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**The next SCMG Association meeting is Thursday, December 9, 2021 At 11:30 AM at Tyler Rose Center**

**MG Grapevine Staff**  
Mary Jo Madden, Editor

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## A Note from the President

### Gratitude

I realize that there's lots going on—and not all of it has to do with Master Gardeners. Hard to believe! And so I want to take this opportunity to thank those who have contributed to the Grapevine over the past year. This newsletter is what we make it, and judging by the feedback that I've received, the members appreciate the effort that it takes to put out a "newsy" newsletter.

And thanks to all of the members who contribute their time and energy to the projects and programs that help us attain our mission! Without your participation, there would be no SCMG!

And thanks to the folks at AgriLife, who support us as we support them, in our combined mission to educate.

Hope to see you in the gardens!

Mary Jo



### CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON DECEMBER 9th !

The December Monthly Membership Meeting will be **THURSDAY, DECEMBER 9<sup>th</sup>**  
11:30am until 1:30pm with lunch and the program!  
We will be in the Rose Center Building.

Please remember to bring canned meat products and/or a blanket to share in the **Spirit of Christmas** giving back to the community through these donations to PATH!

We will start at our regular time 11:30am and have until 1:30pm with lunch and the program! We will be in the Rose Center Building and you will be able to come in through the front door. There is limited parking at in a new small lot near the Heritage Garden and the Heritage Garden Parking lot as well. If you don't need the close-up parking, please consider parking along Houston and getting a little exercise and fresh air. Leave those close spots for those who need it most.

There will be a short business meeting followed by our luncheon, fun and games. Your choices of Lunch boxes have been ordered. We will also serve tea, coffee and water. There will be 8 people per table to allow more spacing. Masks are your personal choice. We will enjoy Christmas music, games, prizes and door prizes. Come ready to enjoy a great time together!





## Inclusion Greg Grant

The Smith County Texas A&M AgriLife Extension office will be going through a routine civil rights audit when we have performance appraisals next year, so now's a good time to talk about inclusion.

At the bottom of every website, flyer, newsletter, publication, and everything we send or give out should be the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Equal Opportunity Statement which reads:

***The members of Texas A&M AgriLife will provide equal opportunities in programs and activities, education, and employment to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other classification protected by federal, state, or local law and will strive to achieve full and equal employment opportunity throughout Texas A&M AgriLife.***

Remember that Texas Master Gardeners are part of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and our vision statement says: Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service will be the leader in providing science-based information and solutions in agriculture and health to every Texan. EVERY Texan.

So in these days of social and political upheaval we need to try especially hard to go beyond just being civil. We need to be nurturing, caring, and empathetic to

all, especially to those who aren't the same as us. It's very easy to get in the habit of working and playing with the same folks all the time.

Recently the question came up about whether something we were doing was "advertising" or "education." The answer was education, since that's 99.99% of what we do. And when we do advertise, we are advertising education. Education, like gardening, belongs to all and it's our duty to share and expand it far and wide in all ways possible.

Since gardening is universal and the beloved number one hobby in the world, we need to make a conscious effort to not only reach all sectors of the general population with our educational programming but also to bring in as many diverse new Master Gardener as we can to help with that goal.

So let's take on social "advertising" by being engaging and welcoming to all including past members, present members, and future members. Be friendly. Be positive. Be helpful. Remember gardening has always been and will always be about caring, sharing, and repairing. We have a wonderful group here in Smith County but let's make diversity a priority. A garden gumbo is our goal.

### **Note From Our Historian....**

Fall is here with beautiful colors! Master Gardeners have been so busy, as always. We had a great seminar, kudos to Elizabeth, Belinda and Greg. Also, thanks to all who helped. Debby arranged to have a load of pine straw delivered, and several of us unloaded and stored it and many came to help. The irrigation system has been updated at the Heritage Garden. We had a great turnout for those interested in attending the next MG class in January.

Hope everyone had a great Thanksgiving! Happy Holidays

Lucy Morgan





## REPORTS FROM THE GARDENS

### Heritage Rose Garden

So much work to do! As the cooler weather began, we started to work on the renovation of the garden to ensure that all beds reflect the mission statement of educating the public about old garden roses and complimentary companion heirloom plants that were found in early Southern homesteads and by displaying them show that they have a place in contemporary gardens due to their beauty and sustainability. We are working on preparing beds by removing an invasive plant called "artemisia vulgaris" or common mugwort that has invaded numerous areas. The plant was introduced to the garden a long time ago before it was realized how invasive it was and attempts over the years to eradicate it have been unsuccessful; so, we are taking drastic measures now that hopefully will prove to be at least somewhat successful. We will continue to work on this so that in the spring the beds will be ready to receive new plants.

