



**SOMERVELL
COUNTY
MASTER
GARDENERS
ASSOCIATION**

**SCMGA
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SCMGA Newsletter

THE GREEN PIECE



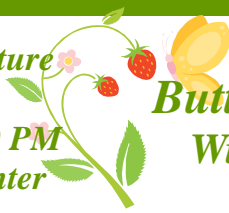
Volume 2, Issue 8

August 2009

**SCMGA Community Horticulture
Education Program**

**Monday, August 10, 2009 6:30 PM
Somervell County Citizen Center**

**Butterfly Gardening
With Polly Parmer**



Polly received her undergraduate and masters degree from Texas Tech University with a major in biology and she taught botany, zoology, and horticulture for 31 years at South Plains College. Her love for gardening and helping others learn about gardening brought her to become a member of the Lake Granbury Master Gardener Association after she

and her husband moved from Levelland to Granbury. She is not only involved with the Master Gardening program but also the Green Thumb Garden Club and many other activities. Polly's power point presentation will include the following topics: location and preparation for the butterfly garden, plant selection for the larval stage of the butterflies, and

plant selection for the adults of these butterflies. A list of butterflies in Somervell and surrounding counties will also be included.

We all are fascinated with watching butterflies so come learn how to have more of them fluttering in your garden. You will also have a chance to win a door prize.



SCMGA Celebrates One Year Anniversary of E-Newsletter

It all began at a monthly Master Gardener meeting with a discussion about starting a newsletter. All 17 members present agreed that it would be a good addition and all were willing to participate in writing garden articles and garden tips as well as including notices of other garden related events. Our first E-Newsletter was published in July 2008. We then offered it to people who attended our public horticulture programs and the numbers quickly grew. We saw an opportunity to include more gardening information for the public as

well as the Master Gardeners. Because we received such positive comments from the public readership, it was only natural to want to see if others might enjoy reading it. The subscriber list has grown from the original 17 to approximately 140 people and the Newsletter actually won a 3rd place award in the small county association division at this year's state Texas Master Gardener Conference. In the coming months we will be adding new topics to our newsletter and we believe that anyone who has an interest in gardening will

enjoy reading it. We welcome suggestions for things you might like to see as well. As part of our anniversary celebration, we have also given the newsletter a new name - **The Green Piece**. If you are interested in subscribing to the SCMGA E-Newsletter you can email somervellmg@gmail.com and type subscribe in the subject line. If at any time you would like to discontinue it, email us again with unsubscribe in the subject line. Try it; I think you'll like it!

Submitted by Sandi Stringer

Highlight on a Master Gardener SCMGA Historian - Yvonna Brown



I was born in a small farming community in north western Kansas. Although we did not live on a farm, I have

many great memories of spending a lot of time with a favorite aunt and uncle who did. They had thirteen children so there was never a dull moment there. Needless to say, with that many children, everything we ate was grown on their farm, so my first experience with gardening was helping shuck the corn and gather the vegetables. My aunt had beautiful beds of Larkspurs, Snapdragons, Hollyhocks and Phlox, which still remain some of my favorite flowers.

When I was ten my father accepted a job with an oil well drilling company and moved our family to Colorado City, Texas. It was quite a change for us after the rolling hills of wheat and corn fields and the beautiful snowy winters we were accustomed to. For the next few years we moved when the drilling rig moved so there was never an opportunity to establish a garden or flower beds. It wasn't until I married, moved to Dallas, and we bought our home there that any consideration was given to planting things. My husband

and I enjoyed getting out in the yard when time allowed as it was a good way to "wind down" after a hectic week of working and being involved in the activities of our three children. We stayed with the good old standbys, Wax Ligustrum, Buford Holly's, Marigolds, Periwinkles and Begonias as they were easy to care for and a good fit for our busy lifestyle.

