

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Agent's Two Cents	2
Bonnie Childers	3
Herbs in the Landscape	4
Tips for Plant Survival During Vacation	5
State Awards	6
Veteran's Memorial Workday	7
Announcements	8

Upcoming Meetings:

June 10/Nancy Angell, Master Naturalist from Liberty/Chambers county.

August 13

Message From The President

JCMG Members,

We are finally warming up and enjoying some sunshine. I believe we have all had enough rain and are ready for flowers to bloom and vegetables to ripen.

Many of you lost citrus trees as well as other plants in the February freeze. I hope you were able to find replacements and get them planted.

Master Gardens have been busy cleaning the Test Garden and working at the Beaumont Botanical Gardens, Seeds for Needs Garden and Nutrition and Services (Meals on Wheels).

Several have worked with David as-

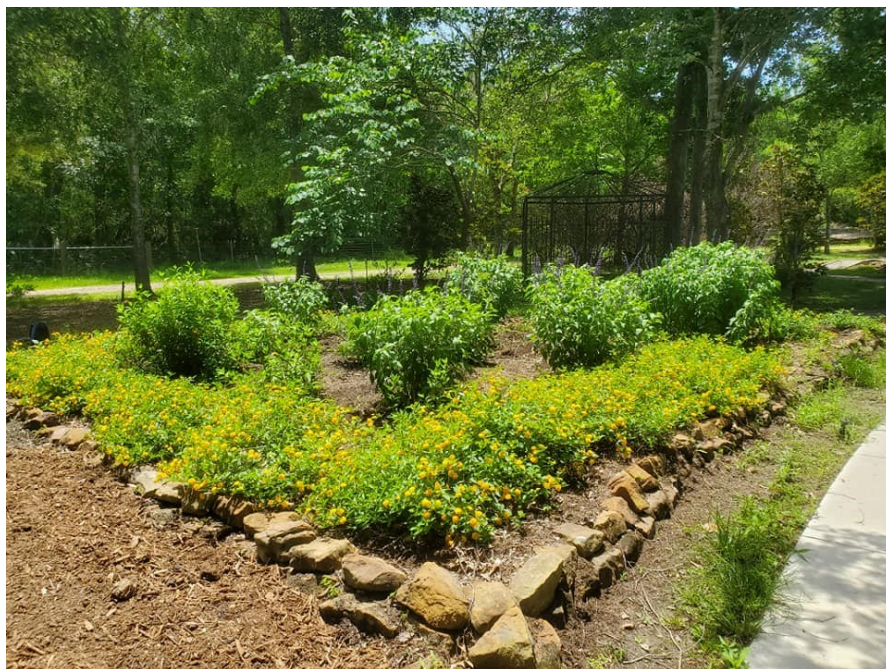
sisting with school projects and replanting the Veterans Memorial Park. This is a great organization as we can spread out and volunteer our time and knowledge in so many areas.

We have scheduled a new short course for new members beginning September 20. If you have any contacts that might be interested in becoming a Master Gardener, please have them call the office and sign up. Please consider signing up to teach a class.

Have a great summer and enjoy your gardens.

Brenda Beadle

JCMG President



Beaumont Botanical Gardens

Agent's Two Cents

By David Oates, Horticulture Extension Agent

By now, everyone has heard those dreaded words: "Covid-19" or "Covid-19 restrictions" or some form of these words. This has been an eye-opening experience for everyone. A truly "global" pandemic is not something that anyone will forget in a brief and short period of time. This pandemic has left a mark on our everyday lives and how we function daily.

This is an excerpt from this newsletter about a year ago. Many things have changed, some have not. Some situations are better, while some situations remain unchanged.

"Saying hello to your neighbor from afar is now the normal if you venture outside. No more shaking hands or a neighborly hug. We have seen increased usage of social media, email, web chats, and social interaction through a variety of video platforms such as zoom, Microsoft Teams, WebEx, etc. to name a few. We are still able to communicate with each other through these platforms and stay connected. Even the old-fashioned phone is still a good option for communication. Now you order your groceries, fast food, medications, and just about anything else online. You can pick it up at designated pick-up locations, or in some cases, you can have it delivered to your doorstep to avoid social interactions with individuals. Most of us have utilized this time to catch up on some neglected reading or watching our favorite program on tv. There is an app for everything now. Who knew? Gardening online?

