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**The next
SCMG Association meeting is
Wednesday, August 12, 2020
via Zoom**

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Debby's Digressions...



It has been a long, almost
six months of turmoil and
disruption to our life,
courtesy of the corona-
virus. Though, some posi-
tives have come from it!
One of which is that peo-
ple have turned to garden-
ing as a way to deal with
the uncertainties. You've
realized this if you've

tried to order seeds online and everything you
want is out of stock, or you've noticed the
large volume of shoppers in the garden center
portion of the big box stores. People are real-
izing what we, as master gardeners, already
know...playing with plants and working in
the soil is healing and gives a sense of securi-
ty in the middle of chaos. Plus, any vegetables
that we grow taste mighty good!

Master Gardener Associations across the
United States are struggling with how to keep
their members engaged during this time of
social distancing and concern with health and
safety. *We are no different.* Some of our folks
have probably developed new routines that
preclude them from involvement with the rest
of us master gardeners. However, even
though we haven't been doing lots of activi-
ties in person, numerous high-quality contin-
uing education opportunities do abound via
online formats that I hope you are taking ad-
vantage of. The positive side of this new
online life is that we have access to excep-
tional educational presentations that were
previously unavailable unless we wanted to
travel a great distance to hear them in person.

It's August and it's HOT, but hey, this is
TEXAS, and it's always hot here in August!
HOWEVER, our demonstration gardens are
flourishing and we are busy at work in them.
It's taking lots of work to get caught up after
so many months of neglect while we were

quarantined. Come out and join us! It's an
easy way to get volunteer hours and enjoy the
comradery of other master gardeners. (I didn't
say you wouldn't sweat, I said it was easy!)
It's not a problem to spread out and work and
enjoy the beauty of the gardens while practicing
social distancing.

Even though it may not seem like it, we do
have plenty going on. Our Calendar/Garden
Guide is on track to go to the printers. There
is still plenty of work to do with marketing
and distribution so stay tuned to help with
that. Five members of the Board of Directors
had volunteered to be part of a Clothing Sub-
committee and worked diligently to prepare a
recommendation for the Board of Directors.
At the July Board of Directors meeting their
recommendation was unanimously approved
as the Board was very pleased with it. They
presented a beautiful, high-quality product
that has ease of ordering. Information is forth-
coming on that. A small group of the Bulbs to
Blooms Conference and Sale Committee has
been busily brainstorming innovative and
creative possibilities of holding the event de-
pending upon the circumstances of what
COVID-19 will hold for us in October. There
WILL be a Bulbs to Blooms...it just won't
look like anything in the past! The Green-
house Committee presented a Business Plan
to the Board of Directors in June, which was
approved, and it is moving forward with that.
So, even in the midst of this tumultuous time
our members are busily working to make the
best of the situation. Our Interns are the ones
who are suffering now because they don't
know how things normally were in the past
and feel like they are in a constant state of
uncertainty. If you see an Intern please stop
and talk to them, welcome them, and reassure
them that we will help them to succeed.

Please continue to be safe during this un-
conventional time...

-Debby Watkins -President

SCMG Meeting Information

We were all looking forward to having an in-person meeting for August, but the current statistics for coronavirus make that seem imprudent. **We are still going to have our meeting on August 12, but it will be via Zoom.** I hope you will join us. Connecting to a Zoom meeting might be a bit intimidating, so be sure to watch the video about how to enter a zoom meeting or elsewhere in this issue of Grapevine (on page 3).

A special blast will be sent out to all members, and it will contain the link for the Zoom meeting and a copy of the agenda. We are going to be practicing ahead of time on using Zoom, changing presenters, and sharing our screens, in order to give you the best meeting that we possibly can.

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This summer I started on my PhD in Forestry at SFA and took my first class (Business Training and Resource Design). There is no PhD in horticulture at SFA. If I survive it, I'll have a bachelors in Floriculture, a Masters in Horticulture, and a PhD in Forestry.

I thought why on earth would they have me take a business class? It turns out that the class was very applicable to my job both from my employer training standpoint and from my day to day job training and teaching Smith County Master Gardeners and the public. The goal of the class was to learn how to create an education resource which could be used in the workplace.

I chose Master Gardeners as my project. By the end of the class we were to have increased our knowledge relating to the training function, training processes, design considerations, alternative methods of instruction, implementation issues, and training evaluation. I can't say that I'm an expert now, but it sure made me think about master gardener training and what I will do differently in the future. I certainly need to do more evaluation. Thankfully, I made an A in the class and will move on to at least three more years-worth of class work and research. Please bear with me. Class, cats, canines, chickens, commuting, and a Cajun are a full load.

