



The Latest Dirt

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Official Newsletter of the Jefferson County Master Gardeners

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A Message From Our President Brenda Beadle, JCMG President

JCMG Members Happy 2020!

The past year has gone by so quickly, and I would like to commend everyone for working to make our association even better. One of our greatest accomplishments this year has been improvements to the Test Garden. Under Dorothy Norris' leadership and a dedicated team of volunteers, they have weeded, trimmed and mulched all of the beds. They have disposed of debris and trash making a visible difference in the gardens. The recently constructed bridge creates an inviting entrance to the gardens. The intern project is moving along with rows of broccoli ready for harvesting. The composting bins and composted materials, solely managed by 2019 MG of the Year, Debby Parker, is a beneficial addition to our garden.

This year we added a winter sale, which is scheduled on February 8. This sale will be much simpler than our spring and fall sale as we will only offer fruit, nut and citrus trees and roses. Fruit and nut trees will be bare root. The planning committee has worked on this in-

ventory to ensure that the trees and roses offered can be grown in southeast Texas. We want to make sure that the public is informed of these selections and proper planting methods for success.

Plans for this year include more educational seminars and speakers. The only way we are going to improve is to make the public more aware of this great organization.

Congratulations to the recently graduated 2019 interns and to the Master Gardeners receiving awards for their dedication and hard work. I am humbled to be a part of an organization with such knowledgeable and dedicated volunteers.

By the way, spring is less than 2 months away!

Happy Gardening,

Brenda Beadle

JCMG President

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

Upcoming Meeting Dates:

February 13 - Mike Beard, Creekwood Blueberry Farms

March 12 - TBA

April 9 - TBA

Agent's Two Cents

David Oates, Horticulture Agent

The spring season is slowly approaching here in Southeast Texas as gardeners begin to survey damage from a soggy winter season. We really have not had any extreme winter weather as in years past. I hope that everyone has taken advantage of the sunshine on days when it is present. We are still assessing some of the damage that has occurred from the continuous rainfall that has accumulated over that last few months. This is one for the record books as far as the amount of rainfall we have received. On the bright side of things, the first day of spring is only about six weeks away on March 19, 2020. I know folks are staring to get ready for the spring season as I have seen the big box stores in Jefferson County and surrounding areas begin to start stocking springtime items in anticipation of warmer weather ahead. I have even seen azaleas blooming in January. Some of these plants just cannot wait for spring.

In January, the Jefferson County AgriLife Extension office in cooperation with Jefferson County Master Gardeners kicked off their annual Master Gardener new intern training. We had 10 participants this year in the program. We have completed the first week of educational programs and now are transitioning into weekly programs every Thursday afternoon from 1pm until 5pm. This is a bit different than the traditional two weeks of intensive educational classes. Everyone seems to enjoy the pace of the program and is excited to learn about something new each week. All current Master Gardeners are encouraged to audit these educational pro-

grams in order to fulfill their continuing education requirement hours. Weekly announcements will be sent out reminding participants of the topics and speakers.

I am happy to inform everyone that we are working on offering a variety of educational activities that will encourage Master Gardener participation and public attendance. Some of these are still in the planning stages but hopefully will be introduced soon. Success of volunteer AgriLife Extension programs, such as the Master Gardeners, prove that these programs are of value and benefit to the community and volunteer participants.

Our goals here in the AgriLife Extension and the Master Gardener programs has not changed. We are still committed to providing quality agricultural education and learning experiences for the residents of Jefferson County and surroundings areas.

Be on the lookout for some of these speakers and activities in the upcoming months. We hope that these programs will be educational events that will entice everyone to become interested in horticultural activities here in Southeast Texas.

I hope everyone has a great spring season and good luck in the garden this year!



Master Gardener of the Year

Debby Parker

By Melissa Starr, JCMG

It is an honor to have Debby Parker as our Master Gardener of the Year. She performed over and above as Jefferson County Master Gardener secretary, attending every board meeting during the year and creating, mailing/emailing and tallying responses to an internal Master Gardener survey that helped the leadership determine the needs and interests of the membership.