I would strongly encourage everyone not to forget gardening as one of those activities that can be done during this time of isolation and staying at home. You can devote any amount of time to a gardening project; all day or 10 minutes a day. It is up to you to decide on the time spent on a variety of gardening activities and chores. Keeping active and involved with a gardening project will help in several ways. Nurturing and tending to the daily necessities of growing plants will keep you active; both physically and mentally. It will give you something to look forward to everyday. Nothing beats the personal satisfaction of growing and producing a vegetable crop or even flowers. It also instills a sense of a daily routine that must be followed on a consistent basis for good results. It also may create a sense of calm and personal achievement during taxing situations that we may be faced with during these uncertain times."

Gardening is still one of those pastimes that is hard for people to ignore and change. This is still true today, even as we forge forward with mass vaccinations and the thought of someday returning to a normal routine or schedule post Covid-19. Gardening is essential; for food production, for daily living, for mental well-being, for overall health, or just as an activity that helps to fill in some of the time in your busy schedule. No matter your reasons, just be sure that you include some gardening in your life and look forward to the next growing season and the reward that it might bring.

"A truly 'global' pandemic is not something that anyone will forget in a brief and short period of time."

In Remembrance:

Bonnie Childers

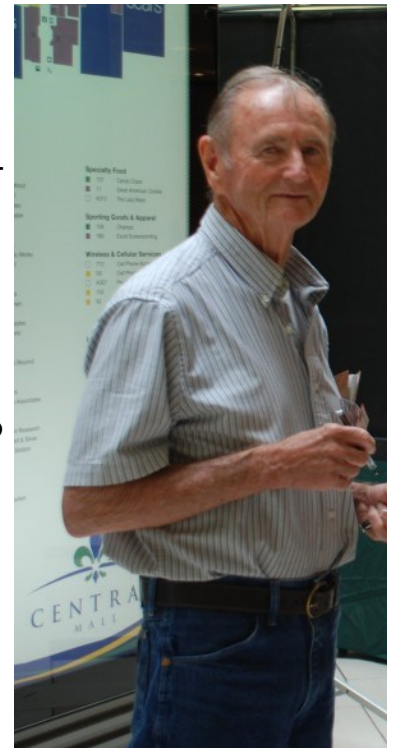
November 10, 1930 - March 29, 2021



Bonnie Childers was a friend and fellow Master Gardener. He was born in Ripley, Mississippi, but resided in Orange, Texas for many years where his family owned and operated the Childers store on Green Ave. After going to telegraph school, he operated a radio for Texas-New Orleans railroad in Echo, TX. He joined the US Navy in 1951 and served as a Radio Operator aboard the USNAAS, USS Kula Gulf Aircraft Carrier, and USS WRIGHT. He was awarded the National Defense Service Medal, United Nations Service Medal, Korean Service Medal, and Good Conduct Medal. After his career in the military, he worked for the Orange Post Office and then at Dupont's lab

in Beaumont, TX.

In 1968, Bonnie began his journey into pecan grafting and citrus budding. Gardeners and horticulturalists all over Southeast Texas and beyond loved and respected Bonnie. He budded and grafted trees from Louisiana to Colorado. Many local gardens contain trees that he grafted (including at least two of my citrus trees). He was a wealth of knowledge. Every time I talked with him about citrus, I was always astounded at the amount of information he could tell me. He knew the names, flavors, and growing habits of every type of citrus known to our area. As a long-time member of the Jefferson County Horticulture Committee, he was a fixture and judge at the Citrus Show and Fruit and Vegetable Show for many years. He also taught many Southeast Texans how to bud citrus through the committee's Budding and Grafting workshop. We will miss you, Bonnie!



Using Herbs in the Landscape

By: Melissa Starr, JCMG

“Herbs can be used as borders, shrubs, to fill in empty spaces, as background accents, to attract insects or to repel insects.”

Herbs are traditionally thought of as culinary or medicinal plants. However, since they come in many different shapes and sizes, they can be used as great accent pieces in the landscape. Herbs can be used as borders, shrubs, to fill in empty spaces, as background accents, to attract insects or to repel insects.

Herbs can add texture to the garden and can be used for different purposes. Some herbs that work well as a hedge or a low border include rosemary, southernwood, parsley, and lamb's ear to name a few. Some taller herbs, such as African blue basil, lemongrass, fennel and pineapple sage, can be used behind plants as a background. Rose geranium and trailing or prostrate rosemary can be used to fill in empty spaces between taller plants since they grow low and wide.

