

November, 2018

Volume 10, Issue 4



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

Upcoming Meeting Dates:

November 8 - Shahid Mamood- F&S Horticulture Services

December 8— Christmas party & awards

January 10 — TBD



The Latest Dirt

Official Newsletter of the Jefferson County Master Gardeners

Agent's Two Cents *David Oates, Horticulture Agent*

"Many a man curses the rain that falls upon his head, and knows not that it brings abundance to drive away the hunger". ~Saint Basil

When talking to a gardener of any age, rain is both a blessing and a curse in the same sentence. We always wish for rain and then complain when we get too much of it. Southeast Texas has had its fair share of wet weather this fall season. Gardeners are a surprisingly resilient bunch of folks who take the rain in stride and make the best of it in any situation. That fortitude is what makes gardeners who they are. Gardeners in Southeast Texas can adapt to just about anything that is thrown at them including lots of rainy weather days.

I would like to extend a thanks to all the individuals who have worked selflessly to promote the Master Gardener program over the past years. This volunteer program is a direct success of your hard work and dedication to a

program that has long lasting results. Programs such as spring plant sales, test garden trials, working to maintain test and trial gardens, community service projects to landscape important areas, educational activities, and numerous other activities are just a few of the actions that serve an important goal of education to the community and beyond.

With 2018 coming to a close, I look forward to a new year working with a group of dedicated volunteers who all share a common goal of working together to improve gardening activities here in Southeast Texas.



2018 President's Farewell

By Eileen Slater, JCMG

JCMG's have been busy this fall! In September we said goodbye to our wonderful secretary, Peggy Coleman, who had 25 years of service to the AgriLife system. She is enjoying retirement with travel and grandchildren. Peggy was celebrated with a Mexican luncheon buffet held in her honor at the AgriLife auditorium. Fall decorations added to the gaiety of the event. Everyone brought many delicious dishes and desserts. Peggy was surprised with retirement cards filled with generous donations for her travels. It was a wonderful, memorable time enjoyed by all. In her place, we welcome Jennifer Coleman, Peggy's daughter-in-law. We are certain that the continuity of great service to the JCMGs will continue! She certainly has a great personality for the job!

What a beautiful October day we had for our first DIG Fest (Demonstrations and Information for your Garden)! Everyone worked for weeks preparing the garden to look beautiful with much weed pulling and rearranging of plants and fall decorations! This fall event completes our JCMG By-Laws objective: To increase knowledge of gardening to its members and the general public. Activities presented to the general public included: Butterfly Info Center and Discussion, Compost Exhibit, Container Garden Demo and Giveaway, Herb Garden Tour and Discussion, JCMG Booth, Keyhole Garden Demonstration and Giveaway, Limited Assortment of Free Plant Giveaway, Propagation Demonstration and Giveaway, Organic Rose Growing Exhibit and Discussion with free rose samples, Soil Sampling Demo and Info, Su-

perstar Plant Exhibit and Presentation, Turf and Weed Problem Discussion, Zoo Plant Garden and Vendors. Awesome job JCMGs! You rock!

On November 1st, all entries for Master Gardener of the Year and all information from candidates running for Member-at-Large are due into the JCMG office by the end of the day and given to Jennifer Coleman. We will vote for Master Gardener of the Year at the November meeting and have a runoff for Members-at-Large. Remember to bring your canned food supplies for Some Other Place.

Our year will close out in December with our annual Christmas party at Tyrell Park Garden Center. We will enjoy a wonderful meal, a talented violinist, games and installation of new officers. Please bring your donation of 3 canned goods for Dream Center in place of meal payment if you are a Master Gardener. Guests cost \$10.00.

As my term comes to an end, I appreciate all who have worked tirelessly for the organization. Thank you one and all! Incorporate new members into our group so we can continue to grow.

God's Peace, Blessings and Best Wishes to all!

Eileen Slater, President 2017 & 2018

DIG Fest 2018



Thank you Marianne and everyone who worked to make this day possible!

DIG Fest 2018 cont.



