

MG Grapevine

<https://txmg.org/smith/>

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The next SCMG Association meeting is Thursday, February 6, 2025 At 10:00 AM at Tyler Rose Center

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What's Up?

I have always had a fascination with trains going back to the age of about 5 years old. It was about that time that I got an American Flyer train set for Christmas. It looked just like the train that later appeared on the sitcom "Petticoat Junction". My interest proved to be a good thing because it allowed my father to have a train to play with as well which resulted in a landscaped train board providing countless hours of entertainment. I still have that train set.



One thing I learned at an early stage was that the engine and all cars that followed had to be on track. Otherwise, the train could not move forward as planned. The train never intended to derail, but sometimes unexpected obstacles arose, and a mishap was imminent. Any organization can be likened to a train and ours is no different.

Though our destination may be unknown, we have a map known as a Strategic Plan, with Education being the fuel that feeds the fire in our boiler. The rails are straight and true, and our map shows many stops along the way with people waiting there for us to impart knowledge. We need to always be aware that the reason we are all on board this train is to teach at different stops. Teaching can take many forms and that is where we each find our niche. The outcome is always the same: to share our horticultural knowledge with the community.

Our train left the station in January with all cars on track and a great list of passengers, many of whom have been on this train many times previously, others not so long, and some will board along the way needing our mentorship. I look forward to the ride this year as we travel together, fulfilling our duties at each stop along the way. Let's be on the lookout for anything that could cause us to derail. It takes great effort and a lot of time to get a train back on track.

By the way, I hope all of you paid for your ticket (dues). We don't have room for any stowaways!

Gary Gardner

February Membership Meeting

Gibbitty gibbitty goooo 2025 here we goooooooo.

He's BAAAAACK

Clear your schedule and bundle up to come hear Dr Andrew King who will be our speaker for Fabulous February meeting, February 6th 10 am.

What a way to warm up to the new year!

Spiced (not spiked) Hot Apple Cider may help too :) I'll save you a cup!

Fabulousness!

Marinda Arney

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Understanding In-Depth Program Area Committees Greg Grant, Ph.D.

Along with the Earth-Kind Water plan, the Smith County Master Gardener volunteer program serves as one of my In-Depth programs which requires it to have a Program Area Committee. It's the only required committee for an In-Depth plan.

Monday February 3 at 2:30 pm, I will hold a meeting in the Cottom Belt classroom and welcome any Smith County Master Gardener who would like to be active in our required educational programming. Please make plans to attend if you want to know what Extension expects in the way of public education from a Master Gardener program.

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service relies on In-Depth Program Area Committees (PACs) to ensure that educational programs are relevant, research-based, and impactful. These committees play a critical role in shaping and guiding Extension programming at the local level, addressing the unique needs of communities across Texas.

Definition and Function

An In-Depth Program Area Committee is a group of volunteers, stakeholders, and industry professionals who provide leadership and guidance for specific educational programs within the Extension system. These committees focus on major program areas such as horticulture, agriculture, natural resources, family and community health, and youth development. Their primary function is to identify critical issues, assess community needs, and help plan and evaluate educational efforts that Extension delivers.

Committee Responsibilities

PAC members take on several key responsibilities:

- **Needs Assessment:** Identifying emerging issues and areas where research-based education can make a difference.
- **Program Development:** Assisting Extension agents in planning and implementing impactful educational initiatives.
- **Resource Support:** Helping secure funding, volunteers, and resources to sustain programs.
- **Evaluation & Impact:** Measuring program success and recommending adjustments to improve outreach.

For Smith County Master Gardeners, participation in a PAC means helping shape horticulture and environmental education programs that benefit residents and promote sustainable gardening practices. Engaging with these committees ensures that Extension continues to provide high-quality, science-based solutions to the people of Texas.

**See You
At
The Meeting**



REPORTS FROM THE GARDENS

Heritage Rose Garden

Since I've been out of town for 3 weeks and we've had such a cold blast I didn't know what to expect when I walked into the Heritage Garden at the end of January. Yes, there were lots of plants that looked bleak. The crinum were all mush. The top growth had collapsed which gives a nice protection against further cold spells. As I read about crinum care, it is suggested to cover with frost cloth to protect the bulb. We have never done that in the garden. We allow the first frost to collapse the long leaves. But we don't prune that off. Instead of covering the bulbs with extra mulch, the plant provides its own insulation. Although this doesn't look pretty, we will leave that until warmer temperatures arrive and we can safely clean them up.

