

MG Grapevine

<http://scmg.tamu.edu>

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**The next SCMG Association meeting is
Thursday, January 4, 2024
At 10:00 AM at
Tyler Rose Center**

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Elizabeth's Thoughts

The year is drawing to a close. It ends as it begins, in cold darkness that we feebly attempt to brighten with fireworks and noise. We chase away the specter of passing time with celebrations. We try to satisfy hungry stalking Winter with the sweet rich foods of our holidays. It is always amusing to me into this heady mix of celebratory foods we eat all through December, here in the South, we settle on the humble black-eyed pea as our ultimate talisman against starvation in the coming year. Goes to show we are all quaint farmer folk in our deepest roots.



I am winter born. Like most of the women in my family, I measure my own years against the New Year. To us, the newly minted year is like a big loud ticking blank calendar with pages to be filled by the events of our lives. Happy and sad, good and bad, whatever comes will mark our pages in its own way, changing us along with them. January is different for the cold weather babies. A New Year's celebration marks our own passing and coming year of life in solemn ways that don't affect my summer born brother or husband. They never connect the endless march of time with the lazy day off in June when they get their favorite cake and eat it too.

One thing about those of us who acutely acknowledge the passage of time is that you focus on scoring your years. You shake the old ones out in January and look them over. You see if you can't mend the rifts and press out the rough bits before you pack them up. You decide if they fit you well. Were they uncomfortable, or fussy? Maybe they were wonderful. Some years you were feeling your best most of the time. Some are dark and heavy. It's not their fault, and as you pack them away you try to forgive them for it, hoping for a lighter garment next year. This is a chore, but it focuses you on what has been and what is coming. Like all chores, the work shapes both the body and the soul.

In this new year I want to thank you all for giving me the opportunity to be President of our association. I have been honored to serve during our Thirtieth year. I hope I have left the organization better for my time. I want to thank everyone who did the work this year. We had some huge heavy lifts. I know all the behind-the-scenes stress and concerns. Yet, everything went beautifully in the end. To me the year felt like a fast-flowing, often choppy, river. No matter the current we ended up like swans floating serenely on the surface, even if we were paddling like the dickens to stay up. This organization is incredible and does great things. So do each of you. I am happy to share this coming year with you.

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Volunteer Service Hours Defined

Greg Grant

County Extension Agents/Master Gardener Coordinators make the final determination on what volunteer service hours are acceptable to meet requirements for Extension Master Gardener certification and recertification. Projects determined appropriate by the agent must be pre-approved and added to the VMS prior to service or reporting. To assist in this determination, the following guidelines are provided. Volunteer service hours should be performed during activities that are:

1. Education focused, as opposed to service or maintenance-type work, understanding that some service or maintenance work is required to support educational endeavors.
Direct contact is defined by actual, physical time spent before an audience or individual.
Examples of educational service:
 - actual time answering questions.
 - face-to-face time educating about a horticulture topic at a booth (may only be 3-5 minutes per person)
 - presenting a lecture on horticultural topics
 - conducting a tour in the demonstration garden
 Examples of service and maintenance work:
 - preparation of PowerPoint presentation
 - setting up tables and chairs for a presentation
 - researching and authoring an article
 - weeding and maintaining a demonstration garden
 - planning meetings
2. Supportive of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service's overall mission and objectives
Examples of AgriLife support:
 - promoting other AgriLife educational opportunities whenever possible such as handing out Better Living for Texans material at a booth
 - coaching a 4-H team with a horticulture focus
3. Sponsored (or co-sponsored) by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service
 - Collaborations with other organizations are important, but Extension does not supply other organizations with volunteers to do their work.
 - An Extension Master Gardener's volunteer hours may be claimed for credit with the Extension Master Gardener program or another organization, but not both.

January Membership Meeting

Wishing you and your loved ones a very Happy New Year!

Don't forget to put the first meeting of 2024 on your calendar:

When: January 4, 2024

Time: 10-11:30 a.m.

Where: City of Tyler Rose Center

420 Rose Park Drive

Tyler, TX 75702

We will be reflecting back at 2023 and looking forward at 2024 with our 2024 officer installation.

Gail Bean

REPORTS FROM THE GARDENS

Heritage Rose Garden

December is a quiet and often cold month in the Heritage Rose Garden. We have a few faithful souls who gladly show up and do what is needed and it is so appreciated! Our December goal was to try to get the rectangular center bed free of perennials and weeds and showcase the roses and annuals. There have been some beautiful perennials that have taken over and will keep trying to come back so, the battle isn't over, but some headway has been made. The annuals that are spouting are bluebonnets, poppies, and bunny larkspur. We had to let those get bigger before weeding so that we could differentiate those from plants we don't want. By the time that happened, we had quite the ground cover of sprouting plants to work with. Black-eyed Susans (*Rudbeckia*) and Coreopsis and coming up everywhere. We will let those grow in other beds. We have removed most of the iris, spider lilies and other bulbs that have appeared. Looks like we'll have quite the bluebonnet show this spring along with the bunny larkspur. Poppies are slow to come up but we are seeing some.