Bewitching Plants

By Eileen Slater, JCMG

“Old witch Mary, quite contrary, how does your garden grow? With moss and slime and poisonous vine and toadstools all in a row.”

With Halloween upon us, we are reminded that some plants can be poisonous. Can you identify these common Earth-Kind Landscaping plants and their parts that cause poisoning when consumed? Do you own any of these plants?

Houseplants in which all parts of the plant are toxic include Dieffenbachia. There is intense burning and irritation of the mouth and tongue that may cause the tongue to swell to block the air passage of the throat which causes death. Eating the bulbs of Hyacinth, Narcissus or Daffodil cause nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. Castor Beans, one or two, are a near lethal dose for adults. The leaves and branches of Oleander plants are extremely poisonous and can cause death.

Flower garden plant bulbs include the Autumn Crocus and Star of Bethlehem. Vomiting and nervous excitement are the effects of these bulbs. The fleshy Monkshood roots cause digestive upset and nervous excitement. Eaten in large amounts, the roots and foliage of the Bleeding Heart may be poisonous. Irregular heartbeat and pulse, digestive upset and mental confusion occurs after ingesting leaves of the Foxglove and leaves and flowers of the Lily-of-the-Valley.

The only vegetable garden plant that is fatal is the Rhubarb leaf blade. Raw or cooked, leaves cause convulsions, coma and death.

Ornamental plants with berries are fatal.

These plants include Daphne, Jasmine, Lantana, Camara and Yew. The seeds and pods of Wisteria produce severe digestive upset. All parts of Laurels, Rhododendrons and Azaleas are fatal.

In the trees and shrub category, the twigs and foliage of the Wild and Cultivated Cherry are fatal. The foliage and acorns from Oaks affects your kidneys gradually. Nausea is suffered by the Elderberry and Black Locust.

Plants growing in wooded areas that are fatal include the Mistletoe's and Moonseed's berries. The roots of the Jack-in-the-Pulpit cause intense burning of the mouth and tongue. The Mayapple's apple, foliage and roots cause diarrhea.

Water Hemlock, a plant in swamp or moist areas, is fatal.

All parts are fatal of the Nightshade and Poison Hemlock plants. These plants are found in fields. Jimson Weed can cause coma and can be fatal. All parts of Buttercups injure the digestive system.

As a child I remember examining the mushrooms growing in the lawn. I decided to take a bite. My Mother looked out of the kitchen window and ran out to tell me not to eat the mushrooms. Luckily, that toadstool did not get me! Whew!

Mums

By Micah Leigh, JCMG

It's finally cooling off and fall is here! And with fall comes chrysanthemums. Colorful pots of mums can be found at all the garden stores right now and are a staple of outdoor autumn décor. Stacked up with pumpkins and gourds and greenery, mums make a beautiful display indoors and out. Mums are quite hardy, but there are still some things to remember in order to enjoy them for the entire season.

When buying a potted mum, decide if it needs to be repotted. To determine if it is pot-bound, try pushing your finger down into the soil. If it needs repotting, you will not be able to do this. After you have bumped it up to a larger



pot, if necessary, make sure to water often. Do not let the soil dry out!

Potted mums are usually for display only and are treated like annuals that are composted at the end of the season. If you plant these fall mums in the ground, they may not have time to recover and put down a good root system before winter.

If you want perennial mums, you must plant garden mums in the spring. These hardy mums produce on underground stolons that

help them survive the winter. Plant in a well-drained location that receives at least six hours of sunlight daily. Make sure they are far enough apart to allow for good air circulation.

Pinching off spent blooms ensures an abundant show of flowers. Remove the stems above the second set of leaves once the stems are 4-6 inches tall. Pinch again after 4 weeks, and continue pinching new growth shoots through June. This practice keeps the

plant from blooming too early or growing too tall. It also helps the plant produce stronger flowers. Not all cultivars require pinching, so read the instructions that come with your plant of choice. Water regularly and fertilize in July. These mums should bloom

prolifically around the end of summer, lasting until the first heavy frost.