There are plants that enjoy the colder temps, and it seems to jolt them into bloom. One plant that is showing off is the Flowering Quince. The Bridal Wreath Spirea is showing the first of its tiny white blooms coming out of sticks that look dead. The Savannah Holly is magnificent. So full of vibrant red berries. Amongst the collapsed crinum, we see daffodils, spider lilies, and other bulbs shooting up preparing to erupt with gorgeous, happy flowers soon. The roses are dormant but still holding their leaves and preparing for the spring surge of growth and flowers. Once they are pruned in mid-February, they will take off.



Linda Gurasich

IDEA Garden

Many of you may not be familiar with Cat's Whiskers, but it is a unique plant that is the most asked about in the IDEA garden. Like so many of the plants we have, it came from the SFA plant sale a few years ago. They are very easy to propagate by pinching off a few inches of the newest leaf branching and potting them up. We had the greenhouse crew take cuttings to propagate for a few years and we have been successful in planting those back in the garden. I've done that this year and have several growing at home.

Cat's Whiskers, (*Orthosiphon aristatus*), is tropical from India to Australia, is in the mint family and is a tender perennial in those regions. But in our area, they are treated as annuals and are replanted in late spring/early summer. One plant will get about 3' high and as wide. As you can imagine, the common name comes from the long white stamens that protrude from its white flowers. Look closely and you can see that in the picture. There are usually many more blooms on each plant which this picture doesn't really show. The upright blooming flowers appear continuously in summer and attract many pollinators. They also attract the public because so many people have never seen them before and are intrigued by the bloom and name! So when you visit the garden next summer, be on the lookout for this unusual plant.

The other most asked about plant is in the picture behind the Cat's Whiskers and it is the small hedge of Jazz Hands Variegated Loropetalum. It's the only variegated loropetalum and the leaves are cream, green and pink. It is spectacular and everyone that sees it wants to know what it is. It doesn't bloom as profusely as other loropetalum but the leaf variation makes up for that. We get many compliments on it and it is readily available in the nurseries.

Laurie Graham



Shade Garden



In this issue we would like to showcase a prominent planting at the east end of the Shade Garden - *Cryptomeria japonica*. The tree was planted a good number of years ago by our very own Keith Hansen, while serving as the Smith County AgriLife Horticulture Agent, in honor of his late father, Dr. Paul Hansen. It remains a beautiful and venerable feature in the Shade Garden.

Cryptomeria japonica is commonly known as Japanese Cedar though is not a true cedar, but rather, a member of the Cypress family. This stately evergreen hales from southern and central Japan and China where it is highly revered for its longevity, beauty and lumber. It can be seen growing at temples, shrines and other places of reverence. *C. japonica* is a tall, evergreen conifer with a sturdy central trunk and beautiful exfoliating bark. It assumes a pyramidal shape in its youth, with the crown opening up and rounding over time. It is hardy in zones 5-9, growing 50-70 feet tall, though up to 150 feet in its native range. Branches are tiered and horizontal, slightly drooping at the end, giving a soft and elegant appearance. Branches sport fragrant, blue-green needles that face outward toward the branch terminus, arranged spirally around the stems. The needles are pointed and sharp, though soft to the touch and in appearance, giving the stem clusters an overall impression of a fox tail. *C. japonica* does not flower and its reproductive organs are hidden, hence the derivation of its genus name- *krypto* meaning hidden; *meris*, meaning part. It forms diminutive cones in terminal

clusters ranging in size from 1/2 to 1 inch which add to its overall beauty and interest. Japanese Cedar prefers acidic, moist, well drained soil, though tends to accommodate to a variety of soil conditions once established. It grows best in full sun but can tolerate light shade, especially from summer's afternoon sun. This esteemed tree is robust by nature and not generally bothered by pests or diseases. However, it can be susceptible to black spot and leaf blight so needs to be planted in an open area with good circulation. Upright and spreading habit, blue-green foliage and hardy nature make Japanese Cedar a good candidate for mass planting as a natural screen or as an individual specimen of note in the landscape-like ours. Thank you Keith.

www.missouribotanicalgarden.org >PlantFinder>*Cryptomeria japonica*.

