

# MG Grapevine

<http://scmg.tamu.edu>

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**The next SCMG Association meeting is  
Thursday, January 6, 2022  
At 11:30 AM at  
Tyler Rose Center**

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

**MG Grapevine Contributors:**

Greg Grant, Debby Watkins, Henry Burch, Belinda Kromer, Katy Barone, Paul Wick, Becky Wade, Debbie Taylor, Laurie Graham, Brenda Strong, Heather Stephens.

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## **A Note from the President**

### **Not a Swan Song!**

Out with the old and in with the new! And hopefully not only new, but also improved!! We have had two tough years, and its time for 12 months of Spring, in my opinion. We've earned it, by carrying on, despite everything.

Take a look at Greg's Report to Smith County (on page 10&11) to see just how much we benefitted Smith County this past year. Despite COVID, despite snow-mageddon. Despite valued members leaving, despite staff turnover. WE ROCK!

And we will continue to do so, because the members of SCMGA are outstanding individuals. At the January meeting, I will pass the baton to Belinda Kromer, who has proven herself to be so caring and so competent! We are lucky to have her lead us through the next twelve months, with the support and assistance of the new Board of Directors. And let's not overlook the Chairs of our four Standing Committees, and the Leaders of our many projects, all of whom are critical to maintaining the vitality of our organization.

Don't forget to get your hours into VMS! Yes, they are supposed to be in by today, but we won't refuse them if you can get them in soon! And January is our dues-paying month, let's all get that taken care of promptly, please.

Thanks to all of you for your support and participation over the past year. I'm so looking forward to my new duties as Parliamentarian, I've even downloaded an electronic copy of Roberts Rules of Order! And I've already delivered the freezer for the new Seedbank, so that new project will soon be up and running. Our office is moving, and ..... there's so much more to look forward to in the year ahead! Hope to see you in the gardens!

Mary Jo 🥰



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See Page 7 for details about the upcoming Membership Meeting! Please come for the installation of our 2022 officers!





## Certified Arborists Greg Grant, The Grapevine

I was recently asked what criteria we used in recommending “certified arborists in Smith County.” I simply go to the Texas Chapter of the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) website each year and check to see who has fulfilled their educational qualifications to gain their certification.

Why hire an arborist? Proper tree care is an investment which can lead to substantial returns. Well cared for trees are attractive and can add considerable value to your property. Poorly maintained trees can be a significant liability. Pruning or removing trees, especially large trees, can be dangerous work.

An arborist is a specialist in the care of individual trees. Arborists are knowledgeable about the needs of trees, and are trained and equipped to provide proper care of trees. Arborists can provide a variety of services:

**Pruning**—The arborist can determine what type of pruning is necessary to maintain or improve the health, appearance and safety of your trees.

**Removal**—Although tree removal is a last resort, there are circumstances when it is necessary. An arborist can help decide whether or not a tree should be removed.

**Emergency Tree Care**—Storms may cause limbs or entire trees to fail, often landing on homes, cars, other structures or other trees. An arborist can assess the work to be undertaken.

**Planting**—Some arborists plant trees and most can recommend what types of trees are appropriate for a specific location.

**Other Services**—Many arborists can provide the following services:

1. Practice Plant Health Care; a concept of preventative maintenance to keep trees in good health which will help

the tree better defend itself against insects, disease and site problems.

2. Fertilization of trees.
3. Cabling or bracing for added support to branches with weak attachment.
4. Aeration to improve root growth.
5. Installation of lightning protection systems.
6. Spraying or injecting to control certain insect and disease problems.

**There are a variety of things to consider when selecting an arborist which include:**

1. Look for membership in a professional organization such as the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA), the Tree Care Industry Association (TCIA) or the American Society of Consulting Arborists (ASCA).
2. Ask for proof of insurance (liability and workman's compensation) and the phone number of the insurance company if you are not satisfied.
3. Ask for references to find out where the company has done work similar to the work you are requesting.
4. Unless you know and are comfortable with the arborist, get more than one estimate. Be wary of individuals who go door-to-door and offer bargains for performing tree work. Good arborists will only perform accepted practices. For example, practices such as topping a tree or using climbing spikes on live trees are not necessary.

