas Regional Airport (Jack Brooks Regional Airport). Rules of the trial stipulate that the roses are never fertilized, never sprayed, and never pruned except to remove dead wood. They receive no supplemental water after the first year.

When planting an Earth-Kind or antique rose, choose a location with good air circulation and make sure it gets a minimum 6 hours of direct sunlight. Plant in raised

beds in a soil mix of 1/3 compost, 1/3 sand and 1/3 manure. Top with 3-4 inches of hardwood mulch which improves the soil as it decomposes. These roses are highly resistant to pests and disease. They are grown on their own root and show good heat and drought tolerance.

A word about irrigation: Never water at night and then only water the soil around the roots. Never water the flowers. Drip

irrigation is the best choice for this job.

To date, 21 roses have earned the Earth-Kind designation. Many are antique roses, also known as OGRs—old garden roses. From dwarf to medium shrubs to

mannerly or vigorous climbers, there are many sizes and color choices available. Belinda's Dream, Marie Daly, Mutabilis (a personal favorite of mine because it blooms three colors at once) and the widely used Knockout are a few of the beautiful options, and there are even more in the antiques category. Antiques are equally low maintenance but do not necessarily have the Earth-Kind designation. You can't go wrong with either one. Surely there are one or two you can incorporate into your landscape for beautiful maintenance-free beauty.

Belinda's Dream Rose



Intern Class Pictures



We are so excited to have a new group of 20 Master Gardener interns. They participated in two weeks of training, passed a test at the end, and prepared and presented presentations on a topic of their choice. We look forward to working with all of them.



Organic Garden Tips

By: Melissa Starr, JCMG

In any garden, the key to success is to build great soil. Organic matter is the most important ingredient in great garden soil. When living plants die and then break down into soil or organic matter, they provide the nutrients living plants need to grow. This organic matter allows water to flow through the soil and creates air pockets in the soil for root growth. Compost is the best organic matter to add into the soil; however, you can make your own compost by putting leaves between the rows of your plants and allowing them to break down during the growing season. The next year, you will have compost ready to work into the soil.

Plant choice and location are important to a successful organic garden. Plant your vegetables in a raised bed with good drainage. Standing water is an invitation to insects and disease. Rotate crops and do not plant vegetables of the same family in the same location every year. For example, tomatoes, peppers, and eggplant are in the nightshade family and can easily spread diseases to each other. Choose plants that are resistant to diseases. The tags on tomato plants have letters after the variety of the tomato, such as VFN. These letters represent disease resistance in that tomato variety.

Water and fertilize your plants correctly. When watering, soak the soil around the plant and then let the soil dry out before you water it again.

Watch your plants; you don't want them to wilt, so water them before the soil is dry enough for them to wilt. Do not water from above the plant. This spreads more disease and can cause powdery mildew. Drip irrigation is the best method of watering. Good fertilizers to use include fish meal, cottonseed meal, and blood meal, or you can buy an organic fertilizer that is premixed, such as Microlife.

Attract beneficial insects (insects that kill the harmful ones) to your garden with plants such as yarrow, coreopsis, and herbs. Insecticidal soap can help control soft bodied insects like aphids and whiteflies, but must be sprayed on the insect. BT (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) is a good control for caterpillars, but it will also kill any butterfly caterpillars that might be on your plants. Neem oil helps control leaf-eating insects, and spinosad helps control leaf beetles and caterpillars. I have also used spinosad to control ants in my vegetable garden.

These techniques will not eliminate all insects or disease from your garden, but they will decrease these pests.

Tomato Disease Resistance Codes

V - Verticillium Wilt
F - Fusarium Wilt (FF - Races 1 & 2; FFF - Races 1, 2, & 3)
N - Nematodes
T - Tobacco Mosaic Virus
A - Alternaria Stem Canker
St - Stemphylium Gray Leaf Spot
TSWV - Tomato Spotted Wilt Virus

Your Health and Safety in the Garden

By Eileen Slater, JCMG

Spring is quickly approaching! Gardeners will be out in their yards and gardens making them look good! But what about that unknown insect bite on your leg from when you were working in your garden? Did you sunburn? Is your skin dry from being outside? Take a moment to think about your health and safety while in the garden.