Our beds are mulched with pine straw and our supplier finally was able to deliver! We hope to place an-

other order before the end of the year and will open it up to the membership again.

The Tyler Sprinkler Company started on the Irrigation Project for the Heritage Rose/Shade Gardens during November. They were scheduled to start the first week of September but the owner struggled with a severe case of COVID, which significantly delayed the start. Work is progressing nicely and should be complete sometime the beginning of December. We elected to install a state of the art cellular controller system recommended by Tyler Sprinkler. This will allow us to program from authorized cell phones and will have connectivity to local weather at Pounds Field to serve as rain gauge, shut off for freeze conditions, etc. We thought that it demonstrates good water conservation techniques and is something that we can brag about to our vested partners.

We know that you are busy with the holidays and that the weather is not as pleasant as in the fall but we still appreciate you coming out and digging in the dirt with us.

*Debby Watkins & Henry Burch*



### Growing and Nourishing Healthy Communities



Growing and Nourishing Healthy Communities is a 6-week introductory garden course for adults. It was offered at the Lillie Russell Memorial Library in Lindale, Texas. There were approximately 20 participants and each week the number of participants and plants seemed to grow. The Better Living for Texans Agent, Amy Shively, works within Smith County is hoping to help create an interest in gardening, eating healthy, plus the extra benefits of being active while in the garden. Jesse Earp, Smith County Master Gardener, was a tremendous help with this program. Mr. Earp helped in maintenance of the garden, from watering to fertilizing and gave great, useful tips for gardening, insect control, and composting.

Several raised beds were built, and transplants were planted at the beginning of October. At the last class there was a harvest where participants harvested over 47.5

pounds of lettuce of 3 different types. To celebrate the harvest, each participant was given a harvest bucket filled with lettuce to take home. Also, there was a salad bar and salad demonstrations given.

A new program is set to start in January, A Fresh Start to a Healthier You, and participants will harvest the rest of the produce then. Demonstrations and recipes will be provided for using the harvested produce. It is a great way to start off the New Year. Then later in the spring, Learn, Grow, Eat & Go will begin, which is a youth gardening class. Amy Shively is excited to have the raised beds for year-round gardening, something that was not available to her growing up in Kansas. The climate in Texas allows for different veggies to be planted at different times. A big thanks to Jesse Earp for his contributions!

*Amy Smith-Shively*



## IDEA Garden

Yes, majestically hand painted canopies of etched jewel-colored leaves quietly carpet the ground, as if a rainbow generously splattered from above. The leaves dazzle one's eyes like lavish Christmas tree ornaments. Hollyberry sparkling red and East Texas canned yam orange, along with perfectly toasted cookie cream, and ornate pecan brown delights are just some of the many colors that adorn the earth. Perhaps like Joseph, fall too wears a coat of multiple spectacular colors. Autumn's stunning annual unannounced debut features an original collection of etched hand painted gems designed by the universal Divine Master Gardener; bearing the trademark, **Made by God!**

This December as you quietly meander down the sidewalks of the shade area of the IDEA Garden, smile back at the happy faces of the magnificent colors of pansies that dazzle the eyes. Embrace the variety of leaf textures, shades, patterns, and shapes, along with some familiar Christmas evergreen aromas. Shhhh, don't tell Santa or a soul about your childhood memory of plucking the flowerhead of the snapdragon to see its imaginary teeth. Yes, you experienced that "twinkling eye" moment of awe in the garden!

The IDEA Garden offers you a divine medley of harmonious wintertime bliss. Maybe like Joseph, winter too wears a coat of many splendid colors. Embellish your amazing stroll through our enchanting IDEA Garden. No, you want to see butterflies fluttering, but you will be welcomed by smiling ornamental edible pansies. Experience IDEA Garden Winter Wonderland Bliss!

*Sheryl Chester & Janet Burns*



IDEA Garden photo by  
Laurie Graham



## Shade Garden

During November, the Shade Garden added 3 small dry creek beds to one of the beds in the area designated as part of a future maple trail. The installation is part of Phase I of the trail. A great crew of volunteers came out to lend a hand. Sue Norton of Creative Home and Garden, San Antonio, lead the volunteers. She gave all an excellent lesson in the design and creation of dry creek beds for controlling water flow and reducing erosion, while also maintaining the natural, woodland theme inherent in the Shade Garden. We all came away inspired and armed with new knowledge and skills, along with 3 beautiful creek beds.



