



**SOMERVELL
COUNTY
MASTER
GARDENERS
ASSOCIATION**

**SCMGA
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SCMGA Newsletter

THE GREEN PIECE



Volume 3, Issue 4

April 2010

*Why's, How's & Wow's of Rainwater Collection
(or we'll need that rain come summer!!)*

SCMGA Community Horticulture Education Program

Monday, April 12, 2010, 6:30 PM

Somervell County Citizen Center, 209 SW Barnard



Whether you'd like to add a small barrel or a BIG rainwater collection system, you can learn why we need to save that rainwater and some simple "How to's" to re-

sult in the "WOW's" of collecting rainwater! Presented by Somervell County Master Gardener Rainwater Specialists Julie Conner and Greg

Marsh, their PowerPoint presentation will give you some great ideas and examples of systems currently being used in your neighborhood. So join the excitement and don't miss this important topic.

....refreshments served...

*Submitted by
Glenda Marsh*



*Somervell County Master Gardeners
2010 Community Horticulture Education Programs*

The Somervell County Master Gardeners have some exciting and informative programs set for 2010. All monthly programs will be held on the second Monday each month at 6:30 pm at the Somervell County Citizens Center, 209 SW Barnard. Please check our website somervellmastergardeners.org for updates.

January—Roses
February—Vegetables
March—Gourds/Bird House
April—Rainwater Harvesting
May—Bees
June—Worm Composting

July—no program
August—Compost Tea
September—Herbs
October—Greenhouse
November—Blue Bird Houses
December—no program

Favorite Plants of Master Gardeners

Crepe Myrtle

By Barbara Lancaster, Somervell County Master Gardener

Common Name/Scientific Name: Crepe Myrtle; *Lagerstroemia indica*

Native/Adapted: Adapted over the entire state

Height: 12 – 20 feet tall

Spread: 10 – 15 feet

Light: Full Sun

Evergreen/Deciduous: Deciduous

Seasonal Interest: Showy flower sprays from early summer to fall in many shades of red, pink, lavender and white; very good fall color (orange-red to yellow)



Close-up of Crepe Myrtle blossom

Water: Drought tolerant; low to medium watering.

Maintenance: Prune for shape or to raise canopy. Do not chop tops. Removal of shoots from base of plant to maintain tree shape. Removal of seed heads to encourage additional blooming. Spraying may be required to keep powdery mildew under control.

Wildlife: No

Deer Resistant: No. Deer will eat any leaves on branches they can reach.



Comments/Experience with the Plant: The Crepe Myrtle can be one of the most beautiful, showy plants in a landscape. It is considered to be a small upright tree, but is actually a large shrub that must be maintained in a tree form by regular removal of shoots that grow at the base of the plant. The bark character of slick trunks is part of the appeal of the Crepe Myrtle. Crepe Myrtles are easy to transplant from the shoots at the base of the plant. We currently have several Crepe Myrtles in our landscape, including 3 that were transplanted from shoots. While the Crepe Myrtle is generally tolerant of our local conditions, they can be damaged by extreme freezing temperatures. It has been my experience that, while they might be damaged above ground in an extreme freeze, they can be cut back to the ground and will re-grow from the root. Some varieties of Crepe Myrtles can be container grown. I am currently growing two Victor Red dwarf Crepe Myrtles in containers.

Source: Neil Sperry's Complete Guide to Texas Gardening, 2nd Edition, Taylor Publishing Company

Horticulture Program at Citizens Center

Submitted by Shirley Smith

THE GOURD LADIES OF GRANBURY

Monday, March 8, 2010, the Gourd Ladies came to Glen Rose. Mary Lange and Dee Gomez of Granbury dazzled the good-sized group of interested individuals with their beautifully constructed gourd birdhouses. This "hobby" began more than 20 years ago in Minnesota and is now a thriving business for these two delightful ladies. Last

year, they sold over 700 of these unique birdhouses. They no longer grow their own gourds but buy them from all over the US. If you are interested in growing your own gourds you will need loose soil and plant early in the spring after danger of frost is past. Gourds require lots of water on a regular basis. Mary stressed that it takes months (yes, months!) for the gourds to completely dry so "don't rush it." The gourds will

begin to mold, but this is expected and the mold patterns can actually lend an air of individuality and character to the gourd. If you are going to make a birdhouse from your gourd, there is no need to treat the inside of the gourd. If the gourd is to be used outside you will need to use polyurethane to protect it. Gourds come in many, many different sizes and shapes so there is something out there for everyone!

