

MG Grapevine

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The next SCMG Association meeting is Thursday, December 7, 2023 At 11:00 AM at Tyler Rose Center

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Elizabeth's Thoughts

As I write this, I am sitting in front of a large window looking out over my pasture toward the creek that bisects it. The outside world looks like someone dumped powdered sugar over it, then topped it with edible glitter. It's a confection.

There was a hard freeze last night that felled the Goldenrod and bent the Bluestem into crystalline piles. Nothing is happening outside my window. The breeze does not stir the leaves, nor does any creature make its way across the strange, stiffened grass. Except the Juncos and Titmice that are randomly lighting on the fence after popping into the glittery piles looking for cold stunned bugs and fallen seeds. Those tiny grey forms are my only companions this cold morning as I wait for the percolator to sigh and shudder signaling that I must get up to begin my day, infused with caffeine and whatever vigor it imparts.

I like to be alone for a while in this quiet, shimmery, white world. Yes, I miss the flowers and the green, but the elegance of this season soothes me. Everything is reduced simply to form. The trees are rapidly losing their leaves. I can again see their naked branches twisting upward in the cold sky seeking the weak, staggering sun. Our fiery orb drags himself across the horizon on the shortest path because he is tired and needs to rest along with all the growing things settling down for Winter.

This is the time of year when the bones of the garden are exposed. The sagging paths and the mislaid edges of the beds have no lush greenery to hide them. I am making lists of things to fix in January. I see space differently now. Undifferentiated by color and texture it is easy to see far, to plan. The space between now and when seems tantalizingly close, clear and uncomplicated.

Of course, with nature all that appears simple is just an illusion. The trick of a mind that cannot bear the weight of the how twined together everything is. The reason my paths sag and my beds are wonky has to do with gophers and moles and the entropy they bring in their digging claws. It has to do with how the rainwater flows toward the creek from a roof that got plopped down in the middle of a pasture where I snuggly sit, computer in my lap. It has to do with the chaos of escaped chickens seeking grubs and digging dogs trying to catch those gophers. The soil that has dried too deep in the drought we are still not relieved of, and so many other things I can't even comprehend.

But right now, it's me, Juncos and the clarity of a cup of coffee. I sit here, with all my plans, watching the pale sun melt crystal castles. I am looking forward to all the changes I will make as though I have the upper hand in this situation.





In-Depth Programs and Evaluations

Greg Grant

I'm tasked with having at least two In-Depth plans and additional outreach plans to address the needs of Smith County. My two In-Depth plans are the "Smith County Master Gardener" In-Depth plan and the "Earth-Kind Water Conservation" In-Depth plan. My outreach plan is a general "Horticulture" plan which includes my articles, blogs, presentations, and interaction with the public and nursery/landscape industry.

In-Depth programs are mandated to include a series of educational events and a variety of educational methods targeted to a specific issue and a specific audience. These programs are supposed to lead to strong participant outcomes, measured by specific evaluation tools, which in our case is an Earth-Kind-Horticulture survey provided by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. The survey we use is a retrospective post evaluation

instrument used to measure attendees' knowledge gained, intentions to adopt practices, and the anticipated economic impact as a direct result of our educational program.

Essentially, all In-Depth educational programs need to be evaluated as I am required to report the three most successful in my annual In-Depth summaries. It's also very important to note that the participation rate needs to be above 60% or we can't use the data. In the past I have found it best to explain to the audience how important the evaluations are, hand them out before the end of the program, and give the participants a free magazine, bulb, or packet of seeds in exchange for the completed survey.

When we are planning our events, make sure and build the evaluation plans into the program.

December Membership Meeting

You are Invited to our Holiday Party

December 7th 11:30 A.M. at The Tyler Rose Garden Center



Celebrating 30 years of SCMGA and all the work we do.

Please plan to join us for our Annual December Holiday Pot Luck Luncheon. We are requesting that you sign up for what you plan to bring to the Pot Luck on SignUp Genius so we will have a range of dishes. You may bring a guest if you wish, but everyone, including guests need to be signed up on SignUp Genius.

