



# SCMGA NEWS



## Somervell County Master Gardeners Association

[somervellmastergardeners.org](http://somervellmastergardeners.org)

[somervellmg@gmail.com](mailto:somervellmg@gmail.com)

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April 2009

## April Community Horticultural Education Program

Monday, April 13, 6:30 pm, Somervell County Citizens Center



### Container Gardening and Drip Irrigation

Wanda Riley has been a Lake Granbury Master Gardener since 1997, has her certification as a Master Composter, and is a charter member of the Rio Brazos Naturalists.

Her program will include a PowerPoint presentation on Container Gardening as well as a discussion on everything one would want or need to know about container gardening.

- Container/pot selection
- Appropriate plants for containers
- Design and color choices
- Potting and caring for your containers
- How to make your own potting soil
- Watering containers with drip irrigation
- How to make your own Hypertufa pot (a container made from a mixture of cement, sphagnum peat moss and perlite)



Marty Vahlenkamp, Hood County Extension Agent, will follow with a brief presentation on drip irrigation.

Get a "jump start" on adorning your patios, porches and yards with colorful container plants and learn how to make your own unique, lightweight pots and incorporate wise watering practices. We hope to see you there!

For more information: contact the SC Extension Office at 897-2809 or visit our website at [www.somervellmastergardeners.org](http://www.somervellmastergardeners.org)

Don't forget that we have a great library of gardening books at the County Extension Office. You may go there and read them at your leisure.

### SCMGA Officers 2008- 2010

President:  
Donna Hagar

Vice President:  
Sandi Stringer

Secretary:  
Marilyn Cranford

Treasurer:  
Barbara Lancaster

Historian:  
Yvonna Brown

**Special Committees**  
EK Rose Gardens:  
Bob Lancaster

Education Chairman  
Greg Marsh

Webmaster:  
Dove Johnson

Newsletter Editor:  
Donna Hagar

## *New Interns Begin Master Gardener Training*



Seven new eager Master Gardener Interns began their intensive classroom training on March 26th. The Master Gardener course is a 10 week long course, totaling 70 hours of instructional time. Once the Interns complete the classroom instruction, they will begin accumulating 50 hours of volunteer service in order to become Certified Master Gardeners. We are so excited to welcome them into the Somervell County Master Gardener Association.

## *One Year Later: The Earth-Kind® Rose Trial Garden*



The Somervell County Master Gardeners Association became a part of the National Earth-Kind® Rose Trials in 2008. This research-based program began in 2005 and was started by the Texas A & M Extension Horticulturists. During this 3-year trial, no fertilizer or pesticides are applied

to the plants, no pruning is ever done, and no spent blossoms are removed. The roses may be watered whenever it is necessary the first year. During year 2 and 3, water may only be applied if the plants are in danger of dying.

On March 10, 2008, 6 varieties of roses, replicated 3 times, were planted in three blocks/sections at the southwest entrance of Heritage Park. Each rose bush has a stone tablet in front of it identifying the variety. The roses have grown considerably the past year and survived our unusual winter without too many problems. With the arrival of spring, we expect to see abundant growth

and blossoms.

We are now entering the second phase of the trial and this involves recording data monthly on the rose's progress. Some of the things that we will be checking are the health of the foliage, abundance of blossoms, leaf drop, presence of hips and retention of old flower petals. In the future, if we are able to collect the necessary funds, we would like to install a split rail fence around the perimeter of the bed to deter animals from entering the garden but not prevent people from walking around in the garden. We would like to encourage you to stop by and smell the roses!



SCMGA Master Gardeners Sandi Stringer and Joan Orr grade the roses for the first time in the trial.