And this was my aha-moment at the end of November. I'm often surprised by something that is showing off. The Muskogee crepe myrtle trees stand at least 30 feet tall and showcase the SW corner of the garden. They have NEVER been cut back but allowed to grow in their natural shape. They fend off aphids and other insects that might be harmful. They didn't have a very good bloom this past summer. But look what happened late fall! The leaves turned a beautiful deep red before falling off. It was spectacular!

Linda Gurasich



The Educational Programming Committee — Speakers Bureau

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,
Becky & Dale Wade

IDEA Garden

Several new plants were added to the IDEA garden in 2023. A new evergreen dogwood now stands in the center of the Tefteller's section in the North end, where for years there was a large Lorapetalum. It grew so big we limbed it up into a tree form where it was quite spectacular, but in the past few years it slowly declined and needed to be replaced. Betty Atchley added two new viburnums called Mrs. Schillers Dwarf to her upper level bed in the South end. They were covered with clusters of white flowers last Spring. We are excited to see how these, and others take what winter will bring. None of them seemed to mind the dreadfully hot summer of 2023. Here's wishing everyone a great year of beautiful gardens for 2024.

Keith Hansen brought us a small tree named Temple of Bloom for the center circle. It was gorgeous in September and a real magnet for butterflies and bees.



Janet Burns added several new things to her section including a beautiful Cassia shrub which seems to love the site she chose and gave us a long lasting show of bright yellow blooms this past fall.

Another of Janet's additions was an Abutilon shrub or Flowering Maple, that bloomed several times with bright orange lantern like flowers. Some people call this Chinese Lantern.

Anne Pattullo



Greenhouse Update

We have propagated about all we can propagate for right now. The freezing temps this week will make sure of that. Late January into early February will be the time for starting seeds that need several weeks to germinate. Those are usually the hard coated seeds and vegetable seeds.

Seed starting will be prolific come the first of March. There will be all kinds of seeds. Some of the seeds will be annual bedding plants and others will be perennial plants. I have so many seeds in my plastic storage container that it will take an army to plant them all. The seeds that we don't use I will donate to Mary Jo's incredible Seed Bank.

For the next few weeks, we will re-pot some of the many cuttings that have rooted nicely. That and some fertilizer should give them the boost and the room to grow in that sunny greenhouse. Weather permitting over the next 2 months, we will be sharing back with the Idea Garden the plants that we propagated for them. Until then, we are kind of at a lull in creating new plants until seed starting. We are just working with the ones we already had success rooting.

Debbie Taylor

Shade Garden

Because the camellias are making a comeback in the Shade Garden, we thought it might be nice to have a review of this beautiful ornamental.

In the Shade Garden you will find *Camelia japonica*, *C. sasanqua* and *C. sinensis*. Native to Asia, these beauties are suitable to grow in in our East Texas soil, climate and landscapes.

Camelia japonica – This species sports glossy, dark green leaves and large, showy flowers. It blooms early winter through early spring and add cheer to an otherwise drab winter landscape.

Camelia sasanqua – *C. sasanqua* are early bloomers, typically in the fall, through winter. Their leaves are smaller than *C. japonica*, as are the flowers, which tend to be simple. The payoff is in the large number of blooms they produce, and, because they bloom earlier in the season, are less susceptible to freeze damage.

Camelia sinensis (tea)- *C. sinensis* is a close cousin of the ornamental camellias and is known for it's fragrant and tasty leaves, used for tea. *C. sinensis* has a rich and interesting cultural history.

Care - Camellias grow best in well-drained acidic soil rich in organic matter. Generous mulching and regular moisture will keep them happy. Plant them in bright shade or morning sun, but avoid dense shade locations or those with full afternoon sun. Fertilize after they finish blooming.

Importance to pollinators - While not native, Camellias are considered important to pollinators during the months when little is blooming. They produce a signifi-

cant amount of pollen and nectar important for bees, other insects and birds foraging on warm winter days. In reciprocation, because camellias are self sterile, they rely on insects and birds to transfer pollen from stamens to stigmas for fertilization and reproduction. Cultivars with open forms, large centers and showy stamens tend to be more conducive to winged visitors

Articles for further reading:

<https://aggie-hort.tamu.edu/county/smith/homegardens/camellias.html>

Katy Barone



2024 MG Meeting Schedule

As you set up your new calendars for 2024, here are the dates for our chapter meetings for 2024.

