

# MG Grapevine

<http://scmg.tamu.edu>

Vol. XXVIII No. 1

January 2021



**The next  
SCMG Association meeting is  
Thursday, January 7, 2021  
At 11:30 AM via ZOOM**

**MG Grapevine Staff**  
Martin Davis, Editor

**MG Grapevine Contributors:**

Greg Grant, Debby Watkins, Janie Fowler,  
Mary Jo Madden, and Susan Stone. .

Published for the Master Gardeners of  
Smith County, Texas under the auspices of  
the Smith County Office of Texas A&M  
AgriLife Extension, 1517 W. Front St. Tyler,  
TX 75702.

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**Debby's Digressions**

Wow...2020 is finally behind us. I know this is a year that most of us will remember forever and also would rather never think about again! Our lives as we knew them were totally disrupted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Unfortunately, this disruption still continues, but with some hope that there is light at the end of the tunnel now. The pandemic made my year as president quite challenging, but with the support of a lot of great people, I feel like we managed to stay engaged and involved, through some innovative thinking and a willingness on your part to be flexible. I want to thank all of you for hanging in there and not giving up on being a SCMG! I feel blessed to be part of such a great bunch of folks. At the January membership meeting I will turn the reins over to Mary Jo Madden, our 2021 President, who will capably continue to maneuver us through this pandemic until we reach some semblance of normalcy. As for me, I will still be around as Parliamentarian and can always be found in the Heritage Rose Garden.

Because of the pandemic there is still so much uncertainty as to what the future holds

for us and what we will be able to do, but be sure to ZOOM in for the January 7 membership meeting. It's your chance to get your first CE of the year! The new officers will be installed and the program will be a presentation with information gathered by our Historian, Mary Hamlin, and presented by me, that takes a historical look back at 2020 in both words and pictures. Mary has done a wonderful job of capturing all that we accomplished this year in spite of the restrictions placed on us by the pandemic.

Don't forget that dues (\$25) are payable in January. This applies to both interns and certified master gardeners. To remain a certified master gardener your hours must be current in VMS as of December 31, 2020. Our new treasurer (former assistant treasurer), Terri Gerber, and new assistant treasurer, Joel Ross, will be providing us with more guidance on how we can pay our dues since we are not meeting in person in January.

There is a tradition that I am not sure goes back how far, but it involves the president receiving a President's Stone in recognition of service. Well, I had totally forgotten about that tradition and when Mary Jo handed me a box at the December membership meeting, I had no idea why it was so heavy. Duh!! Guess what was in it...my stone!

Thank you -*Debby Watkins*, President



As the SCMG Historian, Mary Hamlin has done a great job of recording what went on during 2020. Our outgoing President, Debby Watkins, has prepared a program reviewing the evidence - despite the pandemic, we showed up, we worked, we learned, we made a difference.

Our 2021 officers will also be installed. **See page 4 for ZOOM link.**

*Mary Jo Madden*

***All Garden Workdays and Face to Face meetings are cancelled until further notice.***

AgriLife has established three COVID County levels based on several factors and established directives for each level, which red being the most restrictive. Smith County has moved into the red level; thus, we were told we could no longer work in the gardens or have meetings until further notice.



**Help Desk**

The Help Desk will be operating remotely for the time being. We hope to be back in the AgriLife office in early 2021. Questions can be directed to the Help Desk at [smithmghelpdesk@gmail.com](mailto:smithmghelpdesk@gmail.com) Thanks! *Susan Stone*

## 2020 Smith County Master Gardener Volunteer Program, In Depth Summary

### Greg Grant, County Extension Agent-Horticulture, Smith County

**Relevance:** According to the Smith County Agricultural Increment Report, horticulture is the leading agricultural commodity in Smith County with gross sales over \$120 million annually. It encompasses many different aspects from greenhouse and nursery production to commercial fruit and vegetable production. Horticulture also includes homeowner issues such as diagnosing and managing plant diseases, soil fertility, home fruit and nut production, vegetable and herb production, landscape and lawn maintenance, community beautification, and Earth-Kind practices. The Texas Master Gardener volunteer program provides valuable resources for local extension to support and assist in taking research-based information to the residents of Smith County.

**Response:** The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in Smith County, the 132 member Smith County Master Gardener Association, and the 12 member Smith County Master Gardener Association Board of Directors suggested that education needed to be presented to Smith County clientele on how to properly manage home gardens and natural resources (soils, landscape plants, insects, diseases, Earth-Kind practices, water, environmental horticulture, home food production, etc.). These volunteer-implemented programs/events/trainings/projects included:

- Smith County Master Gardener volunteer training classes (Jan.-March, 22 attended)
- Smith County Master Gardener Association monthly meetings (Jan.-Dec.)
- Smith County Master Gardener Board of Directors monthly meetings (Jan.-Dec.)
- Smith County Master Gardener Association Grapevine monthly newsletters (Jan.-Dec.)
- Garden columns in the Sunday Tyler Morning Telegraph (Jan.-Dec., 1,323,264 reached)
- Master Gardener Help Desk and library (Jan.-Dec.)
- Tyler Botanical Garden workdays (Jan.-Dec.)
- Smith County Master Gardener Facebook page (Jan.-Dec., 8,738 followers)
- Published 2020 Garden Guide and Calendar (500)
- Caldwell school garden (Jan.-Dec., 37 children)
- IDEA Garden educational flyers (Jan.-Dec., over 5,000 distributed)
- Goodman-LeGrand Museum landscape assistance (Jan.-Dec.)
- SCMGA virtual awards/graduation (92 attended)
- Master Gardeners at the Library lectures (Jan.-Feb. 232 attended)
- 2021 MG class orientation (Nov., 13 attended)

Due to the many issues that face gardeners and homeowners today, the Smith County Master Gardener Board of Directors determined that it was important to host a new volunteer training class, Master Gardeners at the Library lecture series, and an Earth-Kind Foodscaping program along with the educational Help Desk, web page, Facebook page and demonstration garden.

#### Results- Overview of the Smith County Master Gardener program:

- 9,813.65 hours of volunteer time (through Dec. 15), multiplied by \$24.47 (2019 Independent Sector Value of Volunteers in Texas) = **\$249,953.67** for the value of volunteer time that SCMG contributed to Smith County.
- As of Dec. 15, 35,976 youth and adult clientele reached through outreach.
- As of Dec. 15, 1,861.26 Master Gardener volunteer continuing educational hours.
- Awards from the 2020 virtual State Master Gardener Conference: **1<sup>st</sup> Place Educational Program (Library Lecture Series); 1<sup>st</sup> Place Outstanding Individual; 2<sup>nd</sup> Place Outstanding Association; 2<sup>nd</sup> Place Project (Home Garden Tour); 3<sup>rd</sup> Place Written Education (Garden Guide/Calendar).**

**2020 Smith County Master Gardener Training Class:** 22 of 22 (100%) of participants responded providing data back on their perception of knowledge gained, intentions to adopt, and economic impact of the educational program.

#### Knowledge Gained:

Statement	Before	After	Change	% Change
Soil, Water and Fertilizer	1.643	3.213	1.570	96%
Plant Growth and Development	1.525	2.992	1.467	96%
Home Fruit & Nut Production	1.813	3.553	1.740	96%
Vegetable & Herb Production	1.675	3.243	1.568	94%
Lawn Care	1.655	3.20	1.545	93%
Diagnosing & Managing Plant Diseases	1.655	3.20	1.545	93%
Earth-Kind Practices	1.675	3.223	1.548	92%

**Greg Grant report continued from page 2****Intentions to Adopt:** *(excludes not applicable or already adopted)*

21 of 22 (95%)- Intend to adopt using a soil test to properly fertilize plants for optimum growth.

20 of 21 (95%)- Intend to adopt the use of mulches in their landscape.

21 of 22 (95%)- Intend to adopt using Earth-Kind Practices in their landscape.

19 of 21 (90%)- Intend to adopt described methods to correctly diagnose and manage plant diseases.

18 of 21 (86%)- Intend to adopt lawn care recommendation to increase irrigation use efficiency.

**Economic Impact** *(excludes not applicable)*

21 of 22 (95%) of the participants in the Smith County Master Gardener Program anticipated a potential economic impact of **\$38,850** as a direct result of this educational program.

**Smith County Master Gardeners at the Library Pocket Prairie Lecture:** 96 of 157 (61.1%) of participants responded providing data back on their perception of knowledge gained and plans to adopt new landscaping practices.

**Knowledge Gained:**

91 of 92 (99%)- Increased knowledge on how landscape design can affect water usage.

91 of 93 (97.8%)- Increased knowledge of proper plant selection to better conserve water.

**Intention to Adopt:** *(excludes already adopted)*

72 of 78 (92.3%)- Intend to adopt proper plant selection based on water conservation.

42 of 68 (61.8%)- Intend to adopt recommended practices of harvesting and storing rainwater.

**Economic Impact:**

88 of 96 (92%) of the participants estimated that annual water-use to decrease 21.4% as a direct result of this program.

86 of 96 (90%) of participants estimated a total economic impact of **\$23,216** as a direct result of the program.

**Earth-Kind Foodscaping Master Volunteer Training:** 36 of 40 (90%) of participants responded providing data back on perception of knowledge gained and intentions to adopt new practices for the educational program.

**Knowledge Gained:**

34 of 35 (97%)- Increased knowledge of what foodscaping is and how it is used in the landscape.

32 of 34 (94%)- Increased knowledge of how to manage edible plants for the home landscape.

**Intention to Adopt:** *(excludes already adopted)*

27 of 28 (96.4%)- Intend to adopt incorporating fruits and vegetables into the landscape.

30 of 31 (96.8%)- Intend to adopt practices of growing edible plants in the landscape.