Don't only accept the low bid. Compare all of the above to the bids.

*For more information, visit the Texas Chapter of the International Society of Arboriculture at <https://isatexas.com>.*

Here's the SignUp link if you want to pitch in and help Greg with the CottonBelt beds:  
<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054DA5AE2AAAF94-greg>

*happy new year*

## REPORTS FROM THE GARDENS

### Heritage Rose Garden

Wow! It's hard to believe that January and a new year is here. We start the new year full of hope and optimism and thanks for the gorgeous weather we have been experiencing. Our hope is that we don't have a Snowmageddon like last year!

We look forward to simply maintaining the garden in January and enjoying the Roses that are still blooming in spite of the weather. The bulbs are also starting to come up in preparation for making their burst of blooms in the Spring.

Come and see our red Old Garden Mum *Chrysanthemum* x "Ruth Williamson" (Maw Maw's Christmas Mum). It is a late blooming, brick red, perennial garden mum from Greg and SFA's late friend and arboretum volunteer extraordinaire Ruth Williamson.

The Irrigation Project for the Heritage Rose/Shade Gardens is complete. All that remains is for our authorized users to be trained on the new state of the art cellular controller system.

Weather permitting, we will be working in the garden throughout January so come and join us.



*Debby Watkins & Henry Burch*



### Griffin Elementary

Our garden at Griffin Elementary is growing. We have kale, spinach, lettuce and radishes. We met on December 3, we had 14 students, prekindergarten through 5th graders. We talked about what was growing and when it would be ready to eat. We plan to have pizza and salad when the children return in January. Katy Barone donated a wonderful rain gage, we put that up.

Plans for January are to plan for planting for the spring. We are having a great time, hopefully we are able to plant two more beds.

*Becky Wade*

### Caldwell School

Plans are in the works to begin Learn, Grow, Eat Go! with third grade students in the gifted and talented program. The GT teachers plan to use this program as a basis for the science and social studies curriculum. Master Gardener volunteers will meet with the teachers the first week of January to work on the schedule, talk about vegetable selection and setting up the garden. We are very much looking forward to getting our hands dirty and working with the young learners.

*Katy Barone*

## IDEA Garden

As we say goodbye to 2021 and look ahead to the new year, it seems a good time to reflect on what we've accomplished, to count our many blessings, to extend some compliments and say a heartfelt thank you!

The IDEA garden is going on 23 years old since opening to the public and continues to look amazing! To keep her young, we've recently added some new features such as new sign, new bottle tree, new flagstone area with new fence section, new compost bin, new fans and new retaining wall, while continually adding or replacing new landscape material throughout the garden.

The heart of the IDEA garden is the dedicated Master Gardeners that come faithfully every week! They continually strive to educate the public with their plantings on what will work (or what won't work) in the garden. Whatever the circumstances, they are there every week with their designs, array of planting materials and an awesome attitude! Without all their volunteer hours and dedication, the garden wouldn't be what it is today. And it happens to be the best IDEA of the SCMGA!

So.... many, many thanks to the leaders, section leaders and extra helping hands, (you all know who you are), for making the IDEA garden so visually stunning throughout all four seasons! If you haven't been in a while, come take a stroll through the gardens.

Remember, gardening is good for the soul!

*Laurie Graham*



IDEA Garden photo by  
Laurie Graham

### Easy Seed / Cutting Starter Box

One Tuesday in November, Betty Atchley gave us a great demonstration on how to take cuttings of “Cat Whiskers” (*Orthosiphon aristatus*) and told us her method of rooting the cuttings. Since I love this plant, I took the cuttings knowing I could figure out some way to nurture them without grow lights or a green house. The easy part was dipping the cuttings in rooting hormone and putting them into 6-packs with soil. The tricky part was finding some way to keep them moist and somewhat warm in our cool house as they were rooting.

The perfect incubator was an old litter box! After putting the 6-packs in it, I covered it with plastic wrap and set up an incandescent light for heat as well as light. This worked much better than my usual heat pad / incandescent light setup. In fact, I just bought another litter box with higher sides to accommodate these cuttings as they grow. I’m eager to try this setup when I start my tomato and pepper seeds in a couple weeks.