<https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/Cryptomeria-japonica>

[https://hic.clemson.edu/Factsheets/Japanese Cryptomeria](https://hic.clemson.edu/Factsheets/Japanese-Cryptomeria)

Katy Barone

Goodman-LeGrand

The Goodman Museum Garden workday did not happen in January due to bad weather. There were no more opportunities in the month for rescheduling. The next workday is the 2nd Friday of February, the 14th from 9am to 11am. We welcome any and all to come out. There is always a lot to do! Please bring your own tools and gloves for weeding and planting. This is an awesome group with a teaching / learning session at the break. If weather is a challenge, please watch your eblast messages.

Thank you in advance! Hope to see you at the Goodman!

Belinda Kromer

REPORT FROM BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING 1/16/2025

The February 2025 Board of Directors Meeting was held in person at the CottonBelt.

- The final piece: IDEA Garden pergola plaque has been ordered and will be placed when available
- New computer required for running new Windows operating systems update: an approved AgriLife laptop has been donated and Desktop has not been purchased yet. This donation will save SCMGA over \$600 in 2025 budget amendment.
- SCMGA Member update: 133 active(certified, interns, LOA); 35 retired, 5 inactive, 1 Emeritus
- Background Checks for 2025: information and links have been emailed to 62 members
- Approved vendors list is being updated with correct information and will be going to SCMGA website
- New Class has started and has 14 new trainees who will need mentors for 2025
- SCMGA has received a Community Advocate Award from Alpha Kappa Alpha for its work on Lollar Street Community Garden.
- Library Series starts January 17 with Dr. Andrew King presenting “Hot New Plants and Some Good Ones You Might Have Forgotten About” with post evaluations required.
- Earth-Kind committee is presenting a Pro-Training for landscaping industry personnel Jan. 24.
- East Texas Fruit, Nut and Vegetable Conference is scheduled for Feb. 7.
- Educational Programming Steering Committee(EPSC) had initial meeting December 16. Greg Grant is the chairman this first year and is looking for interested members to participate in the work of the EPSC. Contact Greg if interested.

Quote of the month from Frances Hodgson Burnett: “If you look the right way, you can see that the whole world is a garden.”

Gail Bean, Past President/Parliamentarian

Lollar Street

On January 18, Colleen Huntsberger and Katy Barone attended the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Founders’ Day Celebration and luncheon at Willow Brook Country Club. It was a lovely event with a host of inspiring and uplifting speakers.

During the event, the Smith County Master Gardener Association was recognized by AKA and the Gamma Omicron Omega chapter, for their participation in and contributions to the Lollar Street Community Garden located on the grounds of the sorority house in north Tyler. Colleen and Katy accepted on behalf of the Association, the *Enhancing Our Community Together Award*, for the Master Gardeners “unwavering commitment and dedication to the betterment of the East Texas Community.” The community garden was a huge success. The Gamma Omicron Omega Sorority team, in partnership with several neighbors, grew a bushel of tomatoes, peppers, okra and Southern peas - enough to feed a slew (which they did); delivering bags of produce throughout the neighborhood. It was so bountiful that they eventually posted this sign: “ Pick some, leave some (share with others.)” The sorority team, in partnership with neighbors and others, took complete ownership of the garden in terms of care, tending and planting. On their own, with a bit of guidance from the MG team members, they started a fall/winter garden to which they are still adding. One neighbor is growing vegetable starts from seed for their upcoming spring garden. We call this a win!

The Master Gardener team continues to provide support as needed through education on vegetable selection and trouble shooting any difficulties that arise. Master Gardeners on the Lollar Street Garden Team include: Gail Bean, Colleen and Randy Huntsberger, Tom Cox, Harvey Collen, Terri Gerber and Katy Barone.

Katy Barone



WHAT THE HECK DOES A BOARD MEMBER-AT-LARGE DO?