Mums should be divided and transplanted every 3-4 years. Divide in the spring when new growth appears. Dig up the plant in one piece. With a sharp knife or spade, separate the outer pieces from the center. Replant the vigorous outer sections of the clump and discard the original center clump. These mums will reward you for years to come with beautiful fall color.

Citrus

By Melissa Starr, JCMG

October and November are two of my favorite months. Not only does the weather turn cooler, but citrus is ready to be harvested and devoured. This year has been an unpredictable year for citrus crops.

Last winter saw several freezes, and many citrus bloomed later causing them to ripen later than normal. The heavy rains have also been a factor. With the many inches of rain and saturated ground experienced this fall, many citrus trees have started dropping ripened fruit. This fruit rot is caused by fungi that invade overripe or bruised fruit. To avoid this, follow a spray schedule, prune lower hanging limbs so that the fruit does not touch the ground, and do not leave overripe fruit on the tree.

Insects have also been a problem this year. Citrus leaf miners and leaf-footed bugs have caused damage to citrus leaves and fruit. The citrus leaf miner causes mostly damage to leaves, but rarely effects the fruit that is ripening. However, if you want to control them, you must plan ahead. Neem oil is a good product to use because it prevents the suspected moth from laying its eggs on the undersides of the leaves. To treat with neem oil, follow the product instructions, and mix about 2 tablespoons of neem oil into a gallon of water. Spray the undersides and tops of leaves until they are thoroughly wet. Treat once a week when new leaves are being produced on the trees. Leaf-footed bugs will sometimes cause damage to the fruit of a citrus tree by transmitting a yeast that causes dry rot. These bugs can be controlled with

insecticides or by picking them off the plants by hand. Insecticides are best used early in the growing season to kill the nymphs. Handpicking the nymphs is also more effective than trying to catch the flying adults. When picking these insects by hand, drop them in soapy water to kill them. They emit a smell when squashed by hand. Also, eliminate any weedy areas in your yard where leaf-footed bugs can hide and breed.



Citrus Leaf Miner Damage

If you have more questions about citrus diseases, insects, or other citrus growing topics, the Jefferson County Horticulture Committee will host the Golden Triangle Citrus Show on November 14, 6:00-8:30 at the Jefferson County AgriLife Extension Office in downtown Beaumont. Citrus experts will be there to answer questions about growing citrus at home. If you have any citrus to enter in the show, you can bring those to the Extension office on November 13 from 9-4 or on November 14 from 9-noon. All entries will be judged after noon on November 14, and ribbons will be awarded during the evening presentation on the same day.

Microgreens

By: Tim Schreck, JCMG

If your garden is starting to wither away, but you still have the urge to grow something interesting, you might think about microgreens. Microgreens are immature greens harvested when they are 3-4 weeks old. They are not to be confused with sprouts, which are usually harvested as soon as the first leaves are full. Microgreens are harvested after the four leaves are present or when the plant is around two inches tall. They are served at many high-end restaurants, not only since they are a new novelty, but also because they are more nutritious and can add so much color to dish. Studies show that microgreens can contain ten to forty percent more vitamin C, E and K. If you buy them pre-bagged in the grocery store, they are expensive. Growing them yourself, is a win-win for you.

Microgreens can be grown in a small area and harvestable in less than a month, so you can fit these in at the end of the growing season. You can buy microgreen packets, which will have a variety of seeds, or you can mix your own. At the end of the year when seed packets are going on sale, you can get quite a few packets really cheap. You will want to do a little research if you are going to mix seeds, but you are always safe mixing lettuce and salad greens that have the same growth rate. For a slight flavor variety, you can add in radish or mustard seeds with the salad greens. For more variety, look for mesclun mixes that will add not only color, but also a kick. Other seeds that will add interest to your dishes include beet, spinach, chia, sunflower, cilantro, kale, and arugula. Herb seeds can be used, but since they grow slower than greens, you

may need to plant them a week to ten days before the greens so they are ready to harvest at the same time.