Brenda Strong



### Shade Garden Bluebirds



You may have noticed bluebird nest boxes scattered throughout the Shade Garden. These 17 boxes were originally put there in 2013 as a Boy Scout project. The big freeze of 2021 was not kind to these bluebirds, and we suspect that many of these were lost. It may take a while to build back a flock.

Eastern bluebirds lay eggs and raise their young in Texas from February to mid- September. They tend to mate for life and tend to return to the same area each spring. It is not uncommon for a pair of bluebirds to raise 4 families in a season but 2-3 broods a

year is normal in Texas.

They will choose a nest site by late January and often begin nest building in mid-February. The male bluebird brings material to the hole and the female makes a nest of grasses, pine needles, etc. They lay 3-6 sky blue eggs. After a successful clutch hatches, the female goes off to build a second nest leaving the male to care for the fledging young birds. Incubation is 11-19 days. The hatchlings grow rapidly and, in 18 days, are ready for their first flight. Bluebirds feed insects to their young and need open space and mild temperatures for a steady supply of insects.

A group of master gardeners who are also master naturalists care for the bluebird nest boxes. We monitor the boxes, clean them and record data on numbers hatched. These boxes should be cleaned out as soon as possible after a brood fledges so the box can be used for the next nest attempt. We plan to relocate some of these boxes so the birds can fly in more easily.

Paul Wick

**REPORT FROM BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING December 16, 2021**

The December 2021 Board of Directors Meeting was held at Bruno's restaurant and the new incoming 2022 Board members were invited to attend.



The following were the highlights of items discussed:

- State Directors' Meeting report was presented. Everyone is asked to add Emergency Contact Information into their VMS profiles.
- A new Uniformity of Hours Policy was adopted.
- A Stewardship Report to the City of Tyler for 2022 will be led by Henry Burch.
- The Master Gardener Office will be moving to new space in Room 117. The move will probably take place by the end of January once the new space is renovated.
- Work on the irrigation project in Shade and Heritage Rose Gardens is complete.
- There are eight master gardeners choosing not to recertify, two that never responded and will be dropped, and three on leave of absences.
- Class 29 that starts in January 2022 will have 29 students.

*Debby Watkins, Past President/Parliamentarian*

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**Greenhouse Update**

It is with great pleasure that I can announce that our greenhouse has been repaired! I met there just this morning with some eager interns. We did propagate vine cuttings of a Mexican Flame Vine. We are hoping that they will get off to a good start with the warmer weather we are expecting for the rest of December. We are keeping our fingers crossed on these late plantings.

Many of our cuttings we started in the fall have roots coming out of the bottom of the pots. That's a really good thing. We will be repotting those plants into larger pots for more growth as the year moves on.

We will have to wait for winter and see what January brings. I have been researching what the weather could be in January and from what I read it could be a cold month. I like to plan ahead when it comes to the greenhouse as best I can. Winter in the greenhouse is mostly sustaining what you already have potted up. A winter like last year can be a game-changer on whether the cuttings will make it through. You just have to hope for the best and plan for the cold weather that could come our way.

We will look into starting some cooler weather vegetable seeds in the greenhouse when temps cool down from the 70s. I'm not an expert in that area so I'll research it and hope that I will get some gardeners who have an interest and expertise in that area. So, if you have an interest in cool weather food plants please come and join us. It would be great if you could teach us what you know works.

Happy Gardening to everyone in the New Year!

*Debbie Taylor*



**January 6, 2022**  
**1st SCMG Monthly Membership Meeting**  
**of the New Year**  
**2022**

The January Monthly Membership meeting will be Thursday, January 6<sup>th</sup> at the Rose Center Building at 11:30am. The program for the meeting will include the Induction of the 2022 Board followed by a brief program by me on "Adjusting to Change - Past and Future".

Hoping you all had a wonderful Christmas holiday and that you stayed safe and well.

With the new Covid variant on the rise, we will do our best to have social distancing and we encourage wearing your mask if possible. Hand Sanitizer and masks will be available at the sign in table.

Happy New Year to you all! I look forward to this new year in 2022!

Belinda Kromer



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## **VMS Update**

As a reminder....OK a plea.....we really need to capture all of the hard work done by everyone in 2021, and we know that there are MGs who haven't input all of their hours and CE's into **VMS**.