When she saw the compost pile at the gardens in disarray, she made and carried out a plan to clean it up and make it into working compost bins. First, she removed enough trash from the bins to overflow a 16-foot trailer. Once this was done, the compostable items were placed in the first bin, partially composted items were placed in the second bin, and completed compost in the third. The fourth bin was labeled for limbs and branches that were too large to compost. Signs were put up to identify the purpose of each bin. Over the year, she turned the piles at least every 2 weeks. During the turning process, the partially composted material was moved from bin 1 to bin 2 and the completely composted

was moved from bin 2 to bin 3. New compostable material was added to bin 1.

Debby participated with other Master Gardeners in youth programs, educating over 300 kids. This included PAISD's summer enrichment program at the Port Arthur Library and BISD's "Champion" program at Ford Park.

In order to improve our Master Gardener plant sales and to choose the best products to provide our customers, Debby participated with other Master Gardeners in traveling to the Galveston County and Montgomery

County Master Gardener's sales. She along with others visited with the heads of these sales to discuss their processes in purchasing, displaying and organizing their events. Additionally, she participated in trips to Texas nurseries to choose quality plants. These trips included Antique Rose Emporium in Independence, Creekwood Farms in Vidor and Doremus Wholesale Nursery in Warren.

Debby is a pleasure to work with and we are proud to call her 2019 Master Gardener of the Year!



Intern Graduation & Awards

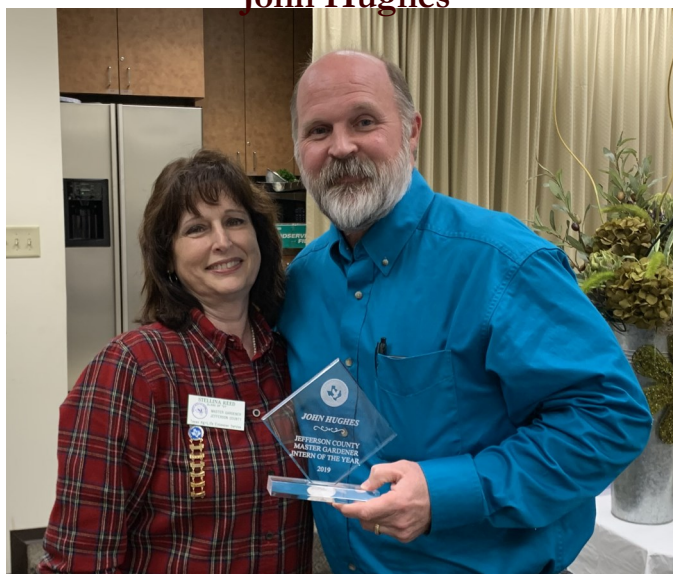
Congratulations to all of our 2019 intern graduates!



Interns front: Larry Trahan, Suzanne Wakeman, Eleanor Lazenby, Dovie Smith, Jane Ballard, Peggy Doerschuk.
Interns back: Mack Trahan, Greg Roberts, John Hughes, Larry Gilstrap, Danny Halliburton, Robert Arnold

Intern of the Year

John Hughes



Project of the Year

Larry Gilstrap



Awards Cont...

Lifetime Member Awards

Lee Freeland, Eddie Wharton, J. C. Drake, Dan Crowley, Ann Abshire

Helping Hand Awards



Sharon LaBove



Holly Kirkwood



Left: 2020 JCMG Board Members

David Oates (Extension Agent), John Hughes, Dorothy Norris, Stellina Reed, Marianne Kirkpatrick, Sarah Sloan, Brenda Beadle, Debby Parker

A special "Thank You" to our chef, , for the scrumptious food and to Sharon LaBove for the gorgeous decorations!

Pruning of Hardwood Fruit Trees, Roses and Citrus

By: Eileen Slater, JCMG

Pruning of Hardwood Fruit Trees, Roses and Citrus

February is the time for gardeners to prune. Pruning tells the plant it's time to wake up and grow.