Begin to arrive at 11:00 and we will get started at 11:30

Gail Bean

[Luncheon Signup](#)

REPORTS FROM THE GARDENS

Heritage Rose Garden



There's always a stand-out in the Heritage Rose Garden, no matter what the season or weather. I guess that's the advantage of having roses and other plants that are used to taking care of themselves. They just do what they need to do to survive, which means putting on blooms. As I stood and looked over the garden to see what caught my eye, there was a showstopper! In all its red glory, it was shouting for my attention. Meet an antique rose cultivar, Eutin, pronounced oy-teen. It was developed in 1940 in Germany.

It's a Floribunda, a cross between a Polyantha and a Hybrid tea. Polyantha roses are compact, low-growing shrubs that produce small, densely packed clusters of flowers. They can grow to be 2-3 ft tall. Hybrid Teas are larger bushes and have one beautiful

rose on each long stem instead of clusters. Floribundas are known for their hardiness, showy blooms, long bloom season, and disease resistance. The flowers are the outstanding quality of the Eutin rose, forming enormous clusters of up to 50 dark red flowers. The flowers are long-lasting and the bush a repeat bloomer. They are considered a good cold climate rose and are resistant to rust, mildew, and fungus. And they look great after our recorded-setting summer heat. I'm having a hard time finding anything wrong with this rose.

Linda Gurasich

VMS Update

Why do we have VMS and why is it important? Why do we have to report at all? This is a question a lot of MGs ask. It IS NOT a bean-counting program for the AgriLife agent or State MG office. As Master Gardeners we are official spokespersons for Texas AgriLife as we interact with a large part of the East Texas population. In order to represent AgriLife and ourselves in an accurate, professional manner, MGs are required have on-going training, experience and continuing education to keep our knowledge and skills current.

Entries in VMS register our efforts to stay updated and give us the right to continue to represent AgriLife in the community. These efforts are recognized as so important to the success of the local AgriLife program, that each AgriLife office has a discrete reporting category just for MG hours/CEs and achievements. So entries in VMS are part of our proof that we are trained and experienced to a level necessary to represent AgriLife wherever we serve. In effect, this is our license to operate.

At this point in the year, we have a fairly large group of MGs who have not input enough hours and/or CE's to recertify for next year. If you have information to input please do it soon. If you need help let Mary Hamlin (mhamlin@flash.net) or Belenda Kromer (kromerb@aol.com) know and we'll help you get that input into VMS.



Mary Hamlin

IDEA Garden

For the last few years, we have used this 'tower' in the IDEA garden in a couple of different locations and in two different color combinations. The first time the pots were painted black and planted with mostly green textured plants, dusty miller and white impatiens. It was placed in front of the black picket fence next to the shed but not easily seen. So the second time, I painted it in bright, primary colors and planted with mostly pansies that complimented the pot colors. It was placed off the patio between beds, next to the iron fence and it was the first thing you saw when you walked onto the patio. It was a real hit this Spring with the Easter egg colors and visitors were always stopping to take pictures and trying to figure out how it was put together. Sometimes I was there to show them how I did it and just hope when I wasn't, that people were able to figure it out!

So I'll tell you how it came about! A friend sent me a picture of one in a yard in Michigan and I thought, 'how cute and clever, I can do that!' You need to gather several clay pots in different sizes with holes in the bottom and paint (inside and out) in whatever colors you desire. The bottom pot needs to be the largest and most substantial and filled almost to the top with plaster of Paris. Before it dries, insert about a 5' section of rebar that has been painted black or wrapped with black electrical tape. (The tape also acts as 'cushioning' to prevent possible chipping as you slide the pots down). Be sure to keep the rebar straight as the plaster dries or you'll have a leaning tower of pots! Decide where you are going to put it before you start to assemble, preferably next to a wall or fence so you can anchor it. I was able to wire it to both the picket and iron fencing to insure it would not move or fall since it can get top heavy. When everything is completely dry and hardened, just start putting the pots down the rebar and tilting. Continue with each pot and tilt the opposite direction with each one. Insert some pipe insulation pieces where the pots rest on each other for a bit of protection. Then you are ready to fill with soil and desired plants! Water from the top as it will easily gravitate down to the other pots. So gather your supplies, do some creative painting on the pots, and it will be all ready for installation and planting in the Spring! This is a fun project, is not difficult to make and is a real eye catcher in the garden!