Project 2010 Rosebush

Put the Rose Back in Glen Rose

**Next Order Deadline – April 13th, 2010
with Delivery April 21st**



By Donna Hagar, Somervell County Master Gardener

Yes, **you** can help bring roses back to Glen Rose! This joint project conceived by the Glen Rose/Somervell County Networking Group and partnership between the Chamber of Commerce and Somervell County Master Gardeners is in full swing! We are slowly reaching our goal of getting 2,010 Earth-Kind® Roses planted in and around Glen Rose/Somervell County by the end of 2010. This effort is in preparation for the State Master Gardener Conference to be held in Glen Rose in April, 2011. Let's all put Glen Rose's best foot for-

ward and show gardeners from across the state why we are called GLEN ROSE!!

Earth-Kind® Roses are easy care, low maintenance roses that will thrive in our environment. Most bloom for many months of the year and come in all colors. This is a perfect time to plant the roses to get them established before the heat of the summer strikes. Order your roses now! The next order deadline is Tuesday, April 13th, with delivery scheduled for Wednesday, April 21st. More information and order forms can be ob-

tained online at either the Chamber of Commerce website, <http://www.glenrosechamber.com/2010rose.html>, <http://www.glenrosechamber.com/PDF%20Files/RoseOrderForm.pdf> or the Somervell County Master Gardener website, www.somervellmastergardeners.org, or see the [informational brochure](#). Order forms may also be obtained at the Chamber of Commerce office downtown. Roses come in one gallon containers and are \$12 each.

Daffodils, Narcissus, or Jonquils!

By Sandi Stringer Somervell County Master Gardener

If you are like me, you've often experienced some confusion when trying to identify the difference between a Daffodil, Narcissus, and Jonquil. In actuality, the American Daffodil Society states that Daffodil and Narcissus are synonyms. Narcissus is the Latin or Botanical name for all daffodils. Daffodil is the common name for all members of the genus Narcissus. In some parts of the country any yellow daffodil is called a jonquil, usually incorrectly. As a rule, but not always, several yellow flowers, strong scent, and rounded foliage characterize jonquil species and hybrids.

This article will focus on daffodils/narcissus because these bulbs are very easy to grow, give you a big bang for your buck, and are the best to focus on in Texas because they provide a dependable and longer bloom period, they require no special handling (no pre chilling) and many will come back year after year. Plant your spring flowering bulbs in November to January. These can be planted in beds containing soil amended

with lots of organic matter. The depth to plant the bulb is about 2 times its height. Sunlight requirement is not very important, simply avoid deep shade. Fertilizing the bulbs with a complete fertilizer (low nitrogen, moderate phosphorous and potassium) will help establish the roots and generate more foliage and blooms. Resist the temptation to cut back yellowing foliage, as the bulbs need all their foliage to provide energy for next year's bloom. Daffodils should be divided every 3-4 years if they have multiplied prolifically. Once the foliage has withered, dig up the clump of bulbs, gently separate them, and replant as quickly as possible. Now that you know how to plant and care for these little beauties of early spring, here is a partial list of daffodils/narcissus that do well in our area.

Narcissus tazetta "Grand Primo" Both Chris Wiesinger of Southern Bulb Company in Tyler, Tx. and Dr. Bill Welch of Texas AgriLife Extension say this is a favorite for all of Texas

N. Golden Dawn, N. 'Ice Follies', and N. X odorus (Campernelle) are some additional favorites.

Look around at the different varieties of blooming daffodils/narcissus this spring and decide what varieties you would like to have. In the spring of 2011 you could be gazing out at your own little "field" of daffodils.

Sources: Texas Daffodil Society, Texas Gardener Magazine March/April 2010, and Doug Welsh's Texas Garden Almanac.



"If a man finds himself with bread in both hands, he should exchange one loaf for some flowers of the narcissus, because the loaf feeds the body, but the flowers feed the soul"

from <http://thinkexist.com/quotation>



March Tips New Perennial Plants

by Bob Lancaster, Somervell County Master Gardener

When new plants are set out, the first few days and weeks are critical and are sometimes referred to as "hardening off". This process is especially important for bare-root plants and seedlings since they must establish new roots to take up moisture before they wither and die. To help your newly planted perennials, it is important that they be kept uniformly moist. For especially tender species it may be necessary to provide

temporary shading for a few days until the roots can begin to function efficiently. Our ancestors sometimes did this by placing a standing shingle in the ground adjacent to the plant, to shade it through much of the afternoon. To keep wind and sun from the plant, old-time gardeners also sheltered them in cylinders they made by cutting the tops and bottoms from cans. After a few days, when the plants had settled in, they

would remove these protective devices. Special care during the establishment period is especially important for plants that are being brought from a greenhouse directly to the garden. It is best for greenhouse-grown plants to spend a few days out of doors in partial shade before they are set into the landscape.