Where: Tyler Rose Center

Time: 10-11:30 a.m.

Dates: First Thursday of the month, unless otherwise noted.

January 4

February 1

March 7

April 4: Awards, intern graduation and certification

May 2

June 6

July- Happy summer; no meeting

August 8-second Thursday to accommodate school activities

September 5

October 3

November 7

December 5: last meeting and pot luck luncheon

Gail Bean

VMS Update

During this year if anyone comes across good TA&M hort videos or web sites, please send the link to Mary Hamlin, mhamlin@flash.net. We're trying to refresh our on-line CE document.

In the last year, TA&M has reworked its site, and some of the links we were using are no longer active. We'll also look at other government, university or state horticulture sites for applicability to our area, and they can be approved by Greg. Thanks.

Mary Hamlin

2024 Home Garden Tour

Believe it or not, it's 2024 and time to begin work on the upcoming Home Garden Tour that will take place on Saturday, May 18, 2024! Janie and I have been doing some preliminary work on details and have even signed up team leaders for each of the gardens. The first HGT committee meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 22, at 1 pm in Room 116 (classroom). All who are interested in being involved in the HGT are most welcome! Even if you can't join us that day, there will be opportunities to help out so stay tuned!

We are now sharing the names and addresses of garden homeowners (all in Tyler) that were chosen last May/June for our upcoming tour! They are all excited to be on the tour and we are thrilled that they all agreed without hesitation!

Dave and Allison Jarvis
520 E. 3rd St.

Craig and Catherine Harrison
719 Timberwilde Dr.

Randy and Debra Roberts
2616 S. Cameron Ave.

Curtis Brown/Randy Watson
1209 E. Dulce St.

Dennis Cullinane
2403 New Copeland Rd.

Happy New Year and see you on Jan. 22!

Co-chairs, HGT
Laurie Graham
Janie Fowler

REPORT FROM BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING December 14, 2023

The December 2023 Board of Directors Meeting was held in person at Clear Springs Restaurant in Tyler.

The meeting was short and the following items were discussed:

- Treasurer's Report and status of Bulb Sale numbers
- 4 budget amendments were passed
- BOD Approved 2024 Budget
- Report from State Director on last TXMGA State meeting
- Discussion on new background check rules and processes
- A position approved for a Bee-ologist at Overton



Belinda Kromer, Past President/Parliamentarian

Social Media

It's hard to believe that we've come to the end of another year, and it's been quite the success with our Facebook page. We're ending the year with 13, 950 people from almost every county in Texas, 40 states and 41 countries following our page. On average our posts reach 2.1M people every month with 649,000 of them either commenting, sharing, or liking the post. Additionally, each month approximately 6500 people click through to our "About" page to learn more about our organization.

A lot of our success can be attributed to all of you sharing posts from the page, as well as everyone who writes articles for the Tyler paper that we post on the page, and those of you who send me jokes and other gardening stories to post to the page. Thanks to everyone for all your help, and let's keep our success going into 2024.

Here are the top posts for December:

Andie Rathbone



#1 December 22
16,810 people reached



#2 December 8
9,171 people reached



#3 December 11
4,443 people reached

New Class and Mentor News

New Member Classes Available for Continuing Ed

Smith County Master Gardener Class 31 training will begin January 4, continuing every Thursday through March. There will be room for certified MGs looking for refresher training for CEs. Class meets from 9-12, breaks for lunch from 12-1 and resumes from 1-4. If you would like to attend, we have a few stipulations:

1. Please remember this course is primarily for the new Master Gardener trainees. Their experience in the classroom as well as their access to instruction (handouts, time for questions) is our priority.
2. To avoid distractions, please do not come and go during class time. Plan to arrive and be seated prior to class start at 9:00 or 1:00, and leave when the session ends or during a break.
3. Cell phone etiquette is observed during class.
4. The schedule for available classes will be published in the weekly e-Blast during January.

Heather Stephens & Chris Cochran

Mentor Program

Class 30 has just 3 months to complete their remaining requirements. Class 30 Mentors should be actively engaged with their Interns to ensure that they are on target to complete everything NO LATER THAN March 29.

We will be looking for approximately 16 Mentors and alternate Mentors for Class 31 beginning in April. Mentor training will be held in early February (date TBD). Please contact Heather Stephens at heather.e.stephens@gmail.com if you are willing to be a Mentor.