Laurie Graham

REPORT FROM BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING November 16, 2023

The February 2022 Board of Directors Meeting was held in person at Cotton Belt. Among the items discussed:

- Continued discussion of replacement Pergola for IDEA Garden
- Treasurer's Report including Bulb Sale update
- State Master Gardener Report from State Director
- Proposal for reshaping Development Committee
- VMS contact numbers and how to improve reporting for Greg's survey
- Christmas luncheon preparation



Belinda Kromer, Past President/Parliamentarian

Shade Garden



The Shade Garden is full-on into autumn. Acer hues of red, orange, yellow and apricot; Camellias in bloom or bursting with promise; Grape-Leaf anemones wafting pink, golden Ginkos and oaks dropping mounds of crispy fun. At the last Saturday work day, the garden was a-buzz. Visitors strolled through the gardens enjoying the peaceful beauty. Children and grandchildren reveled in old-fashioned play, airborne into the leaves and rolling like mad. A wedding party gathered for special photos. All this a reminder of the gift the Tyler Botanical Garden is to our community.

Nestled within the arboretum is a favorite fall wonder that seldom gets any press, the Black Gum. Several are nestled at the west end of the Shade Garden, and a large single specimen shines at the east, near the IDEA Garden. A robust tree, *Nyssa sylvatica* is literally an autumn jewel. Glossy leaves turning fiery in shades of orange, crimson, purple and garnet, ablaze among the evergreens. Looking through the branches upward against a crisp blue sky is breathtaking. It's spreading pyramidal habit and unusual 6 plated bark makes a striking appearance. Once the leaves shed; it's a bonus in winter interest, adding a sculptural element to the landscape. In spring and summer Black Gum plays home and host to wildlife. Producing insignificant flowers enjoyed by bees, and dark ½ inch drupes favored by birds and other critters, the Black Gum is hailed as

one of the best honey producing trees in the world. Some may know this beauty as Tupelo, a name derived from the indigenous Creek language, *ito opilwa*, meaning "swamp tree," a reference to the first identified native Black Gum, a swamp species. This sturdy tree prefers moist, acidic, well-drained soils though is highly adaptable. It is drought resistant, has few disease or insect problems and is hardy to USDA Zone 4. Slow growing, Tupelo may reach 30-50 feet high with a 20-30 foot spread. While it can grow fine in sun or shade, the best fall color can be expected in open locations with room to rise and shine.

As we approach the year's end, take stock and count our blessings, we would like to express heartfelt thanks to all the volunteers who have this year contributed your time, hard work and talent to the keeping, tending and beauty of the Shade Garden. We are grateful for it.

Katy & Dana

Calendar Update

The calendar sales are going good. I hope we sell a lot at Christmas. I will be selling them at the December luncheon if you haven't gotten yours yet. Be sure and buy for all your friends for Christmas. I want to thank everyone that helped get this together. The interns even wrote articles. It is a big endeavor to put out a great calendar every year. Thank you to all that participated and to all that sell them at speaking engagements. Merry Christmas!!

Sherri Matthews



Greenhouse Update

In the spirit of Thanksgiving, just gone by one day, I'm going to make this article about thanking the folks that make the greenhouse work. It takes way more than just one person to keep those plants growing.

First off, I'm thanking all the gardeners who come each Wednesday to help with the propagation, the watering, all your ideas and contributions, the soil mixing and all the things we do there. There would be no greenhouse without you.