As requested by the Board of Directors today, I will try to inform you of my duties as Board Member-at-Large. The other elected director's duties are pretty self-explanatory by their title alone but Board Member-at-Large..not so much! I volunteered to serve in this position, was voted in and will now spend this year as your liaison between membership and the Board. Instead of members taking up the President and other board members valuable time, you can come to me with questions and/or concerns for them. If I'm unable to answer, I will take it to the Board members for answers or a resolution. I will then report back to you with my findings/answers, hopefully to your satisfaction. And I'll always give it my full attention and best try!

The other new duty added this year that I will have as Board Member-at-Large is serving on the Volunteer Assistance Committee along with Mary Hamlin and Belinda Kromer. We will try to assist and advise membership on specific requirements, challenges and needs while working with leadership.

So, if you are needing help, want to voice a concern or complaint (or to just pass along a compliment to the BOD), please contact me and we can work together to find a resolution!

Laurie Graham

Home Garden Tour

Home Garden Tour met for their first meeting on Monday, January 13 with 22 members present. Thanks to all who attended! Annette VanDuren has sent letters out to the homeowners, Kim Smith has begun ad selling for the guidebook and Lynn McGinnis is working on design of tickets, new riders for the yard signs, cover for guidebook and a map that will be available at each check-in table.

Tour date is May 17, 2025. Pre-tour date is Mon, May 12 at 10 am and followup date is Wed, May 21 at 1 pm in the classroom. We still have some openings for five team leaders (see below). Two are needed at each address.

We will increase the number of tickets and guidebooks printed since we ran out early last year at a couple of the gardens. Prices will be the same as last year, \$15. in advance, \$20. at the door. Sign up genius for docents/cashiers will be April 1 as will jot-form for ticket purchases.

I've come up with Earth-Kind Education topics for teaching at each garden. Greg has approved them so we will go with those. There will be an additional signup genius April 1 for those wanting to teach in the gardens.

If you couldn't make it to the meeting but want to help or just have questions, please let one of us know!

Homeowners, Addresses and Team Leaders (so far)

Cheri/Tim Cairns
6401 Hollytree Circle

Lynn/Bill McGinnis
1720 Easy St.
TL - Margaret Herring

Patrice/Mike Carmichael
2728 Old Bullard Rd.
TL - Tom Cox

Lisa Odum
607 W. Rusk
TLs - Katy Barone, Gail Bean

GG/Ken Martin
1243 Rainmaker
TL - Belinda Kromer



Laurie Graham

New Class News

Class 32 is already a third of the way through their initial training. We have an enthusiastic group of 14 trainees, who are full of interest, friendly and a lot of fun! Look forward to meeting them in April.

Continuing education hours may be earned by attending class sessions. Please plan to be in your seats before the start of the session and remain for the full 3 hours to minimize disruption for the students. Please give the students priority on seating, handouts and questions, as this is their first exposure to the materials. Classes available for CE are:

Feb 6 9-12; 1-4 Ornamentals (bulbs, roses, azaleas, Texas Superstars) (3 CE hours for each session or 6 hours for full class day)

| | |
|-------------|---|
| Feb 13 9-12 | Turfgrass; Weeds (3 CE hours) |
| Feb 13 1-4 | Landscape Design (3 CE hours) |
| Feb 20 9-12 | Vegetables; Herbs (3 CE hours) |
| Feb 20 1-4 | Fruits; Berries; Nuts; Seed Saving (3 CE hours) |
| Mar 6 9-12 | Plant Pathology (3 CE hours) |
| Mar 13 9-12 | Entomology (3 CE hours) |
| Mar 13 1-4 | Integrated Pest Management (IPM) (3hours) |

Heather Stephens & Chris Cochran

Tech News!

Tech Committee meets January 29th, updates next month.



If you're on Facebook please like and share as much as possible AND invite your friends to follow our page- help get the word out about SCMGA!

Please take time to go to our YouTube channel, subscribe and view our videos, some of them are approved for CE hours and we would really like to utilize our channel more.

YouTube channel at https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=Smith+County+Master+Gardener

And as always, if you have any tech issues (*within reason, LOL!*) you think we need to address, let me know. AND if you're slightly tech savvy or even very tech savvy, we'd love to have you on our committee. If you're interested, please contact me lynnmac@suddenlink.net.