## *Master Gardeners and Friends Participate in 5K Walk*



Pictured L-R Yvonna Brown, Donna Hagar, Daphne Lain, Sandi Stringer, Shirley Smith and Doug Richards

On March 21, Somervell County and area Master Gardeners drove to Meridian, the town known as being the Top of the Hill County, to walk 3.3 miles in order to help raise money for a young Meridian girl who is being treated for cancer at St. Jude's Hospital. A large crowd of enthusiastic people clad in Darcy's Angels T-Shirts began the walk on the town square. The weather was ideal as we walked thru the residential streets of Meridian and enjoyed the early spring blooms of iris, redbuds, and wildflowers. Although we weren't the fastest walkers, we also weren't the slowest and we actually had 2 blue ribbon winners in a special category! A fun time was had by all and there was great satisfaction in being part of such a worthwhile cause.

## Conference Update



Lake Granbury Master Gardeners and Somervell County Master Gardeners have joined together to pursue hosting the 2011 State Conference in Glen Rose, TX. Our two enthusiastic Master Gardener groups have been working for several months to put together a very exciting program and have secured a unique facility that will create an extraordinary **conference to remember!**

Located in the midst of the Brazos River Valley, our area offers many exciting attractions, breathtaking sites and a variety of fascinating tour possibilities. Join us at the Directors meeting in Marshall to see our presentation and learn more about our exciting plans.

*Submitted by Doug Richards and Donna Hagar, Co-Chairs, 2011 Conference*

## March Rainwater Harvesting Program



Greg Marsh, left, explains the simple construction of a trash can rainwater harvesting container.

The SCMGA Rainwater Harvesting Program was well attended by many people who have a sincere interest in learning how to conserve our precious resource - water. SCMGA Rainwater Harvesting Specialist Greg Marsh gave a power point presentation on rainwater catchment. He followed with a demonstration on how to convert a garbage can into a rainwater harvesting barrel and concluded with a question and answer session. A drawing was held at the end of the program and attendee

Peggy Scharff happily accepted her rain barrel.

For those who did not receive our flyer on Rainwater Harvesting, they are available at our monthly community horticulture programs.

For questions or more information, please visit our website

[www.somervellmastergardeners.org](http://www.somervellmastergardeners.org) or send an email to [somervellmq@gmail.com](mailto:somervellmq@gmail.com).



Peggy Scharff enthusiastically accepts the rainwater barrel received in door prize drawing.



## Highlight on a Master Gardener

### *Bob Lancaster*



Bob Lancaster at the EarthKind® Rose Trial Garden Planting Day

Being raised in a small Texas town, I had an early introduction and association with horticulture/agricultural activities. My mother and grandmother both enjoyed flower gardening and vegetable gardening. The vegetables were always a welcome addition to the table and we really appreciated the fresh wholesome taste of veggies that were home grown. So I learned to play in the dirt at an early age, helping out the family in a small way with the family garden and learning how to weed flower gardens. While attending Baylor University pursuing a degree in Biology, I discovered that one of my favorite classes was the Plant Taxonomy class where I learned a lot about native Texas plants.

After working for many years helping to build and operate nuclear power plants, my wife Barbara and I retired to Somervell County. Our plans were to play a lot of golf, but life has its way of throwing changes your way. Now we spend very little time

playing golf and lots of time with community activities we support and enjoy. I read about the Master Gardener Training being offered in the local paper. Reviewing the curriculum I recognized many horticulture experts that were to teach the classes. I had been reading their articles in plant magazines for many years and even owned several of their books. I really looked forward to meeting them and hearing their lectures. After our training in 2001, several of us, working with the AgriLife representative decided to form the Somervell County Master Gardeners. This has been a very rewarding adventure in that not only have we helped with many horticulture projects in the community but hopefully, through our educational efforts we have helped increase the horticultural knowledge for folks too. Saving the last for the best, being a Master Gardener is just plain "fun" and the associations you make and the friends that you develop is the real bonus. We all bring our different talents to the table and enjoy working together to help make Glen Rose/Somervell County more beautiful each year.

*Editors note: Bob was a founding member of the SCMGA in 2001, initially serving as Vice President. He then served as President in 2002, 2003 and 2004. Today, Bob continues to chair several committees and is an invaluable member of our organization.*



Bob assisting an attendee construct a rainwater harvesting barrel from a 32 gallon trash can at monthly Community Education Seminar.