We use the hours and CE's in our awards and City of Tyler public relations, and AgriLife uses them for their stats to, among other things, retain Greg and staff.

As of noon on 12/31, SCMG members have reported these totals for the year:

12,277 Volunteer Hours

2,552 Continuing Education Hours

We understand that not everyone is a fan of VMS, but this **really is important**. So please take some time and get your efforts recorded. Remember, if it's not in VMS, it doesn't count!

Mary Hamlin

**Officers which will be installed on January 6, 2022**

President	Belinda Kromer
Vice President	Elizabeth Waldrop
Secretary	Mary Cantrell
Treasurer	Terri Gerber
Assistant Treasurer	Lyn Benson
Parliamentarian	Mary Jo Madden
Historian	Lucy Morgan
Board Member At-Large	Andie Rathbone
State Director	Debby Watkins
State Director	Janet Burns
Alternate State Director	Susan Seale
Alternate State Director	Henry Burch
Communication & Technology	Lynn McGinnis

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**New Class and Mentor News**

The 2022 New Member Class will begin on January 6 and continue every Thursday through March 31. We are set to have 30 students!

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 this Fall! A training class is planned for January 19, and we are hoping to find more folks who decide that the Help Desk is their perfect niche within SCMGA.



In addition to answering phoned-in questions, the Help Desk volunteers have analyzed photos received by email and identified problems, cleaned some interesting seeds, helped with last-minute proof reading, and helped plan for the move to our new office space.

Springtime is just around the corner, and things will start to get really busy in another 6 weeks or so. 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>

And if you would like to attend the training (required for all who plan to volunteer), here is the link for it:  
<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054DA5AE2AAA-F94-helpdesk>

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





## 2021 Smith County Master Gardener In-Depth Summary

Smith County  
Greg Grant | County Extension Agent-Horticulture

## RELEVANCE

According to the Smith County Agricultural Increment Report, horticulture is the leading agricultural commodity in Smith County with gross nursery sales of over \$125 million annually and fruits, vegetables, nuts, and Christmas trees adding another \$4.5 million. Horticulture also includes homeowner issues such as managing plant diseases, insects, soil fertility, home fruit and nut production, vegetable and herb production, landscape and lawn maintenance, proper irrigation, tree care, community beautification, pollinator preservation, and Earth-Kind gardening practices. The Texas Master Gardener volunteer program provides an extremely valuable resource for local extension agents in taking science and research-based information to a wide range of residents in Smith County including both youth and adult.

## RESPONSE

The 13-member Smith County Master Gardener Board of Directors provides leadership in planning, implementation, and evaluation of all horticultural programming. The committee decided on the First Tuesday in the Garden and Master Gardeners at the Library lectures, a booth at the East Texas State Fair, a garden guide and calendar, and the Bulbs to Blooms conference and sale to help educate the public in Earth-Kind gardening concepts.

### Monthly SCMGA general and board of director meetings

SCMGA Speakers Bureau-178 reached

*Grapevine* monthly newsletters

Weekly *Tyler Morning Telegraph* Sunday columns-1,323,264 reached

Help Desk and Help Desk training

Tyler Botanical Garden weekly workdays-25 volunteers, 468 hrs

SCMGA Facebook page-10,099 followers

Published *2021 East Texas Garden Guide and Calendar* (500)

Learn, Grow, Eat, Go school gardens

Tyler Botanical Garden IDEA Garden educational flyers (5,000+)

SCMGA YouTube channel

*Master Gardeners at the Library* Lectures-191 attended

East Texas State Fair Booth-230,00 visitors, 60 volunteers, 120 hrs

*First Tuesdays in the Garden*-93 attended

Earth-Kind *Bulbs to Blooms* fundraiser sale-\$20,122 profit

\$2,000 SFA Horticulture Scholarship

2020 SCMGA awards from the Texas State Master Gardener Association:

1<sup>st</sup> Place Outstanding Association, 1<sup>st</sup> Place Written Education, 1<sup>st</sup>

Place Outstanding Educational Program, 1<sup>st</sup> Place Outstanding Individual,

2<sup>nd</sup> Place Project

## VALUE STATEMENT

Smith County Master Gardener Assn

11,836.75

Volunteer Hours

2,467.80

Continuing Education Hours

\$337,820.85

141 Smith County Master  
Gardener Volunteers con-

Value of volunteer time contributed to  
Smith County

## Response

### Target Audience

Volunteers are crucial in disseminating tried and true, science and research-based horticultural information to the gardening public. This is accomplished through educational projects and programs targeted to a variety of audiences from school children to both advanced and novice gardeners.