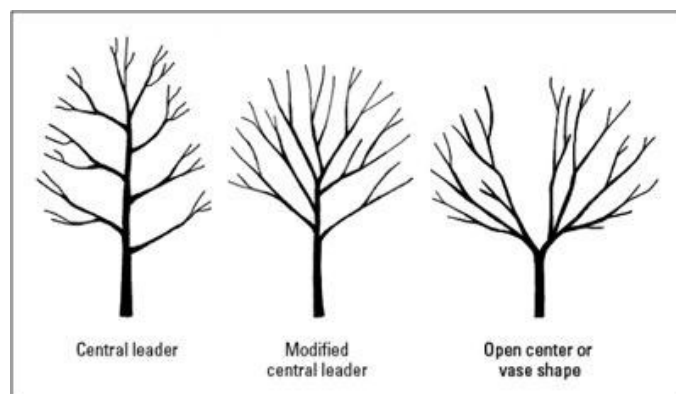
Begin with the correct tools. Hand pruners are the main pruning tool you will need. Thorn-proof or gauntlet gloves are useful when you prune your roses. Other tools include a keyhole saw and large loppers. Make sure they are clean and sharpened. Use alcohol to dip or wipe your pruning shears after pruning each plant to prevent spread of disease.

Hardwood fruit trees need to be pruned. The Open Center pruning technique is used for hardwood trees including peach, plum and nectarine that grow in our area. The Central Leader pruning technique is used on apples, pears, mayhaws, pecans and persimmons. The Open Center pruning technique for a first-year tree creates a main trunk with 4 main supporting branches that form a circular shape that should be large enough to hold a beach ball in the center of the plant. The Center Leader pruning technique creates one main trunk with alternating side branches.

From Valentine's Day through the end of February is the recommended time to prune. Look for buds that begin to swell in February. Choose outward growing buds. Cut $\frac{1}{4}$ inch above the bud at a 45-degree angle above the outward bud. This will make the rose grow outward. Remove canes that rub against each other. Clear the middle of the plant to increase air circulation to prevent fungal formation and to deter spider mites. Remove spindly or diseased growth back to the newest healthy cane. Trim vining roses after they bloom. Knockout roses can be pruned anytime to

keep their shape. Multi-petaled roses will spring bloom in 45 days and fewer petaled varieties will bloom in 35 days. YouTube videos from colleges and big nurseries are available online if you want to view in detail how to prune a rose bush.

Valentine's Day is also the day to prune citrus trees. Limited pruning is done on citrus. Prune citrus trees of dead branches, branches crossing over each other and water sprouts arising from the center of the tree. Branches touching the ground should be removed. Instead of topping the tree, control the height of the tree by finding where the long shoot begins on larger branches. Cut the shoot off flush at that point. Freeze-damaged trees should be pruned in July after the second flush of growth. Pruning a freeze-damaged tree consists of removing the dead wood to the point where the live wood starts. If you live in a limited city lot space like me, you may need to unfortunately prune limbs when they get too close to your neighbor's yard or when the limbs begin to grow into your fence line.



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



We're On The Web:

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

<http://jefferson.agrilife.org>



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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, John Hughes

Past President—Eileen Slater

Announcements

Spring Market Day
Saturday, April 4
8 am - 1 pm
JCMG Test Garden
Jack Brooks Regional
Airport

Magnolia Garden
Club Speaker:
Greg Grant
Feb. 11
1 pm - 5pm
Beaumont Art Mu-
seum
Open to garden groups

⇒ **Beaumont Farmer's**
Market volunteers
2nd Sat. of every month
⇒ **Master Gardener**
Shortcourse
Additional classes on Thurs.
Jan 30 and Feb 6,13,20, 27
from 1 pm to 5 pm
⇒ **Budding & Grafting**
Workshop
April 18
AgriLife Extension Auditorium
Registration-8:30 am

**2020 WINTER**
PLANT SALE
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 8TH
9 AM UNTIL NOON
Ford Park Barn
5115 Interstate 10 Access Rd
FRUIT and NUT TREES (APPLE, PEAR, PLUM,
PECAN & PERSIMMON TREES)
ROSES from "The Antique Rose Emporium"
FREE ADMISSION & PARKING
ALL MAJOR CREDIT CARDS ACCEPTED
For more information, call Jefferson County Texas AgriLife Extension Service
409-835-8461 or 727-2191, Ext 8461
TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION

TXMG State
Conference
May 12-14
Waco, Texas
Register:
[https://txmg.org](https://txmg.org/conference/)
/conference/