Lynn McGinnis

Calendar & Garden Guide

Since the 2025 Gardening Guide/Calendar is all about native plants be sure to get one before you start on your spring garden plan. It will not only help with ideas for plants but also gives you a list of gardening chores for each month.

If you are going to give a program somewhere be sure to take some calendars to sell. Believe it or not it will be time to start working on the 2026 calendar in about 6 weeks. Send me your ideas for the next calendar.

Sherri Matthews

Youth Gardens

We are getting ready to start working on the school garden soon. Hope to plant potatoes and onions in the next few weeks. It will be fun to help the kids learn to plant them. We are making plans of what to plant next. Hoping they learn a lot and enjoy it as much this year.

Sherri Matthews

PUBLICITY PITCH

Committee/project leaders - when you have events or projects we really need to get the word out - so PLEASE let me know as soon as possible so we can get that information out into the universe! We can post it on so many community calendars, newsletters, websites and Facebook to help publicize your event/project. We can also do press releases to let the media know of the event/project. Keep me in the know and I'll get it out there. lynnmac@suddenlink.net or 903-954-0181.

Lynn McGinnis

Education Dispatch

After a slow start to our Education Program requests that were sent out in mid-December, things are heating up, unlike our weather. We have added a couple of new local libraries to our list and are adding two month-long, once-a-week series at the Food Bank, one for the Spring and one for Fall.

I am so proud of how this program is slowly growing and what wonderful likeminded education partners we are developing all over Smith County. I have to give credit to all the volunteers who helped last year. Your enthusiasm and dedication to these classes, demonstrations, and our tables makes all the difference and creates the warm reception we get. And all the people who promote our programs out in the community - a big thank you to you too!

Our first project will be a table set up at the Fruit and Nut conference in February. Please keep an eye on the EBlasts to watch out for volunteer opportunities. Remember that an added bonus to volunteering with Education is you can often get a CE!

Elizabeth Waldrop

EXTRA EXTRA READ ALL ABOUT IT!!!!!!

Tyler Morning Telegraph (Weekend only)

February 2 – Succulents for Beginners – Vickie Harper

February 9 – Keeping Grandma and Grandpa in the Garden – Ruth Sauer

February 16 – Love in Bloom – Lynn McGinnis

February 23 – You Might Be A Master Gardener... - Annette VanDuren

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

Tyler Today

Greening from the Outside In by our VP - Marinda Arney! The February/March issue will be on the racks February 1st or you can check it out online at <https://www.tylertodaymagazine.com/inside-this-issue/> .

Archived issues available on their website as well.



Lynn McGinnis



Dr. Andrew King speaking to a crowd at the first Library Lecture of 2025 in January.

Don't miss the next presentation -

February 21:

Luke Alfaro: Urban Tree Stress

Luke will discuss tree stress and how to manage stress and promote healthy trees in East Texas

Luke Alfaro is the Urban Forester and Arborist for Tyler, Texas

February 2025

Smith County Master Gardeners

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|--|---|--|------------------------------------|---|--|------------------------------------|
| | | | | | | 1 Shade Garden workday 8:30 |
| 2  | 3 | 4 HRG/IDEA Garden Work- day 9:00 | 5 Shade Garden workday 9:00 | 6 SCMG Meeting Rose Center 10:00 AM Class 32 Meets 9:00 | 7 Fruit & Nut Conference | 8 |
| 9 | 10 | 11 HRG/IDEA Garden Work- day 9:00 | 12 Shade Garden workday 9:00 | 13 Class 32 Meets 9:00 SCMG BOD Location 10:00 | 14 Goodman workday 9:00  | 15 Shade Garden workday 8:30 |
| 16 | 17 Office Closed  | 18 HRG/IDEA Garden Work- day 9:00 | 19 Shade Garden workday 9:00 | 20 Class 32 Meets 9:00 | 21 MGs at the Library Noon | 22 |
| 23 | 24 Grapevine deadline | 25 HRG/IDEA Garden Work- day 9:00 | 26 Shade Garden workday 9:00 | 27 Class 32 Meets 9:00 | 28 | |