

MG Grapevine

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November 2020



**The next
SCMG Association meeting is
Thursday, November 5, 2020
at Mineola Nature Preserve**

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Go to Page 3 for detailed info.



Debby's Digressions

I can't believe that it is November already! It has been a tumultuous year for everyone. Though, the resilience of folks never ceases to amaze me! When I talk to people and hear how they have adapted to this "new normal" I feel so blessed to be living here in East Texas among such amazing people. In addition to the amazing people, the weather has been equally amazing. I hope you have taken advantage of the great fall weather to get outdoors. This is the perfect time to plant new shrubs so they have a chance to get acclimated before our brutal summer kicks in. Used to be you couldn't find nice plants for sale in the fall as it was all the leftovers from the summer. Thanks to people like Greg getting the word out that this is the perfect time of the year to plant, we now have garden centers bringing in nice plants for the fall instead of just trying to clear out their inventory!

I was extremely excited about the level of volunteerism for the "From Bulbs to Blooms Conference and Sale!" We knew it was going to take the entire village to pull it off and you stepped up fabulously. The Committee worked hard to make sure that everyone stayed safe and that COVID protocols were followed during the preparation of orders and the actual pick-up day. Thank you for being willing to participate when it can be done safely! We learned lessons from this to apply to future gatherings. In terms of how successful the event was, the Committee totally knocked it out of the park with their planning, organization, and commitment to excellence as this sale's net revenues even exceeded last year!

Even though I'm nervous about the execution, because we've never done anything like this before (my technological skills have been challenged this year), our November Membership Meeting promises to be a special event. We are going to combine in-person with Zoom in an outdoor venue. The details have already gone out in the Friday

e-blast. So, I hope to see you there, whether in-person or virtually. Rain or shine it will occur!

Hard to believe, but plans are being made for the 2021 Trainee Class. Greg is planning for it to be an in-person class like in the past because of the educational value in doing it that way. All precautions are being taken to make it a safe activity with all COVID protocols being followed. Even in the midst of this pandemic, people have contacted the Extension Office and expressed interest. Greg has written an article for the Tyler paper and the information will be posted to Facebook and our website BUT, you can help spread the word too. Talking to family and friends is sorta like preaching to the choir because they see what you are doing, but you can encourage the ones who have an interest in gardening to get involved. Also, when you're out and about and chatting with people in your favorite garden center you can tell them that for a complete schedule, information packet, and application they can call the Smith County Extension office at (903) 590-2980 or come by the Cotton Belt Building, [1517 W. Front St., Suite 116](#), in Tyler. An orientation meeting for potential Master Gardeners will be held at the Smith County AgriLife Extension office ([1517 W. Front St.](#)) on Friday, November 20 from 1-3 pm.

As you read this, there are two months left in this year to obtain your 12 Volunteer hours and 6 Continuing Education (CE) hours in 2020 to stay certified as a Texas (Smith County) Master Garden. We want you all to continue to be certified and maintain your affiliation with the Smith County Master Gardeners Association. (This information does not apply to Interns.) If you don't know how to get your hours, please contact me and I will provide you with suggestions and alternatives. Even during the midst of the pandemic there are ways to obtain hours and still stay safe. **Most importantly, if you're having problems, please reach out to me and let me know.** Don't wait till December 31 and then ask what you can do. Greg is a magician in so many ways, but we can't conjure things out of thin air at the last minute.

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Growing Fruit and Nut Trees in Smith County

The Smith County Master Gardener Help Desk was recently presented this problem via e-mail:

“Hello. I have multiple diseases and some that I cannot identify on a majority of my fruit trees. All trees including peaches, pears, apples, plums, apricots, persimmon, and pawpaw have issues from blight, canker, leaf spot, brown rot, borers, etc. I cannot seem to stop most of them. Some I do control with copper spray but not the majority. I also have a tree that I cannot identify that was planted by the previous owner. I want to remain organic. I have two children who are very sensitive to chemicals.”

“Additionally, I have fruit trees planted in two different areas on my property. They seem to do much better in one area than the other. I do not know if I have some strange micro-climate or something else odd going on. Any help would be appreciated.”

Here’s how I answered it:

The only fruit trees with hope of producing organically are Japanese persimmons, hard canning pears, figs, blackberries, and blueberries. Unfortunately borers and diseases have to be prevented and can’t be cured. Each species of fruit tree has its own separate insects, diseases, and cultural problems so you will need to send us high resolution images (or drop off live samples sealed in zip lock bags) of each problem individually. I have attached a number of our publications on each fruit crop which tell how to produce them along with a recommended varieties and a submission form for the Texas A&M Disease Diagnostic laboratory in College Station. It may take two e-mails to send them all. There is no easy answer. Hopefully this will help. Many fruit trees like peaches, plums, apples, and apricots are short lived and very prone to insects and diseases here. You can find more production information under the fruit resources section of the Aggie Horticulture website.

With fruit tree planting season coming up (fall and winter for container grown trees and winter for bare root trees) this is information that all interested parties need to know along with the fact that are too far north and have far too erratic winters to grow and reliably produce tropical and subtropical fruits like avocados, bananas and citrus and too far south with summers too hot and winters too warm to grow and reliably produce more northern fruits and nuts like apples, cherries, and walnuts.