**Economic Impact:**

34 of 36 (94.4%) of participants estimated a total economic impact of **\$11,986** as a direct result of the program.

Total economic impact for the 2020 Smith County Master Gardener volunteer program can be positively determined to be **\$324,005.67** as a direct result of these programs and volunteer time.

**Acknowledgements:** All Natural Grass and Stone, Blue Moon Gardens, Breedlove Nursery, Dr. Brent Pemberton, City of Tyler, Clint Perkins, Claudann Jones, Daniel Duncum, Dr. David Creech, Dawn Stover, East Texas Brick, Erfan Vafaie, Farm Bureau, Dr. Jared Barnes, Dr. Joe Masabni, Keith Hansen, Mineola Nature Preserve, Native Plant Society of Texas, Dr. Kevin Ong, Premier Horticulture, Swift Hill Farms, Texas Organics, and the Tyler Rose Garden.

**The Board of Directors met on Thursday, December 17, 2020 via ZOOM.**

Debby Watkins called the meeting to order and recognized both the incoming officers and those officers leaving the board in the upcoming year.

Jean Smith presented an update on members still needing to obtain volunteer and continuing education hours to remain a member of the Smith County Master Gardener Association.

Mary Hamlin updated the board on the entries for the 2020 Smith County Master Gardener Association Awards to be submitted to the Texas Master Gardener Association awards program.

The writers of the awards will be Katy Barone for the Tyler Botanical Garden Project, Brenda Strong for Bulb Sale and Conference Program, Jean Smith for Written Education, Mary Jo Madden for the Outstanding Individual Award/Debby Watkins, and Mary Hamlin for the Association Award.

The board approved the sponsorship request for Texas Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences State Conference. A budget amendment was approved for sponsorship in the amount of \$1,000.

Laurie Graham reported on the IDEA Garden Project. Tyler Landscape and Irrigation will be constructing a new retainer wall and adding flagstone on the patio.

Debby Watkins advised the board that the new Master Gardener class is still being planned for June, July, and August with between 12-15 applicants at this time.

The next Board of Directors meeting will be on the 3rd Thursday in January 2021 via ZOOM.

*Janie Fowler*

## New Initiatives Coming from the Office of the Treasurer

With all the social distancing and office lock-downs still with us, 2021 is starting out full of challenges. As the new Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer, Joel Ross and myself have also challenged ourselves to think outside the box as stewards over our organization's money. We realize that as a group of gardeners, most of us just want to work in the gardens and continue to participate in all the great educational opportunities that our Master Gardener association offers. None of us want complications when it comes to how finances are handled, including Joel and myself. Therefore, we've spent time brainstorming and have come up with a couple of ways to make finances easier to handle, while not sacrificing strong accounting controls.

The first initiative is to offer online payment of dues. The way it will work is that around the time of the first Member Meeting in January every active member will receive an email that contains a link they can click on. This link will open your browser and take you to a page where you can 'check out' and pay your dues with a credit or debit card. Much like the online bulb sale where you paid for your bulbs online, you will be offered a way to pay dues online. But you don't have to go to our online store to do it, you start from the email. Don't want to use a credit card online? Not a problem. Just mail your check directly to Joel Ross. His address is in the directory, but it's 2702 Old Bullard Rd., Tyler, 75701. Want to save a stamp or use cash? Joel has a mail slot in the middle of his front door that you can slip your envelope into. Concerned about something getting lost? Also not a problem. Everyone will get a receipt for their dues in their email, no matter what method you choose for payment.



The second initiative has to do with reimbursements. While in the past you've dropped off your approved reimbursement request at the AgriLife office, we're now requesting you either mail them or email them directly to me. My address is also in the directory, but it's 5260 Cedar Hill Circle, Tyler, 75703 and my email is [TLGerber@suddenlink.net](mailto:TLGerber@suddenlink.net). We'll be offering a new form on VMS that can be filled out online and you only have to scan in your receipts to get started. Don't have a scanner? Not a problem. We're still working out some of these details, but basically you'll be able to mail the approved request and receipts to me. Have questions about how this works? Call or email me. My cell phone is (903) 504-6337.

We're always here to help and are trying to make things easier given the challenges we're all facing. Obviously this is a work in progress and Joel and I are also trying to avoid going into the AgriLife office. We're hoping that as things open up and start back toward normal, we'll continue these and possibly other initiatives that reduce paper and open up more online features to our members and others. *Terri Gerber, Treasurer*

## ZOOM MEMBERSHIP MEETING, THURSDAY, January 7, 2021, 11:30 AM

Information to join the SCMG monthly meeting via ZOOM. The Agenda, Minutes, and Financials will be on VMS. Please review before Thursday.

### LINK TO THE MEETING:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84591636209?pwd=UVFDOFlObGVBSXUveWtUTzcvWEVQZz09>

## Officers which will be installed on January 7, 2021

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
Alternate State Director	Denise VanSandt-Boyd



**LAURIE GRAHAM** –  
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