If you really like microgreens, there are two methods of keeping a continuing supply. The first method is to plant a variety of leafy greens that will grow back after each cutting. You can then have another set of colorful or spicy ones to mix with them each week. The second method is to have four to six flats and stagger the plantings a few days to a week apart. As the first flat matures and is harvested, you replant that flat and it will be ready to harvest again in four weeks. Then the cycle starts the again.

Microgreens are easy to grow. All you need is a two-inch deep flat and potting or garden soil. Fill the flat. Do not soak the soil, but get it wet. Microgreen seeds are small, so they do not need to be planted deep. You can sprinkle the seed on the soil and then sprinkle an eighth inch layer of soil on top of the seeds. Wet the soil again. Spray with water daily keeping the soil moist until harvest.



Do Your Research

By Micah Leigh, JCMG

I have lost track of the many times I hear would-be gardeners commiserate over their “brown thumb”. When I ask them to tell me what sort of problems they are having, nine times out of ten, they are trying to grow something out of season. Take parsley, for instance. Parsley is a winter herb, but is often carried over to spring in the big box store nurseries. Inexperienced gardeners will plant it only to see it die as soon as the heat hits in earnest. Then the self-blame kicks in and they decide they are not talented enough to grow anything.

STOP! The only difference between a so-so gardener and a great gardener is education. Whether you get the education from your grandmother or from the internet, knowledge is a big help when it comes to growing anything. First of all, decide what you want to grow and then do your research. Don’t assume that just because you see it at the plant store, that it is the right season or even the right zone. (We live in zone 9. Look for that information on the plant tag.) Locally owned nurseries are good sources for plants that are adapted to our area, but if you shop in the other plant stores, know your stuff. Often these stores receive plants that are shipped to lots of areas at once and are not necessarily meant to be here.

Several years ago, I was in the garden center of a big box store. There were several pots of pink and purple hyacinths in bloom. I overheard a couple of ladies talking about how lovely they were, where they could put

it in the garden and how they had never seen them before. (Red Flag: if you have never seen it before, check out why before you buy.) I just couldn’t stand by and let them waste their money, so I politely explained that they were looking at a blooming bulb that didn’t grow here, and that when the bloom was spent, they would never see another one. They thanked me profusely and put it back on the table.

All this is to say, do your research. Most of us have a phone with us at all times. When you see a plant you don’t recognize, google it on the spot. There are lots of good plant identification apps, as well. Knowing what to plant, when to plant, and where to plant can save you a lot of money and frustration. You will still make mistakes. Even the most experienced gardeners have a failure occasionally. It’s all part of the gardening experience, but if you know the basics, you will have more successes than failures... and that “brown thumb” will turn bright green!

Links to help your research.

<http://jefferson.agrilife.org/files/2011/05/PlantingGuide.pdf>

<https://jefferson.agrilife.org/publications/home-gardening/>

<http://texassuperstar.com/>

<https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/earthkind/>

The Latest Dirt

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

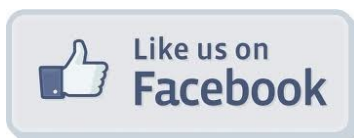
Phone: 409-835-8461
Fax: 409-839-2310
Hotline: 409-835-8742



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.

2018 Officers

President—Eileen Slater

Vice President—Jeanene Ebeling

Secretary—Sarah Sloan

Treasurer—Marianne Kirkpatrick

At Large—James Butaud, Joyce Logan, Dorothy Norris

Past President—Tina Gonzales

Announcements

**Master Gardener
Christmas Party & Awards**
December 8, 6:30pm (appetizers)
7:00 pm (dinner)
Tyrrell Park Garden Center

Golden Triangle Citrus Show
Bring Citrus for judging:
Nov 13 from 9-4 and Nov 14 from 9-noon
Speaker & Awards Nov 14 6-8:30 pm
Extension Office Auditorium

⇒ **Garden Workdays**
Wednesday and Friday, 9-
Noon
⇒ **Master Gardener
Shortcourse**
January 22-February 1, 2019
M-F, 9 am - 4 pm