Secondly, I would like to say a big thank you to the folks who take it upon themselves to do extra projects that aren't necessarily things we do during the 8:30 to 10:30 time that we are there. This includes moving pallets and soil, rounding up wheelbarrows, bringing in seeds and plants from home that they want to share, and pressure washing the floor as well. These are things that help out the project more than you know.

Thirdly, I am so thankful for other MGs who help me keep up with the greenhouse on the other 4 days of the week that we aren't meeting there. Monitoring the greenhouse on a daily basis is a huge part of running the greenhouse and keeping the plants alive. Quick decisions have to be made sometimes based on what is happening in the greenhouse on less than perfect weather days.

Finally, I would like to thank the Idea Garden, Shade Garden, Heritage Garden, and all the Smith County Master Gardeners for any and all cuttings, plants, seeds, and ideas that have been shared with us. We do our best to take those cuttings and seeds and to plants to return to the gardens or share with others. We appreciate it so much.

Debbie Taylor



EXTRA EXTRA READ ALL ABOUT IT!!!!

Tyler Morning Telegraph (Weekend only)

December 3 – Winter Ornamentals – Diane Everhart
 December 10 – Legend of the Confederate Rose – Jackie Thomason
 December 17 – Christmas Cactus? Or is it? – Julie O'Brien
 December 24 – Deck the Halls with Boughs of Holly – Lynn McGinnis
 December 21 – Talking with the Trees – Marinda Arney

Tyler Morning Telegraph under Lifestyles at <https://www.tylerpaper.com>.

Lindale News & Times (Thursdays only)*

December – 7 – Wash Your Herbs – Alica Bailey
 December 14 – Teaching Children to Appreciate Insects in the Garden – Barbara Nelson
 December 21 – Deck the Halls with Boughs of Holly – Lynn McGinnis
 December 28 – Native East Texas Pineywoods – Karen Walker

You can read the Lindale News & Times online for free at <https://www.lindalenewsandtimes.com/current-edition>.

**Note: Please remember the Lindale News & Times is a small local newspaper with lots of hometown flavor, so if there's an important community issue, high school football or the 4H is having a livestock show or even if a large corporation buys a full page ad, we get bumped that edition. They do try to use all the articles we send, however the date might be different.*

Lynn McGinnis



Historian's Corner

Hats off to our Past and Present Leadership

It has been so much fun looking back at the accomplishments of the Past Presidents and their boards. Through their leadership, the SCMGA has continued to grow in its mission to educate the people in Smith County. All of the past presidents still serve our organization in numerous capacities. Of course, none of their success would have happened without the dedicated volunteers that stepped up to make the vision become reality with our many projects. With that said, I will complete this look back in time featuring the leaders of the past three years.

When Mary Jo Madden stepped up to president in 2021, COVID was still raging. This presented a monumental challenge in starting the new class of interns, the present class completing their hours and still meeting the needs of the community and the organization. Through these trials, the gardens were maintained, rules were adapted in regards to hours needed for certification, intern classes were moved to summer, and any number of "normal" procedures were modified. Seeds were harvested and sold through the bulb sale. The seed bank was begun. And finally, the greenhouse project which had been in the research stages was finally launched. Having a greenhouse meant we could provide plants for the gardens and also educate our membership. Today MJ can be found training and running the Help Desk. Often, she will be seen in one of the gardens harvesting seeds. MJ is also the editor for the Grapevine.

Belinda Kromer became president in 2022. Finally, things were settling down and SCMGA was on the way to "back to normal". With the help of this outstanding leadership team, the "Master Your Garden," segment was born on CBS 19. The award winning, Nature Detective Camp was launched with Katy Barone project leader. The garden tour committee was reorganized and plans made to host the garden tour in 2023 with Mary Cantrell and Brenda Clark as project leaders. Belinda also started a feature in the Grapevine called Above and Beyond, where MG could recognize their peers for excellent work. Today Belinda serves on the board and her helping hands can be found at pretty much any SCMGA event.