Producing regular crops of high quality fruits and nuts is very difficult here and usually requires irrigation, fertilizer, fungicides, insecticides, weed control, and specific pruning techniques. Be sure and share our recommended fruit and nut variety list along with the specific fruit or nut publication from the Aggie Horticulture website with anyone interested in growing their own along with advice that it’s not easy and requires diligence and hard work. -Greg



The Board of Directors met via ZOOM on October 15, 2020. The following are highlights from the meeting.

A budget amendment was approved for the purchase of a Perpetual Memorial Plaque to be displayed at the Extension Office Building. The plaque will honor members from the past, present, and future.

Jean Smith gave a VMS update on members volunteer and continuing education hours. Several members have not reported volunteer or continuing education hours and there are those

members with volunteer hours and no continuing education hours and those members with continuing education hours and no volunteer hours.

Henry Burch presented a financial update on the From Bulbs to Blooms Sale and Conference. The virtual conference and sale proved to be a success.

The Board approved the budget amendment of \$147.21 for the purchase of a cordless voice amplifier and microphone system for the Extension Office Classroom, Rose Garden Guide Tours, First Tuesday in the Garden, and field trips.

A Tri-Fold brochure for the Tyler Botanical Garden will be printed and placed in the garden for visitors seeking information about the garden.

The Board approved the 2021 SCMGA Annual Budget presented by Henry Burch and committee.

The Board was informed of the approval of Lifetime Membership status for Jim Powell.

-Janie Fowler

SCMGA—November Meeting

The November meeting of SCMGA will be held at the Mineola Nature Preserve on Thursday, November 5. There is a large, open pavilion that will allow for adequate social distancing, and we will convene there at 11:30 for the business portion of the meeting. The program for this meeting will be presented by Smith County AgriLife agent Clint Perkins and Wood County Master Gardener Linda Timmons, and it will include a walking tour of the gardens and various onsite facilities. Members are invited to bring their lunch to enjoy on the pavilion after the meeting.



Wood County Master Gardeners maintain several demonstration gardens at the Mineola Nature Preserve, and there are walking, riding, biking, and paddling trails in place for year-round enjoyment.

So wear your mask, bring your lunch, and plan on enjoying a safe, socially distant outdoor gathering with your fellow Master Gardeners - because it's been a while!

We want to provide them with an estimate on the number of attendees, so we've got a Signup for RSVPs - **please sign up if you plan to attend**. And if you need accommodation to ensure a safe visit, please include that in the comment area or send me an email (maryjmadden@gmail.com).

Here is the link for the Mineola Nature Preserve, where you can find more info, including maps and driving directions: <https://mineolanaturepreserve.com/>

Here is the link to the Signup: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054DA5AE2AAAF94-november>

Here is the link to the simultaneous Zoom meeting, for those who do not want to attend in person:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83697835685?pwd=RUJJdWtoMU4yWDBRU0cwRDdxVldvQT09> -Mary Jo Madden

Debby's Digressions—from page 1

Also, we know there are those of you that have participated but have not entered your hours in VMS. ***Please, get those hours entered!*** It is important if you want to continue to be certified, but it also is important for Greg and his status at AgriLife and us having a horticultural agent.

Mary Jo Madden, our Vice-President, is brainstorming ideas to make our December meeting as special in this crazy pandemic time as what it was in normal times. If you have any thoughts on this, please feel free to reach out to her. We may have missed our April, May, and June meetings trying to make sense of all this and stay safe, but we regrouped and want to end 2020 on a bang and be able to say, "COVID-19 you may have knocked us down for a brief spell, but you can't keep us down!"

As always, please continue to be safe during this unconventional time... -Debby Watkins, President

This slate of officers which will be presented for election at the November association meeting.

Nominees for 2021 Association Officers

President	Mary Jo Madden
Vice President	Belinda Kromer
Secretary	Susan Buntz
Treasurer	Terri Gerber
Assistant Treasurer	Joel Ross
Parliamentarian	Debby Watkins
Historian	Lucy Morgan
Board Member At-Large	Elizabeth Waldrop
Board Member At-Large	Henry Burch
State Director	Maury Hudson
State Director	Chris Cochran
Alternate State Director	Janet Burns

New Members who Transferred to Smith County



Lenka Johnson
150 County Road 3811,
Troup, TX 75789.
E-mail Lenka_7@msn.com
Phone number is 970-215-2988.

From Montgomery County



Stephen G. Purdy
2051 W Cumberland Road,
Apt 525, Tyler, TX 75703
E-Mail: spurdy06@sbcglobal.net
Phone: 817-975-7917

From Tarrant County

Gardening Guide & Calendar

The **East Texas Gardening Guide and Calendar** is a yearly publication by the Smith County Master Gardeners offering gardening advice, tips, planting guides, lists of things to do, and timely articles on seasonal plants - all written with the local East Texas gardening community in mind. The 2021 Guide highlights the newly-designated Tyler Botanical Garden and offers insights into the creation and maintenance of the IDEA Garden, Shade Garden, and Heritage Rose Garden - the three gardens that comprise the Tyler Botanical Garden .

The **2021 East Texas Gardening Guide and Calendar** is a must for all local gardeners and can be purchased locally for \$7.00 at many local vendors. Go to: txmg.org/smith/mg-projects/gardening-guide-calendar/ for a complete list.

Calendars can also be purchased and picked up at the AgriLife Extension Office, 1517 W. Front St., Suite 116 in Tyler. Cost is \$7.00, check or exact cash only.



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

Smith County Master Gardener Association
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