Here is a flyer I put together for class that provides educational resources to help find answers to the public's (and your own) horticultural questions. -Greg



Board of Directors

The Board of Directories met on July 16th. The following items were discussed:

- **Greenhouse Project** --- Liz Wiley updated the board on new directives coming from the Tyler City Greenhouse project leader, Juan Landeros. Several items were addressed and should be worked out before the Greenhouse is up and running. Check out the Weekly Blast for upcoming dates that volunteers will be needed.
- **Name Badges** --- Debby Watkins and Allison Morrow are searching for a new vendor for name badges. The search has been narrowed down to two companies. Name badges should be coming soon.
- **SCMGA Clothing** --- Victor Long and committee have selected new shirts for members. The board approved their selection and agreed that all orders will be handled individually online. Members will have the month of August to order shirts. Additional information will be in the Weekly Blast.
- **East Texas State Fair Exhibit** ---With the cancelation of the ETSF, alternative plans are being made for the exhibit. Delane Sykes and Belinda Kromer have been working with their committee and will present an update soon.
- **From Bulbs to Blooms** ---The Bulb Sale and Conference Committee is planning a virtual sales event this year. Thanks to Brenda Strong and the Bulb Sale committee many details are being worked out as they research how other associations are handling similar events.
- **August Monthly Membership Meeting** ---At this time, plans are being made to meet at the Rose Garden Center. The date is Wednesday August 12th. Check the Weekly Blast is case changes have to be made due to large group gatherings.

-Janie Fowler



From Bulbs to Blooms Update:

Just what is this year's bulb sale going to look like? If anyone has a working crystal ball, please contact me because I'd love some insight! Barring any crystal ball insights, we are currently hoping to have our sale in-person as usual with some accommodations for social distancing.

The reality of the current environment means we are also brainstorming how we could conduct this sale as an online-only event.

In mid-July a number of committee members attended a Zoom meeting with other Texas MGs to hear what other groups have done for their sales. One member recommended a sales platform that sounds quite promising. Another member strongly discouraged a particular platform – equally valuable information.

At this moment, I am cautiously optimistic that we will definitely have a bulb sale in October.

-Brenda Strong



HOW TO ENTER A ZOOM MEETING

There is a good possibility that, if you already haven't participated in one, you will be attending a Zoom meeting in the near future. Our monthly membership meetings will be held on Zoom at some point. When you attend a Zoom meeting for SCMG you will receive an invitation to join the meeting via an email or a link posted on our members' only section of the website or VMS. The first time you participate in a Zoom meeting it is helpful to click on the link a few minutes ahead of the meeting time in case you need to download the Zoom app to allow you to participate. This link explains how to join a Zoom meeting for the first time: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9isp3qPeQ0E&feature=youtu.be>. -*Debby Watkins*



What about a Greenhouse?



About a year and a half ago, our current Master Gardener President, Debby Watkins, gave a presentation on Greenhouse Management at one of the Friday Library series. It was so inspiring! So many people were interested in having a greenhouse, even if it was only a little 'hoop house' in the back yard. As Master Gardeners, we were excited as well. Oh, the things we could do with a greenhouse of our own! We could have a series of educational presentations, have talks about propagation, grow various plants for our gardens at the now Tyler Botanical Garden, maybe have enough for additional plant sales, and so much more. So many people were interested, that Debby put together a subcommittee to investigate the possibilities.

As a new subcommittee, we really did our homework. We looked at partnering with various nurseries and school greenhouses all over the county. We contacted James Wilhite who owns Wilhite Landscaping in Tyler to see if they would be willing to share some space with us. We also checked with a couple of school districts that were known to have agricultural programs and greenhouses. We made a trip to Whitehouse High School and were given a tour of their facility and we visited the City's Rose Garden greenhouse. There were so many options. We finally decided the best course of action however was to work with the City of Tyler at the Rose Garden. One thing that worked in favor of the City was the fact that their greenhouse was located right behind the IDEA garden and across the street. A much shorter distance to transport plants when ready to plant. Their facility was also not being used except to store supplies and some plants prior to planting, but unfortunately, it needed a lot of repairs. A LOT of repairs. But as gardeners we looked at this as an opportunity for a collaborative project that would provide hands-on experience in building and developing a greenhouse for the benefit of our gardens as well as our members. Sounds like a mouthful, but basically as gardeners, we're in the business of growing things, so why not a greenhouse?