Our current president Elizabeth Waldrop brought her unique abilities to this leadership position. The Policy and Procedure handbook has been revised to better reflect the needs of SCMGA. The membership enjoyed a field trip to King Gardens for the first time in a very long while. The annual garden tour was relaunched and was a resounding success. The botanical garden tours are up and running again in the capable hands of project leaders. The From Bulbs to Blooms just completed a 25th anniversary extravaganza, with in-person conference, on site bulb sale and a marketplace in addition to the online sales. Elizabeth's true love however is education. She has given numerous hours preparing and giving presentations on everything from Garden Design to The Physic Garden. Under her leadership, an education component has been added to all events. A partnership with the Goodman Museum will help to maintain the gardens in that historic landmark.

It is such an honor to serve with so many talented and capable leaders throughout our organization. Not all of us are called to serve on the board, but we all seem to find our own niche and work to make our organization epic! Well done!

Tommie Ann Grinnell

HELP DESK UPDATE

Help Desk regulars were offered an opportunity for a hands-on propagation class from Greg, and more than a dozen attended! In addition to everyone leaving with their own African Violet to nurture, we had a great brainstorming session on possible topics for future classes. We will now be offering these classes monthly, in an effort to give these valued volunteers customized training that will keep us all one step ahead of the callers.



Upcoming classes may include cold weather crops, fall gardening, birds & bees, natives in the landscape, growing fruit & nuts, fertilizing basics, and lawn care basics.

Mary Jo

Education Dispatch

I want to thank everyone who volunteered to help me at a table or for an event this year. I know I had a great time talking with our friends and neighbors about their yards and gardens and giving out information, I hope you all did too. None of these projects can happen without your help and your presence. Because each one of you shows up and offers your time, energy, and smarts to your neighbors in our community we reach so many people. This year we had tables at Arbor Day, Earth Day, and Pollinator Day, where we gave out advice and information to adults and had a ball playing with the kids we were teaching with our projects. We were at the Home Garden Tour helping wives prove to their husbands that they are mowing all wrong. We taught twice at the Troup Library. We helped out at the Lindale Libraries Plant Sale as the people who could tell you how to take care of the stuff you just bought. We were at Goodman's Artisan Market with sage advice and hands on demos. We taught a class on how houseplants can help you de-stress at Glass and we held our amazing Kids Camp. We taught kids and grown up alike about the magic of butterflies and their metamorphoses at the East Texas State Fair, and we had our first ever kids education at the Bulbs to Blooms Conference. Over these projects we taught over 650 people this year at events we attended or hosted and that doesn't include the thousands that visited our booth at the Fair. I can't say enough how great it is to be part of this organization. Thank you all for what you do, who you help and who you are.

Oh and I will need some help next year! There are new questions just waiting to be asked.

Elizabeth Waldrop

Social Media

It's hard too believe that we're at the end of another year and again I want to thank all of you for sharing our posts. Because of your help we're ending the year at almost 14,000 people following our page. We're now spreading our gardening information not only in East Texas, but also throughout the state, in over 30 states in this country and also over 28 foreign countries. We're happy to be able to spread information of Earthkind gardening practices far and wide. As we look forward to 2024 we're looking forward to continuing our tradition of providing our community with the best gardening information available and continuing our SCMG tradition of excellence.

Here are the top posts for October:

Andie Rathbone



#1 October 6
9,157,283 people



#2 October 13
606,257 people



#3 October 3
8,058 people

Programming Committee Report

We delivered one presentation in October and one in November. That pretty much wraps it up for 2023 Speakers Bureau. Congrats to all for a very successful year presenting to 17 garden clubs with 362 individuals. A huge thank you goes out to those MGs who stepped up: Belinda Kromer, Andie Rathbone, Anne Patullo, Debby Watkins, Holly Pritchett, Peggy Canant, Elizabeth Waldrop, Heather Stephens, and moi.

Tuesdays in the Garden closed out the year with Seasonal Floral Arrangements by Megan Lissner & Paige McGuffey of Moss Florist. We counted 90 individuals for all three presentations. Thanks to Elizabeth Waldrop and Anne Patullo for their roles.