Source: "Perennial Garden Color" by Dr. William C. Welch; Taylor Publishing Company, Dallas, Tx

Who Are Master Gardeners?

by Nancy Hillin, Somervell County Master Gardener

Master Gardeners are volunteers sponsored by the AgriLIFE Extension Service who have chosen to help further the education and progress of horticulture within their communities. The AgriLIFE Extension Service defines a Master Gardener as a person who has completed a minimum of 50 hours of horticultural training in a program created by Texas A&M University and administered by a county extension office.

After completion of the course, the intern is required to contribute 50 hours of volunteer service within a year, as approved by their AgriLIFE Extension Agent. After the training and volunteer hours have been completed, the intern is given the certification of Master Gardener. In order to maintain the title, one must serve 12 hours of volunteer service and six hours of educational training or specialist training each year through their local extension office. These requirements may be increased at the local level by county extension agents.

Master Gardeners are encouraged to participate in local Master Gardener Associations and attend state and regional Master Gardener conferences that are conducted yearly. In April, 2011, the Somervell County Master Garden Association and the Lake Granbury Master Gardener Association will be co-hosting the Texas State Master Gardener Conference. It will be a three-day event

with workshops, classes and well-known guest speakers associated with the gardening world.

Master Gardener Associations thrive on the diversified talents of their membership. You will find them preparing and delivering horticulture related programs to the public and designing and managing gardening projects for their communities.

Other contributions include writing computer software, creating and maintaining websites, writing articles and publishing newsletters related to horticulture subjects. One of the most important goals of a Master Gardener Association is to enhance 4-H and youth programs through 4-H horticultural clubs and Junior Master Gardener groups.

Somervell County Master Gardener Association is the smallest fully-functioning Master Gardener Association in Texas with an active membership of 24 who continuously complete and maintain horticultural projects of their own and contribute to those of other organizations within Somervell County and surrounding areas.

Master Gardeners are aware that our plant world can be fragile if we are not good stewards of all the wonderful living elements that support it. Although Mother Nature often sends challenging obstacles, Master Gardeners will always go to great lengths to meet those challenges by their willingness to help and beautify our environment.

Source: Texas Master Gardener Handbook



Highlight on a Master Gardener

Glenda Marsh

Although I grew up in Pasadena TX, with a dad who grew vegetables behind our homes and a mom who canned much of what he grew, I had NO desire to garden while growing up. My take on the gardening: '...that's a lot of work'. My dad is now 87 & still plants almost an acre of garden in his back yard. By mid-March 2010, I think he had already planted 97 tomato plants & 5 bundles of onion. He's also started some of the 'little Juliette tomatoes' he'd eaten here last year 'in his hot house' (a bathtub he'd put an acrylic door over). Every year he says he's not going to plant as much.....but some things never change. He gives us all we want if we can show up at the right time & sells as much of the rest as he can. So yes, it's a lot of work for him BUT that's probably what's kept him 'going & going' during his retirement years. My actual garden interest must include some type of 'genetic tendency'. We do differ in the area of flowers.....my dad's philosophy being: "...not worth much if you can't eat it" while I believe both, food & flowers, are very important to one's overall well-being! Oh well, genes don't always mean 'the same'.

My husband Greg took the MG training in Brazoria County & created a small plot

in our back yard in Angleton for tomatoes, onions, rosemary & a few other 'trials'. We quickly learned the flavor of these products were superior to what we purchased in the store. The best tomatoes I'd ever eaten were the result of his using a 'bed full' of mushroom compost. (we've got to try that again up here).

Although I had enjoyed working with potted plants & day lily's in our flower beds, I worked as a Pediatric Nurse Practitioner up until the week before we moved to Glen Rose 3 years ago, & felt I never really had the time to take the MG course. When my husband's State Master Gardener Conferences came along, I'd 'pay the fee' so I could attend classes of my interest. But once we moved here, it took no time to realize our Glen Rose Zone 7 was & is so different than our tropical setting on the 'golden Gulf Coast' as we not so affectionately called it. After our move here, I decided I would make the time to take the course.....really doing so because I 'wanted the information for myself'. And what a wealth of information we received. Experts from all over the state led our educational sessions.....from vegetables to flowers to trees & shrubs to landscaping & rainwater collection & more, it was so enlight-

ening, interesting, & exciting to realize what each one of us could do to improve our immediate environment & personal food source if that were our interest. I enjoyed the field trips & visiting with fellow gardener-friends about what worked for them & what didn't. We've met many new friends since becoming Master Gardeners. And the learning, experimenting, & 'fellowshipping' continues. My husband might argue the benefits of having TWO master gardeners in one family because that 'WE need to...' still means, in his opinion, 'YOU need to..!' In any case, becoming & being a master gardener is FUN.

While I enjoy working outdoors starting about March, I prefer sewing, quilting, & sharing with others how to create budget-friendly meals using professional quality kitchen tools through my Pampered Chef business during those hottest of months of summer & into fall!