Step one, the repairs. The covering for the greenhouse has basically disintegrated and will need to be replaced. The City had already purchased a new cover and we've scheduled August 10th as a workday to put the it on. Before that workday, the City will finish taking the old cover off. The City will reserve equipment to help with the job and even though we've scheduled the workday for August 10th, we're reserving the 11th and 12th as workdays, just in case there's bad weather and we can't do it on the 10th. So, if you think you'd be able to help on the 10th and possibly the 11th or 12th, please sign up by emailing Liz Wiley at txmimi52@suddenlink.net.

Coming up next month, we'll share our goals and plans for the Smith County Master Gardener Greenhouse at the Tyler Botanical Garden. -*Terri Gerber*

Heritage Rose Garden Update

During August we'll still be working on Tuesdays starting at 8:30 AM in the Heritage Rose Garden. It may be hot out, but there is still plenty that needs to be done. We're trying to get caught up from our absence during the quarantine. If you arrive to work and find that the gate is closed, do not be alarmed! We are working...it's just that the Rose Garden Crew has sprayed in their areas and the gate has to stay closed to the public till 8:30 AM. You can park outside the gate and go through the building or simply wait until the gate opens. Hope to see you in the garden! *Debby Watkins and Henry Burch*

(From Page 1) SCMG Meeting Information

Of course, we will have our VMS incentive drawing for a gift card during our zoom meeting. So please be sure to have all of your hours entered by August 1st. Remember, you must have a total of three hours in any combination of continuing education and volunteer hours, in order to be eligible for the drawing.

For our meeting Program, Mimi Hershey and Katy Barone are going to talk to us about the Junior Master Gardener program. They both attended advanced training on this and are looking forward to sharing what they learned, and encouraging interest in this program amongst all of us.

Meanwhile, I will continue to lurk in the aisles of Sam's and Walmart, Dollar General, and any place else that I think I might get lucky and find facemasks, hand sanitizer, and disinfecting spray. So that when we finally can have an in-person meeting, we will easily be able to make it a safe one. -*Mary Jo Madden*

New e-mail addresses: Hazel Bateman: hazelbateman54@gmail.com Wayne Elliott: wayneelliott509@gmail.com

BE A GREG GRANT MINI-ME



Greg always says he wants us to be a mini-him in dealing with the public... well, now is your opportunity to dress like Greg when you're acting like Greg!

Seriously though, in April 2019, the Texas Master Gardener Association rebranded the logo to make it uniform throughout the state. In keeping with the new logo and needing shirts and name tags for our new interns, a clothing committee was formed to look for new options. The new shirt, modeled by Greg Grant, will be a short sleeve polo style in blueberry with the logo on the upper left side. There will be men's and women's sizing available and everything will be handled online. Members will be able to order and pay online with local pick

up of the merchandise.

The committee decided to keep the SCMG look simple by staying with one shirt, color, and style, making SCMG members recognizable at events. Watch the SCMG Weekly Blast in the coming weeks for the website launch to begin ordering the new shirts. -Jean Smith

REPORT FROM THE GARDENS

Please wear name badges when working in the garden. You should only be working in the gardens on Garden Work Days. The Garden Coordinator should be aware of any exceptions. We have been advised that if the Rose Garden Crew observes anyone in our gardens on any days other than workdays and you are not wearing a name badge you will be asked to leave. There was a recent incident where a woman was working in the IDEA Garden and not wearing a name badge and was asked to leave. She claimed to be the master gardener in charge of the garden. Turns out she had other issues and the police were called to escort her from the garden, but the moral of the story is "wear your name badge" or you will be asked to leave.

A new vendor has been selected to provide our name badges as the vendor that was being used had issues and could not provide the name badges. Replacement badges (ones folks have already ordered) and Intern badges will hopefully be ready soon.

-Debby Watkins

Online Gardening courses link: <https://agrilifelearn.tamu.edu/catalog?pagename=Plants-and-Garden>



Horticulture Field Day - Overton

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic this year, we made the decision to go virtual for the Horticulture Field Day. There will be virtual tours of our trial areas including our Field Annual Color Trial, Container Trial, and the Demonstration Garden/Perennial Trial guided by Dr. Brent Pemberton. These tours consist of video and images of the current happenings in all aspects of the trial.

-Brent Pemberton

*VIRTUAL TOURS OF CURRENT 2020 TRIALS

(A series of videos filmed on 18 and 19 June 2020 featuring tours of the Overton Trials with Dr. Brent Pemberton) Go to link below:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLxQeAt0asHA3vX8tbGpfzk7sVhuHf0waM>