### Partnerships & Collaborators

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service would like to recognize the following partners and collaborators:

- Blue Moon Gardens
- Breedlove Nursery
- City of Tyler
- Claudann Jones
- Clint Perkins
- Daniel Duncum
- Dr. Kevin Ong
- Dr. Brent Pemberton
- Keith Hansen
- Rozell Sprayers
- Smith County
- Tyler Morning Telegraph
- Tyler Rose Garden
- Tyler Public Library

## Evaluation Strategy

A retrospective post evaluation instrument was utilized to measure attendees' knowledge gained, intentions to adopt practices, and the anticipated economic impact as a direct result of the educational programs.

## RESULTS

**2021 Smith County Master Gardener intern class:** 17 of 19 (89.5%) of the participants responded to survey.

17 of 17 (100%) increased their knowledge of soil science and fertility.

16 of 17 (94.1%) increased their knowledge of botany.

16 of 17 (94.1%) increased their knowledge of vegetable production.

16 of 17 (94.1%) increased their knowledge of bees and pollinators.

16 of 17 (94.1%) increased their knowledge of Earth-Kind plants.

15 of 15 (100%) intend to adopt soil testing.

15 of 17 (88%) intend to grow vegetables at home.

Anticipated economic impact of the SCMG intern class is **\$11,169**.

**Spring Garden Tour:** 25 of 25 (100%) of the participants responded to survey.

25 of 25 (100%) increased their knowledge of how landscaping affects water usage.

25 of 25 (100%) increased their knowledge of how to use mulch.

24 of 25 (96%) increased their knowledge of pesticide safety.

22 of 25 (88%) intend to decrease their water usage.

Anticipated economic impact of the Spring Garden Tour is **\$10,191**.

**Master Gardeners at the Library:** 18 of 18 (100%) of the participants responded to the survey.

17 of 18 (94.4%) increased their knowledge of primary cavity dwellers.

17 of 18 (94.4%) increased their knowledge of food sources for woodpeckers.

13 of 14 (92.9%) intend to identify species of woodpeckers in East Texas.

Anticipated economic impact of the Master Gardeners at the Library lecture is **\$3,519**.

## Summary

The total economic impact for the 2021 Smith County Master Gardener volunteer hours, Smith County Master Gardener training classes, and the Smith County Master Gardener programs surveyed were expected to have an economic impact of **\$362,699.85**.

# January 2022

## Smith County Master Gardeners

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						<i>1</i> 
<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i> HRG/IDEA Garden Work- day 9:00 AM	<i>5</i> Shade Garden workday 9:00	<i>6</i> <b>SCMG Meeting</b> <b>Tyler Rose</b> <b>Center</b> <b>11:30 AM</b> New Class Meets 9:00	<i>7</i>	<i>8</i> Shade Garden workday 8:30
<i>9</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>11</i> HRG/IDEA Garden Work- day 9:00 AM	<i>12</i> Shade Garden workday 9:00	<i>13</i> New Class Meets 9:00 Member Photos at Lunch	<i>14</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>16</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>18</i> HRG/IDEA Garden Work- day 9:00 AM	<i>19</i> Shade Garden workday 9:00 Help Desk Training Classroom 10:00	<i>20</i> <b>SCMG BOD</b> <b>Cotton Belt</b> <b>10:00</b> New Class Meets 9:00	<i>21</i> Master Gar- deners at The Library  <i>Grapevine            deadline</i>	<i>22</i> Shade Garden workday 8:30
<i>23</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>25</i> HRG/IDEA Garden Work- day 9:00 AM	<i>26</i> Shade Garden workday 9:00	<i>27</i> New Class Meets 9:00	<i>28</i>	<i>29</i>
<i>30</i>	<i>31</i> <b>Deadline for            Dues            Payments!</b>					