## April is National Gardening Month

by Dove Johnson

Yes April is National Gardening Month so I have gathered some information for your consideration. Have fun with it, maybe even involve the children. They love to watch things grow.

### John Dromgoole's Tips

#### *Fertilize your perennials*

This is the time to fertilize your perennials. Give them the nutritious boost they need to grow and flower and prepare them for the summer heat that's still ahead of them. Foliar feed your perennials with Liquid Fertilizer. The best time of day to foliar feed plants is early in the morning or late in the afternoon - never in direct sunlight. Apply it once every 3 to 4 weeks during the growing season and watch them do their thing.

#### *Be Aware.*

Go out and enjoy your garden. Take your morning Coffee and take a walk in the garden. Look at your plants. Do you see powdery mildew or black spots on your roses? Are your squashes showing signs of squash vine borers? Do your tomatoes have black rot spots on the end? These pests, diseases and nutrient deficiencies are much easier to remedy in the early stages, and often can be done with simple, safe solutions. If you are not sure how to treat a problem, call or visit the Extension Office and talk with us to find the best solutions.

#### *Protect your new vegetable transplants from trouble.*

Have you ever had a wonderful day of gardening only to return the next morning to find half your transplants have been cut off at the base? Well, there are two possible culprits, the cutworm or pill bugs (aka roly-pollies). A cutworm is a caterpillar that lives in the soil and will wrap itself around a new transplant at the base and cut it off. You can either protect the plant with a collar around the base or place a stick next to the stem so the cutworm will wrap around the stick along with the stem and not be able to cut through. Once the plant is established, the cutworm is not affective.

The Pill Bug will gnaw at the base of a seedling or a new transplant. Once the seedling or transplant is established, the pill bug will generally leave the plant alone, so you need to be diligent about protection for only a short period of time. First for pill bug control keep the area on the drier side. Water early in the morning. This allows the top part of the soil to dry before night, when the pill bugs are active. Also keep mulch away from plants during this period of time. In the evening dust with diatomaceous earth (D.E.) and pyrethrin, around base of plants. Set up boards, grapefruit halves or banana peels as traps for the pill bugs and scoop them up every morning and dump into soapy water to get the population down. Pill bugs, like many pests, have their place in life as decomposers of dead plants or weak plants,



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so control is only needed during the early stages of the plant's life. The rest of the time let the pill bugs do their work.

*Plant summer seeds now.*

It is time to get summer veggie and flower seeds in the ground. Plant beans, cucumbers, corn, okra, melons, gourds, squash and zucchini. All of these come up very easily from seed. Flower seeds to plant include cosmos, zinnias, morning glories, moonflower, cypress vine, marigolds, four o'clocks, cardinal climber, sunflowers and many more. Be sure to prepare the soil, making it nice and loose by adding compost. A good organic fertilizer such as, cottonseed meal or alfalfa meal can be worked into the soil at this time at half the recommended application. Or you can wait to apply fertilizers after the plant has developed its first real set of leaves. Too much nitrogen at the

beginning of the plants life can cause tall,

leggy growth at the expense of good root development. Read the seed packet information on depth and spacing of seeds. Be sure to thin to proper final spacing for fewer big, vigorous plants rather than a lot of so-so ones. Keep seeds evenly watered using a gentle spray.

***Skips Tips Skip Richter***

*Fertilize:*

Tomatoes and peppers should be fed with a liquid fertilizer. Feed crape myrtle beneath the branch spread with 1/3 cup complete fertilizer per sq. yd. After second mowing, fertilize lawn with 3-1-2 ratio product; aerate first, if needed. Fertilize all houseplants with complete fertilizer.

Mulch trees, shrubs, vegetable garden and flower beds (after soil has warmed) with 2-4 inches of mulch. Pine needles and oak leaves make a good mulch for acid-loving plants. Spread coffee grounds around azaleas and other acid-loving plants.