Pecan Tree Fertilization

Submitted by Josh Blaneck, CEA-AG/NR Somervell County

What symbolizes the tradition of the great state of Texas better than

the Bluebonnet, the Texas Longhorn (the breed of cattle, not that little school in Austin) and the Pecan Tree? Pecan trees are native to the state of Texas and have been here for hundreds of years. Just take a trip down **the Brazos or Paluxy Rivers** and you'll see trees that, if they could talk, could tell you stories of great floods and droughts, wide open grasslands and Comanche Indians. Pecan trees are so well liked we named them the State Tree of Texas. Pecan trees are liked for both their crop producing abilities and landscape value. And while most Pecans can get by with little to no care at all, giving them that little extra care can make a difference in yielding a high quality pecan crop or having the best looking landscape tree on the block.

Nitrogen (N) and zinc (Zn) are the only mineral elements that pecan trees normally need for good growth and production. Nitrogen may be applied on the soil surface, or it can be applied in water through a drip irrigation system. Zinc must be applied as a foliar spray. Zinc applied to the soil is soon tied up in a form unavailable to the tree.

Young Tree - Nitrogen is necessary for rapid tree growth and is the only soil-applied nutrient that most pecan trees ever need. It is important to apply nitrogen in frequent small amounts during the first few years.

Spread fertilizer on the soil surface, under the tree, but well away from the trunk. Nitrogen fertilizers are very soluble and are readily moved into the soil by watering. It is inefficient and unnecessary to make holes around the tree to pour the fertilizer into the ground. If the trees are not making rapid

growth, do not fertilize the first year. Poor growth by a first-year tree usually indicates problems other than lack of nutrition, and fertilizer may hinder rather than help the tree.

Ammonium sulfate (21-0-0) and ammonium nitrate (33-0-0) are common, economical nitrogen fertilizers that can be used. Table 1 gives guidelines for determining how much fertilizer to apply and when.

Freeze damage is very common on young pecan trees fertilized after the month of June, so do not fertilize after this date.

Table 1. Cups of ammonium sulfate or ammonium nitrate per tree.*

	April	May	June
Year 1			1
Year 2	1	1	1
Year 3-4	2	2	2
Year 5-7	4	4	4

*1 cup equals approximately 1/2 pound.

Mature Trees - Apply 1 pound (2 cups) of 21-0-0 or 33-0-0 for each inch of trunk diameter in late March before bud break. If the tree produces a very heavy nut set in May, make a second application in late May or early June. Apply the fertilizer broadcast on the surface starting 3 to 5 feet from the trunk and extending out a few feet past the tree canopy. Water the fertilizer into the soil promptly. Avoid scattering fertilizer on sidewalks or paved driveways because some materials can cause unsightly, although seldom permanent, spotting.

Zinc - Frequent zinc sprays are essential for rapid tree growth. Trees deficient in zinc usually have small, weak leaves, highly branched (rosetted) twigs at shoot tips and, in severe cases, dieback of twigs and branches. During the first 7 years, trees grow

best if foliar sprays of zinc are applied at least every 2 weeks throughout the growing season of April through early August. If the trees are not growing, reduce the spray frequency. Spray mature trees with zinc at least three times between bud break in late March or early April and early June. Zinc is needed primarily by young expanding leaflets. Leaflet expansion on mature trees usually stops by mid-June. Two of several choices of zinc materials to spray are:

Zinc nitrate is formulated as a liquid. Use 2 to 4 teaspoons per gallon or 1 to 2 quarts per 100 gallons of water. Zinc sulfate is formulated as a powder. Use 2 teaspoons per gallon or 2 pounds per 100 gallons of water. UAN liquid fertilizer (32-0-0) can be added at a rate of 1 quart per 100 gallons of the zinc sulfate solution to improve penetration of zinc into the foliage. Zinc sulfate spray can cause leaf burn on other trees in the home landscape, especially peaches, plums and other stone fruits. Zinc sprays are most effective if applied early or late in the day with little or no wind. The higher humidity under these conditions allows longer wetting and more zinc absorption. Zinc sprays pose a minimal hazard to man and animals, yet care should be taken not to contact the spray directly. Zinc sprays are not likely to stain sidewalks, houses, cars, etc.

These zinc materials can be mixed and sprayed in combination with most chemicals labeled for insect and disease control. Consult Texas AgriLife Extension publication E-145, *Homeowner's Fruit and Nut Spray Guide* for recommended combinations.

For more information on pecan fertilization or any other management options contact the Somervell County Extension Office at 254-897-2809.



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We're on the web!

<http://www.somervellmastergardeners.org>

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 2011. 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 Blaneck, Somervell County Extension agent at 254-897-2809 or jblaneck@tamu.edu or you may email the SCMGA at somervellmg@gmail.com.



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