Heather Stephens & Sue Lambert

CHANNEL 19 TV SPOTS

As we finish our first full year of “Mastering Your Garden” our Thursday gardening spots on Channel 19’s Noon news show, I want to thank everyone who has appeared on camera to talk about different aspects of gardening in East Texas. I especially want to thank Jolana Damkroger who has done the “Things to Do” spots every month and also to Elizabeth Waldrop, Brenda Strong, and Vicki Lewis who have filled in with professionalism and good humor when I was in a pinch.

Planning for the 2024-25 season will begin in May, and I hope that many of you will raise your hands and do a spot. Also, if you have ideas for a topic to go on air, please send them to me. I’m always looking for new ideas.

Here’s the schedule for January:

January 4	Things to Do in January	Jolana Damkroger
January 11	Crape Murder	Laurie Graham
January 18	MG at the Library	TBD
January 25	Growing Onions	Colleen Huntsberger

Andie Rathbone

Master Gardener Book Sales

I need everyone's help maintaining an accurate inventory of the books that SCMGA has on hand. Please, please, please let me know if you pick up any books from the Cotton Belt Building for any purpose. Whether it is to have them on display at an event you are attending, giving them as door prizes or purchasing them for yourself or as gifts, it is important that I am aware of it.

I appreciate your assistance.

Maggie Taliaferro



EXTRA EXTRA READ ALL ABOUT IT!!!!

Tyler Morning Telegraph (Weekend only)
 January 7 – Planning Your First Garden – David Googins
 January 14 – Society Garlic – Julie O’Brien
 January 21 – Purple Hyacinth – Lynn Sylvester
 January 28 – My Soil Mate – Marinda Arney

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



Lindale News & Times (Thursdays only)*
 January 4 – Freeze Warning – Holly Hollenshead
 January 11 – Fishy Fertilizer – Sam Lackey
 January 18 – Holiday Flower Picks Made Easy – Cynthia Adams
 January 25 – In My Travels I’ve Got the Dirt on Soil – Dora McLain

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

Education Dispatch

Though it seems like we are in a lull, we are already getting calls about education events for next year. We have scheduled classes for the Troup and Whitehouse Libraries and are expecting to hear back for several other partners after the first of the year. We are preparing for Arbor Day, The Goodman Flower Market, Earth Day, and Pollinator Day plus having a big educational impact at our Home Garden Tour in May. There will be so many opportunities to get involved in education this year. So, please keep an eye on the E Blasts and volunteer early and often!

Elizabeth Waldrop

Calendar & Gardening Guide

The calendar sales are going great this year. We sold quite a few for Christmas gifts but still have about 150 at the office to sell. If you are speaking somewhere I would appreciate you taking calendars to sell. Just let Amanda know how many you are taking. People can use them to decide what kind of trees to use to replace their lost ones. They need to be planted soon to get established before the heat of summer. The calendars also tell what to do in the gardens each month. That is very helpful to many people.

Thanks for all your help.

Sherri Matthews

Seed Bank Update

Most of are familiar with the seeds of Hyacinth Bean Vine—black with a white edge on one side. Intern Barbara Nelson donated some to the Seed Bank recently, but was concerned because some of hers were brown. Were they okay? To find out, we did a germination test.



On December 15, we place a few of the brown seeds on a damp paper towel, then added a black seed as our control. The paper towel was folded over the seeds and placed inside a plastic bag, and then the bag was placed in a warm spot.



On December 18, we checked to see if there had been any action in all that wrapping, and found that all but one of the seeds had started sprouting! We love an opportunity to do a science project—bring us your seeds!

MaryJo Madden

January 2024

Smith County Master Gardeners

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 	2	3	4 SCMG Meeting Rose Center 10:00 AM Class 31 Meets 9:00	5 <i>Office Closed</i>	6 Shade Garden workday 8:30 AM
7	8 Project Leaders Meeting 1:00 PM	9 HRG/IDEA Garden Work- day 9:00 AM	10 Shade Garden workday 9:00 Greenhouse workday 9:00	11 Class 31 Meets 9:00	12	13
14	15 <i>Office Closed</i> 	16 HRG/IDEA Garden Work- day 9:00 AM	17 Shade Garden workday 9:00 Greenhouse workday 9:00	18 Class 31 Meets 9:00 SCMG BOD CottonBelt 10:00	19 MGs At The Library	20 Shade Garden workday 8:30 AM
21	22 Home Garden Tour Meeting 1:00 PM	23 HRG/IDEA Garden Work- day 9:00 AM	24 Shade Garden workday 9:00 Greenhouse workday 9:00	25 Class 31 Meets 9:00	26 <i>Grapevine deadline</i>	27
28	29	30 HRG/IDEA Garden Work- day 9:00 AM	31 Shade Garden workday 9:00 Greenhouse workday 9:00			