*Transplant:*

Divide and transplant late summer-and fall-flowering bulbs. Container-grown plants (almost any kind) can go into the ground now. Plant summer annuals to get their root systems established before the extreme heat arrives.

*Lawn Care:*

Plant grass sod or plugs. Water daily for one or two weeks to establish. Begin regular lawn care. Mow every 5-7 days, leaving the clippings on the lawn. Keep St. Augustine grass at 2-1/2 to 3 inches.

*Gardening for Kids-*

Growing pumpkins is a great introduction to gardening for kids. The Connecticut Field Pumpkin variety is usually chosen for making Jack O'Lanterns. They typically grow 10 to 20 pounds each, but can grow up to 50 pounds.

*Gardening Idea-*

Put a sweet potato into a glass of water in your kitchen window. Kids love to watch it sprout.



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### **Gardening Tip**

Many people grow sweet potato purely for its ornamental value as ground cover or in hanging baskets. It makes a cheap and attractive plant.

#### **Gardening Idea -**

Children love sunflowers, and especially, mammoth sunflowers. They will be amazed at how tall this attractive plant grows from such a small seed. After harvesting, you can feed the seeds to the birds, make decorations with them in craft projects, or let the family eat them!

#### **Gardening Idea - Gardening for Kids**

Let the kids plant radishes or scallions. These quick-growing vegetables will delight the children because they can see the fruits of their labor faster. Section them off their own little garden plot. Let them choose what they want to plant. You can buy child-sized plastic hoes, rakes, watering cans, and wheelbarrows. Allow them to "play gardener." Your child's garden can include flowers (just make sure they're not toxic) and vegetables.

Texas A&M University website, Kinder Garden

<http://vegetablegardens.suite101.com/article.cfm/gardeningforkids> is a wonderful website with a wealth of resources for getting kids involved in gardening and is Texas A&M University's webpage for kids. I highly recommend it - it has many gardening-related activities children will love! I would also like to suggest that each Gardener from our area plant a few extra vegetables and give this extra produce to our Food Bank. During this difficult economic time we need to reach out to each other and this is a wonderful way to do so. Please consider doing this.

John Dromgoole <http://www.naturalgardeneraustin.com/information/monthly/march.html>

Skips Tips <http://www.klru.org/ctg/tips/march.php>

<http://www.nationalgardenmonth.org/?page=video>



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## **April Garden Tips**

**By Bob Lancaster**

**Somervell County Master Gardener**

Don't be afraid to change a landscape bed so you can add new plants and a fresh look. We all have planted beds with too many plants of one kind or the wrong kind of plant or planted plants that grew too large for a bed. A landscape change can improve the appearance of one's home but also could minimize the care and labor required to maintain that bed, especially if you focus on using native and adaptive plants. First develop the plan and research the plants to be selected and start with a small bed at first. You might just be surprised how this change affects your overall landscape and generally one of the second thoughts you might have would be, "Why did I wait so long to do this?"

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## Upcoming Events of Interest to All Gardeners

### SCMGA Community Horticultural Education Series

#### Topics remaining for 2009

All programs will be held at the Somervell County Citizens Center, at 6:30 pm, second Monday of the month. Please visit our website for any changes.

[www.somervellmastergardeners.org](http://www.somervellmastergardeners.org) No program in July and December.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Speaker</b>
April 13	Container Gardening	Wanda Riley
May 11	Roses	Garey Wylie
June 8	Turf Grass	Josh/Mcafee
August 10	Butterfly Gardening	Polly Parmer
September 14	Fire Ants	Josh Blane
October 12	Bees	Dwayne Cleveland
November 9	Trees for Somervell County	Carrie Smith



### Take Care of Texas Rain Barrel Event

The TCEQ has partnered with The Home Depot to host an Earth Day consumer-education event about water conservation on Saturday, April 18, 2009, 10:00 a.m.

to 11:00 a.m., at 16 Home Depot stores across Texas.