Library Lecture Series 2023 ended a few months back. We hosted 399 individuals for the five programs. A special thanks to our Master Gardeners who presented: Andie Rathbone, Elizabeth Waldrop and Katy Barone.

The lineup for the Library Lecture Series 2024 is as follows:

19 January - *Growing the Longview Arboretum: The Good, The Bad, & The Muddy*

Steve Chamblee, Executive Director, Longview Arboretum, brings a fast-paced behind-the-scenes look at the development of the Arboretum from a pipe dream to a beautiful garden.

16 February - *Things I Wish I Had Learned Sooner*

Baxter Williams, Master Rosarian, American Rose Society, gives a light-hearted look at both the right information about rose horticulture against the historical lore that has been passed down.

15 March - *Texas Superstars*

Lynette Sewell, Master Gardener, will discuss the Texas Superstar® program in which every effort is made to ensure that highlighted plants will perform well for Texas consumers.

19 April - *Tried & True, New & Different, Plants to Try to Find and Use in Your Garden*

Keith Hanson, former Extension Horticulture Agent in Smith County, will help us discover plants that may not be familiar to us, or, maybe they are.

17 May - *Bloom Where You Are Planted—Make Your Garden Fit Your Life*

David Gary, Master Gardener, gives an inspiring presentation that serious gardening is possible despite physical limitations.

Happy Gardening,

Dale & Becky Wade



Tech Committee



Lynn McGinnis

Member Spotlight

David Gary was honored by the Dallas Arboretum this past Veterans Day. You can read the article here:

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CzgxaM9t44N/>

Mastering Your Garden

As we end our first full year of providing gardening information every Thursday on the CBS19 noon news show, I want to thank all the SCMGA members who have appeared on air to provide gardening information to the Tyler viewing area. We've covered monthly to-do lists, lawn care, Texas Superstars, water conservation, crape murder, and many other topics. We've also been able to promote our library lectures, First Tuesday in the Garden, the garden tour, the bulb sale, and our summer educational workshops. It's been a wonderful way to extend our reach into the community.

We've also gone from doing our spots live to pre-recording them at 9:30 AM each Thursday. This means less time waiting to go on air as we had with our live broadcasts, and also the ability to correct any mistakes that may be made in a presentation. So don't be nervous if you're asked to present a topic in the future.

Here are the December spots:

December 7	Gifts From Your Garden	Colleen Huntsberger
December 14	Clean Your Garden Tools	Cindy Harrington
December 21	Poinsettia Care	Belinda Kromer
December 28	Feeding the Birds	Brenda Strong

Andie Rathbone

Seed Bank Update

As you prepare your gardens to sleep for the winter, remember the Seed Bank! Fall is prime time for seed collection, cleaning, and storing.

We recently received seeds of trumpet vine, wisteria, crape myrtle, and cypressvine, among others. We accept all seeds, natives or not. We will clean donated seeds if needed, before we pack them into the freezer. Donated seeds should include a note with the name of the plant, when and where collected, and by whom. If donated seeds are intended for specific use, such as a school garden, we need to know that too.

Think about the Seed Bank when you are planning events for your projects. We can provide seeds for distribution at education tables at community events and Speakers Bureau presentations—we just need notice to get the right seeds bagged and tagged. Who doesn't appreciate free seeds?

MaryJo Madden



December 2023

Smith County Master Gardeners

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2 Shade Garden workday 8:30 AM
3	4	5 HRG/IDEA Garden Work- day 9:00 AM	6 Shade Garden workday 9:00	7 SCMG Meeting Rose Center 11:00 AM	8 	9
10	11	12 HRG/IDEA Garden Work- day 9:00 AM	13 Shade Garden workday 9:00	14	15	16 Shade Garden workday 8:30 AM
17	18	19 HRG/IDEA Garden Work- day 9:00 AM	20 Shade Garden workday 9:00	21 SCMG BOD 	22	23
24 	25 Office Closed	26 Office Closed 	27 Shade Garden workday 9:00 Grapevine deadline	28	29	30
31 						