If you want to attract bees or butterflies to your garden, herbs are a perfect solution. Flowering herbs, such as basil, bee balm, foxglove, rosemary, and yarrow are perfect for pollinators. Also, parsley, dill and fennel are butterfly host plants and will attract female butterflies that will lay their eggs on them.

If you want to repel bad bugs, herbs can be the answer to this problem. Rosemary repels cabbage moths, carrot flies and bean beetles while chives and mint repel aphids. Be careful with

mint. It should be planted in a container because it will spread rapidly and take over the garden.

No matter what type of sun or shade is in the yard, there is an herb that will grow there. Lovage grows best in cool weather in the deep shade, but basil loves heat and sun. Herbs that grow in part sun/part shade include thyme, marjoram, chamomile and catnip. Parsley likes bright sun in the cooler months, but part shade in the summer months.

Growing herbs is not difficult if you have the right soil conditions. Herbs need good drainage and at least 18 inches of soil depth to grow well. To achieve this, you can plant herbs in pots, in a raised bed or in the garden if the soil meets these requirements. Add some compost to the soil every year where your herbs are planted. This will help keep the soil fertile and deep. Mulch the top of the soil to keep it cool during the hot summer months. Small herb plants need more air circulation, so don't let mulch touch the stems of these plants or they will rot. Water herbs when the top one inch of soil is dry. It is best to not use sprinklers, but to water at ground/soil level to discourage fungal diseases. Prune herbs to the shape you desire. As you prune, they will grow to become bushier.

Tips for Plant Survival During Vacation

By: Melissa Starr, JCMG

How do I keep my plants alive while I am on vacation? This is a question many people ask when they are planning to be away for a week or longer. Instead of letting your vegetable garden and flowers wither away and die, follow these simple steps, and your plants will be happier when you return.

First, make sure that you irrigate your lawn and garden. If it hasn't rained in the last couple of days, make sure you water the ground until it is moist to at least a depth of one inch. If you have irrigation timers, set them to come on at least every third day for 30 minutes or longer. If you don't have timers, you may also ask your neighbor to come water the garden for you. If you have container plants, group them together to make it easier for the neighbor to water them. Normally, I can count on my husband's mom to water our garden for us, but some years ago she went on vacation with us. We set our irrigation timers to come on every third day for an hour; our garden and container plants were still happy when we came home.

Deadhead your roses and annual flowers before you leave. This will encourage them to produce blooms while you are away and look beautiful when you arrive home.

Weed and mulch in your gardens. Weeds left unattended will take over within a week or two and become a burden to you later. Mulching discourages weed growth, reduces soil temperature, and helps hold water in the soil.

Check for insects and diseases. If you find any unwanted insects or diseases on your plants, spray before you leave. Insects left unchecked will multiply and have a feast in your garden, and diseases will become uncontrollable later.

Harvest any ripe or nearly ripe fruit in the garden. You can also ask a neighbor to harvest for you. It is disheartening to come home and find rotten tomatoes and peppers still clinging to the vines.

Last, don't forget your houseplants also need tending while you are away. If you can, move your houseplants outdoors under a shade tree near an automated sprinkler. If not, put them in a group in the bathtub. Water them with two to three times the amount of water you would normally give them. You can also fill the bathtub with 1 to 2 inches of water and let the plants soak it up while you are gone (as suggested in Doug Welsh's Texas Garden Almanac). If all else fails, ask your neighbor to come and water for you.

Enjoy your vacation, and make sure your plants enjoy it too!



Congratulations!

TXMG State Award Results

2nd Place

Medium County

Outstanding Individual—**Stellina Reed**

JCMG—1st Place

Medium County

Educational Program

Facebook Live Gardening Classes

JCMG—1st Place

Medium County

Written Education

Daily Facebook Garden Tips

JCMG—1st Place

Medium County

Outstanding Association

Veteran's Memorial Workday



The Latest Dirt

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MISSION STATEMENT

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

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Announcements

50th Annual
Jefferson County
Fruit and Vegetable Show
Saturday, June 12th Central
Mall

Entries received from
9:00 – Noon

Judging will begin at Noon
Enter your fresh or processed
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JCMG Master Gardener class

9 am to 4 pm daily
Sept 20, 21, 22, 23, 24
and 1 pm to 5 pm on
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