Participants will learn tips to help save money, water, and energy, and will learn how to build a rain barrel for use at home. For \$50, participants may build their own rain barrels to take home. (optional)

The first 30 customers to pre-register will receive a FREE Take Care of Texas reusable bag, a faucet aerator, and a compact

fluorescent light (CFL) bulb.

The one-hour class will provide tips to save you up to \$1,300 a year.

We ask your assistance in promoting this event. Please forward information about the event to your (members, affiliates, etc). A flyer is attached to assist you, or you may download a copy from the Take Care of Texas web site.

For more information and to find a location near you, visit [www.takecareoftexas.org/partners](http://www.takecareoftexas.org/partners).



### Molly Hollar WILDSCAPE Native Plant Sale

Saturday April 18, 2009

10:00 am – 2:00 pm

Randol Mill Park Greenhouse, Arlington

[Directions and much more Information](#)





## *Upcoming Events of Interest to All Gardeners continued*



### **April 9 - Somervell County - Feral Hog Biology, Control & Management Seminar**

Texas AgriLife Extension Service offices in Somervell, Bosque and Hood counties are sponsoring a Feral Hog Biology, Control & Management Seminar in Glen Rose, TX on Thursday April 9, 2009. The seminar will cover "The Good, Bad & Ugly" on feral hogs. Registration begins at 8:30 am at the Somervell County Expo Center on Hwy 67 and Bo Gibbs Blvd. in Glen Rose. During the past several years Agriculture producers and homeowners alike have started to see the damage that can be caused by feral hogs. The aim with this program is to bring land-

owners up-to-date on the latest development in the world of feral hog management. The morning program includes Status and Distribution of Feral Hogs in Texas; Feral Hog Biology; Game Laws and Regulations; Disease Control; Feral Hogs... an Economic Nuisance or an Opportunity; and an update on the Feral Hog Abatement Project and Current Research. The program will finish with trapping and baiting techniques and lunch. Individual pre registration is \$10.00 until April 6 and \$20.00 at the door. Registration includes lunch, refreshments and hand-out materials. For more information contact the Texas AgriLife Extension Service, Hood County Office at 817-579-3280.

[Info/Agenda](#)



### **May 12, 2009 8:00am-4pm Granbury First United Methodist Church 301 Loop 567, Granbury, TX**

The Texas Watershed Steward program is a free, one-day educational workshop designed to help watershed residents improve and protect their water resources by getting involved in local watershed protection and management activities.

The workshop will provide an overview of water quality and watershed management in Texas. It will primarily focus on water quality issues in Lake Granbury as well as efforts by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) and the Brazos River Authority (BRA) to help improve water quality in the lake and the health of the surrounding watershed.

Pre-register for the workshop by going to:

<http://tw.s.tamu.edu>



### **Howard Garrett to Speak in Central Texas May 14, 2009**

Organic gardening guru and "Dirt Doctor" Howard Garrett, author of 14 books and columnist for *The Dallas Morning News*, has accepted a 6 p.m. speaking engagement in Hamilton, Texas, for May 14, 2009. Venue is the Hamilton Middle School cafetorium on College Street, just southwest of the courthouse square.

The newly formed Hamilton County Master

Gardener Association is hosting the event, which will make two CEUs available to both Private Applicator Licensees and Certified Master Gardeners. Tickets will be \$10 in advance for Master Gardeners, \$12 in advance for others. Tickets are \$2.00 more if purchased after May 8th, IF THERE ARE ANY. Send a check for tickets to Hamilton County Master Gardener Assoc, 2470 CR 513, Hamilton Texas 76531. For more information to contact Michael Langford, HCMGA treasurer and event chairperson, at [bar-nun@htcomp.net](mailto:bar-nun@htcomp.net).

## *Specialist Training for Master Gardeners*



### **Master Gardener**

### **Rainwater Specialist Training**

Texas AgriLife Extension Service in Hood County and the Lake Granbury Master Gardeners are offering a Master Gardener Rainwater Specialist Training in Hood County on **June 1-3, 2009**. The training will take place at the Hood County Annex I, 1410 West Pearl Street, Granbury, Texas.