A highlight of the month was the Shade Garden team's field trip to the Longview Arboretum and Nature Center. Stephen Chamblee kindly gave us a tour, sharing his knowledge and keen eye for garden design, plant selection and form following function. Waxing both humorous and philosophical, Stephen definitely kept us entertained!

In other SG news, the installation of the new irrigation is underway, with the aim of updating the system to provide adequate water pressure, better water coverage across the Shade Garden and ease of controlling and monitoring the system.

SG volunteers also added 30 bales of pine straw to the beds in preparation for the winter. Many thanks to Debby Watkins for organizing the delivery.

In terms of the state of the Shade Garden, the crew is keeping things tidy as we transition into winter. We are happy to report that, despite the big February freeze, quite a few Camellia sasanquas are in bloom and many of the japonicas are brimming with buds and a promise of winter color. Quite a few of the Japanese maples are in full autumn glory, with many others on the verge. Autumn is always a beautiful time in the Shade Garden.

*Katy Barone*





**REPORT FROM BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING November 18, 2021**

The following were the highlights of items discussed:

- 2021 State Search for Excellence Award – The following will be submitted:
  - Project – Garden Guides, written by Susan Buntz
  - Educational Program – SCMGA YouTube channel, written by Terri Gerber
  - Written Education – Calendar and Garden Guide, written by Elizabeth Waldrop
  - Outstanding Individual – Brenda Strong, written by Mary Jo Madden and others
  - Outstanding Association – written by Mary Hamlin with input from others
- Work on irrigation project in Shade and Heritage Rose Garden is almost complete.
- Job Descriptions for Standing Committees and Project Leaders were approved and will be posted.
- New Projects were approved for a SCMGA
  - Seed Bank (submitted by Mary Jo Madden)
  - SCMGA Public Workshops for 2022 (submitted by Elizabeth Waldrop)
- Attire – A navy blue windbreaker was approved. See the website to order.
- Hardship leave – approved for Valerie Swords for 2021.
- Tracking for Non-Monetary Contributions – A form will be made available on the website and VMS for members to complete and submit to Greg Grant.

*Debby Watkins, Past President/Parliamentarian*

**Greenhouse Update**

The Greenhouse is still awaiting repairs to be completed.

The workers were gracious enough to let us move our plants to one of the smaller greenhouses on site.

The plants are still being monitored during the week to make sure they are healthy. We are hoping to get our original site up and working again in the near future. For now, we are not meeting on Wednesdays.

Everyone will be notified when things change and can sign up for future workdays.

*Debbie Taylor*





## Youth & Community Garden Update

### Griffin Elementary

This last month was very exciting at Griffin Elementary. The students planted three raised beds with vegetables, flowers and seeds. We worked a half day planting, watering, and talking about what and how to plant. Some of them had great stories to tell about planting gardens with their families. We had fourth graders during the school day, then the garden club after school. The garden club members range from pre-schoolers to fifth graders. We had teachers and parents drop in to see how we were doing, with the art teacher offering to help.



The Smith County Master Gardeners helped the Griffin Garden Club so much this month, Plants and Pots I like to call it. Thank you Mary Jo

Madden and Marinda Nguyen for the pots. We used them to have the children take home a plant. We discussed how to take care of them and the next week all was well with the plants. Dale, my husband, brought home a couple of flats of vegetables. An anonymous donor gave us lots of kale, pansies, snapdragons. This allowed each student to take home a plant. That thrilled them. Debby and the Heritage Garden crew dug up phlox for us. Thank you everyone.



The children asked lots of questions, a couple that I could even answer. It helped me reflect on how lucky I am to be able to work in the gardens. I hope to show these children the patience that Cindy, Laurie, and all the regulars in the IDEA garden, my mentors Marketta and George, Katy in the Shade Garden and with Griffin garden, and Debby and Henry in the Heritage Garden show me. Thanks again to all!

*Becky Wade*

## OUR FACEBOOK PAGE NEEDS YOUR HELP



As we head into the holidays and gardening activities slow down, I want to thank all of you for your help this year, sharing Facebook posts and providing me with photos and interesting information that I can post to the page. This is especially appreciated in the wintertime when gardening news is scarce. Without your help, I doubt we would have achieved (and surpassed) our goal of 10,000 followers this year.

As we head into a slower time of the year, I'm going to be taking a deep dive into some of the "improvements" Facebook has made to their administrative activities. I know there has to be a logic to what they're doing, but it isn't intuitively evident. I just can't believe that they're trying to make things harder to do on purpose. This is a test of teaching an old dog some new tricks.