Begin by protecting yourself from the sun's harmful rays that cause cancer. Use sunscreen on your face, neck, arms and legs.

Wear sunglasses to protect your eyes. A wide brimmed hat will protect your face, head and neck area. Long sleeves and pants will keep your skin from becoming too dry.

Other protective gear includes nonslip closed toed shoes to prevent slipping and to protect your feet when mowing the lawn.

Use earplugs when running loud garden and lawn equipment. Tuck your pants inside

your socks or rubber boots to help prevent insect or spider bites on your legs. Leather gloves protect your hands against cuts and irritants. Avoid loose fitting clothing and jewelry that can entangle in equipment.

Know how to properly use your equipment. Read the directions. Work power tools under dry conditions to prevent electrical shock. Knowing how to turn equipment on and off may save fingers and toes. Unplug and turn off all electrical power tools to keep children

safe.

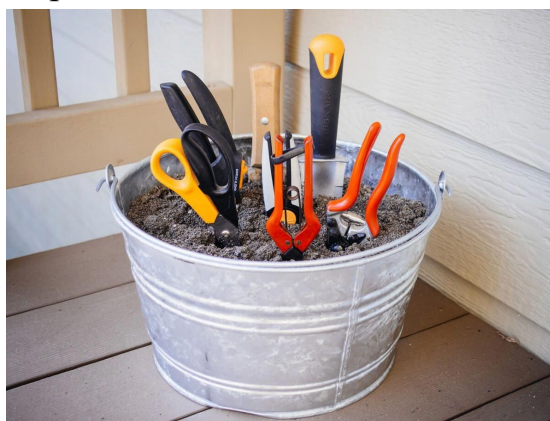
High temperatures can cause serious health problems. Drink water and take plenty of breaks. Rest in shaded areas to allow your body temperature to cool down. Headaches, rapid pulse, dizziness, nausea, confusion or unconsciousness are signs of being out in the heat too long. Children under the age of 4, people 65 years of age and older and overweight people should be especially careful in heat.

Before mowing your lawn, remove objects that can propel from the lawnmower blades. Common objects include rocks, sticks, dog bones, toys, sports equipment, metal, glass, and garden tools. These objects can propel at speeds up to 200 miles per hour. Ouch! That would really hurt!

Keep your tools sharp, clean, neat and organized. Insert small garden tools in a closed bucket of sand and old motor oil mixture to keep them clean and rust free.

Keep up the good work in your garden and yard, and use your health and safety skills!

Do you need some vegetables, shrubs, flowers and trees to plant your yard and/or garden? The JCMG Plant Sale is on Saturday, March 16, from 8:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. at Hangar 4 found at Jack Brooks Airport. Bring your own wagon. Service animals only.



The Latest Dirt

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service
1225 Pearl Street, Suite 200
Beaumont, TX 77701

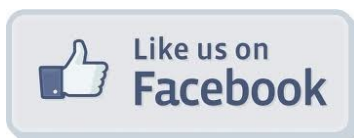
Phone: 409-835-8461
Fax: 409-839-2310
Hotline: 409-835-8742



We're On The Web:

<http://txmg.org/jcmg/>

<http://jefferson.agrilife.org>



MISSION STATEMENT

To encourage and support the horticultural community of Southeast Texas through education and example.

2019 Officers

President—Brenda Beadle

Vice President—Sarah Sloan

Secretary—Debby Parker

Treasurer—Marianne Kirkpatrick

At Large—Dorothy Norris, Stellina Reed, Diane Davis

Past President—Eileen Slater

Announcements

Spring Market Day
Saturday, March 16
8:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
Hangar 4 at
Jack Brooks Regional Airport

⇒ **Garden Workdays**
Wednesday and Friday,
approximately 9 a.m.-noon



JCMGs are now on Instagram!
@jeffersoncountymastergardeners

Texas Master Gardener
State Conference
April 25-27 in Victoria, TX
<http://2019tmgaconference.com>