This hands-on training will include the installation of a collection system and drip irrigation at an Extension/Master Gardener demonstration site. Every trainee will make a rain barrel to take home for themselves, or to use as a demonstration. Each trainee will receive a shirt, power point and other materials to help them install a rainwater harvesting system demonstration in their counties

and teach others about rainwater harvesting. A copy of the tentative schedule is attached with the registration form with some information on hotels and sights to see. Only 30 participant spots are available for this training, so please submit your registration forms in as soon as possible. Registration is on a first come/first serve basis, and forms must be in our office by May 15, 2009. Contact Marty Vahlenkamp, 817-579-3280, to answer any questions or provide further information.

Once the course is complete, Master Gardener Rainwater Harvesting Specialists will be able to set up a rainwater harvesting demonstration and trainings in their counties for other Master Gardeners and for the public.

We are excited to be able to host such a great learning opportunity and look forward to seeing you here in Granbury.

[Registration Packet](#)



### **Texas Master Gardener Vegetable Specialist Training**

June 29-June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2009  
Somervell County Expo Center  
Glen Rose, Texas



Hosted by Somervell County Master Gardeners and AgriLife Extension Service Master Gardener Vegetable Specialist Training will include training by experts on the subject of all phases of vegetable growing such as soil prep, garden location and set up, cultural practices, plant growing, vegetables A-Z, insects and disease control and handling and harvesting vegetables.

This will be two full days of training and will include a workbook, lecture, books, informational files, 2 lunches, snacks, drinks and dinner the first night.

Transportation and lodging is on your own. [\(hotel information\)](#)

Course will be limited to 50 participants. Only 2 Certified Master Gardeners per county. Registration information will be forthcoming. Please check the SCMGA website soon for more information.

## *Specialist Training for Master Gardeners continued*

### **September 28 – October 2, 2009 Master Volunteer Entomology Specialist Training**

– Texas AgriLife Extension Service Montgomery County Office, Conroe, TX  
Hosted by Dr. Paul R. Nester, Extension Program Specialist, Houston/Metro area, and the Montgomery County Master Gardeners.

Registration fee of \$300.00 includes collecting kit with lots of goodies; lectures; Extension bulletins; 3 lunches, 1 dinner, snacks & drinks. Transportation and lodging is on your own. Course is limited to 25 applicants; deadline is July 18, 2008

Contact Paul Nester at [PNester@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:PNester@ag.tamu.edu) or 281-855-5639 with any questions.

<http://grovesite.com/GSLibrary/Downloads/download.ashx?>

[file=sites/1569/14485/276310/2009%20MV%202009%20Ento%20Spec%20Training%20announcement%20%20agenda.pdf](http://grovesite.com/GSLibrary/Downloads/download.ashx?file=sites/1569/14485/276310/2009%20MV%202009%20Ento%20Spec%20Training%20announcement%20%20agenda.pdf)



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The Somervell County Master Gardeners are volunteers who work with the AgriLIFE Extension to improve gardening skills throughout the community. Program objectives are implemented through the training of local volunteers known as Master Gardeners. We collaborate with Extension to conduct youth and community education; establish and maintain demonstration gardens; and provide a speakers bureau. We work with special audiences in the community for youth and community outreach of a horticultural nature. We recruit and educate new Master Gardener candidates for effective volunteering.

The training for Somervell County is held in combination with Hood and Johnson Counties and is currently held only every other odd year. The next training for our area will be held in the spring of 2009. If you are interested in the SCMGA, we would like to invite and encourage you to visit one of our monthly meetings, so that you might learn more about our various projects and activities. Our regular monthly business meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month at 10:00 a.m. in the Somervell County Extension Office. For more information, please contact Josh Blanek, Somervell County Extension agent at 254-897-2809 or [j-blanek@tamu.edu](mailto:j-blanek@tamu.edu) or you may email the SCMGA at [somervellmg@gmail.com](mailto:somervellmg@gmail.com).