Lastly, if any of you are Facebook savvy and would like to help out with the page, please let me know. Having two of us handling daily posts and special events would make things go more smoothly.

Thanks again for making 2021 successful and have a great holiday season.

*Andie Rathbone*

### New Class and Mentor News

The 2022 New Member Class will begin on January 6 and continue every Thursday through March 31.

We will assign mentors for the students by February 1; Mentor Orientation will take place in March. Please contact Heather Stephens if you are willing to mentor a Class 29 Intern at [heather.e.stephens@gmail.com](mailto:heather.e.stephens@gmail.com).

We need **YOU** and it would be great to see some new faces among the Mentor Team.

*Heather Stephens*



### HELP DESK UPDATE

We have had great success with staffing the Help Desk in November! Many who attended the training class and then signed up as First Timers have found that working the Help Desk is their cup of tea. They have signed up to work additional shifts as Trained Volunteers, thus opening more slots for First Timers to sign up.



In addition to answering phoned-in questions, the Help Desk folks have assisted in handling the pickup of bulbs for those who missed the Bulb Sale pickup day; they have done a bit of seed cleaning, some proof reading, and dealt with a couple of walk-ins with questions about what is invading their yards.

The Smith County AgriLife website now has a tab inviting visitors to submit a Master Gardener Help Desk request. It will be announced in their December newsletter, so we may start getting more emailed inquiries.

If you would like to work a shift (or more), here is the link to sign up:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054DA5AE2AAA-F94-helpdesk1>

*Mary Jo*



## Educational Programming Committee

### **2022 Master Gardeners at the Library Lectures and Dates**

#### **January 21 “Treetment: Arboriculture for the Homeowner”**

City of Tyler Arborist Madeline Burton will discuss how trees can be a valuable addition to your home and property, but they have their own set of obstacles. Proper selection and care of trees including the right tree for the right place, pruning and signs that a tree needs help will be discussed.

#### **February 18 “Some Like It Hot- Plants That Love Summer in Texas”**

By Smith County Master Gardener Andi Rathbone. Texas summers are famous not only for both their heat and the length of time we must endure that heat. How heat affects plants, what heat zones are and what plants thrive in our sizzling Texas summers will be discussed.

#### **March 18 “Flapping About Butterflies”**

Greg Grant, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Horticulture Agent for Smith County will teach us about some of the showiest and most common East Texas butterflies along with which plants that host them and which plants they nectar on.

#### **April 22 “Saving the World with Homegrown Bouquets”**

By Jay White, editor of Texas Gardener. 90% of the cut flowers sold in the U.S. are now grown overseas. While beautiful, the international trade in cut flowers comes at a high cost to the environment and the people that grow them. Learn how to “save the world” by growing your own cut flowers or supporting the American producers that provide an environmentally responsible alternative to American consumers. Selected guests get to make their own homemade floral arrangements using techniques discussed in the lecture.

#### **May 20 “Night Gardens: The Magic Mix of Plants and Moonlight”**



By Smith County Master Gardener Elizabeth Waldrop. Gardens that are planted to be at their most beautiful in the evening and by moonlight are a magical sensory experience. They also allow Gardeners who are busy during the day to experience their gardens when they have time to enjoy them. Also discussed are historic night gardens, basic design plans for your own and the enchanting plants that bring these gardens to life.

Paul Wick



# December 2021

## Smith County Master Gardeners

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			<i>1</i> Shade Garden workday 9:00	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i> Shade Garden workday 8:30
<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i> HRG/IDEA Garden Work- day 9:00 AM	<i>8</i> Shade Garden workday 9:00	<i>9</i> <b>SCMG Meeting</b> Tyler Rose Center 11:30 AM	<i>10</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>12</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>14</i> HRG/IDEA Garden Work- day 9:00 AM	<i>15</i> Shade Garden workday 9:00	<i>16</i> <b>SCMG BOD</b> <b>Luncheon</b> 11:30 Bruno's	<i>17</i>	<i>18</i> Shade Garden workday 8:30
<i>19</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>21</i> No Garden Workday	<i>22</i> No Garden workday	<i>23</i> AgriLife Office Closed  <i>Grapevine deadline</i>	<i>24</i> AgriLife Office Closed	<i>25</i> 
<i>26</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>28</i> IDEA Garden Workday 9:00 AM	<i>29</i> No Garden workday	<i>30</i>	<i>31</i> AgriLife Office Closed  