In 1995, after our children had completed college and were out on their own, I retired from a twenty five year career in the Banking Industry. We had been casually looking for land in a smaller area for some time and finally in early 1997 we purchased acreage outside of Glen Rose. We would spend every weekend possible here clearing the land in preparation for our home, which we completed in December 1998. While doing this clearing we were also considering the types of trees, grasses, and flowers we thought would be most suitable for our property. After much trial and error with some of our choices, I felt we needed some expert help in the areas that just weren't performing as well as we wanted them to. One of our neighbors, Somervell County Master Gardener Bob Lancaster, had sent me literature on the Master Gardener Training Classes. I de-

cided this was the right fit for what we needed so I signed up and completed the courses in May 2005. I am very grateful to him as I have learned so much about the ins and outs of gardening although I still have a long way to go before I become a "Master in Gardening." The



friends I have made and all the compliments and thank you's the SCMGA receives

from so many people on the Beautification Projects we do around the community have made me realize that taking the classes and becoming a Master Gardener was a very wise and rewarding decision.

When I am not gardening or doing SCMGA or Glen Rose Garden Club projects my husband and I enjoy traveling and spoiling our four beautiful grandchildren.



Yvonna accepting SCMGA Award at 2009 State Conference in Marshall in April.

"Footsteps in the Garden"

Last month's newsletter included an article on losing a special gardening loved one titled "Footsteps in the Garden". We neglected to acknowledge one of our very own Master Gardeners who recently lost her husband and her own second set of footprints for her garden. It is with very special condolences that we extend our apologies and recognition to Julie Conner and family for the loss of her husband Bert.

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 No program in July and December.

Date	Topic	Speaker
August 10	Butterfly Gardening	Polly Parmer
September 14	Fire Ants	Josh Blaneck
October 12	Bees	Dwayne Cleveland
November 9	Trees for Somervell County	Carrie Smith

August Garden Tips

By Dove Johnson, Somervell County Master Gardener

There is no doubt that with this heat we are experiencing that August has arrived here in Texas. But we can't hide indoors and forget about our gardening chores, so here are some helpful hints to help you make your gardening and landscaping tasks around the house a little easier this month. Try to work in the morning and take frequent breaks. Drink a lot of water and pace yourself. Planning a fall garden? Here in Central Texas we can grow something every month of the year. So let's get busy with our fall gardens. Early in the month is the time to plant beans, cucumbers and squash. Broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage and cauliflower can be planted in the middle of the month. Leafy and root crops can be planted later in the month. Variety selection and proper planting time are critical to success. Fertilize fruiting vegetables after first fruit set for higher productivity.

Turn our compost piles. Recycle plant material and shred leaves to use as mulch. Add

healthy plant material and kitchen waste to the compost pile also.

Watch for cutworms on new tomato transplants; protect with aluminum foil around base 1" above and below ground.

If you are out in your flower beds or gardens daily, pull a handful of weeds everyday before they get to large. This is better than spending a sweltering afternoon picking weeds that are out of control.

Never pack down the soil when planting anything, and do not walk on the beds. Always use stepping stones or paths and keep off the soil. This is absolutely vital! Work compost into your soil and cover with mulch. Work with nature, not against it. Improve soil health to improve plant health. Use beneficial insects. Encourage biodiversity by planting a variety of plants that provide shelter and food for the natural enemies of pests. When you view your garden, you should see it is alive with birds, toads, lizards, and beneficial insects such as green lacewings and ladybugs.

Do you know what ladybug larva look like? Never just spray to kill an insect unless you know what it is; it may be a beneficial. Educate yourself so you will know. When you put in a garden, you are creating a micro habitat. You will know you have done well when it is teaming with life. All these creatures need water; provide a source for those who need water placed on the ground and those who need a bird-bath.

Keep a garden journal to write down your successes and failures. Record

such things as varieties that did especially well in production, products that you felt improved your garden, and things that you want to buy. Take photos of your successes and put them in your journal.

And finally, take advantage of local gardening events, plant sales and Master Gardener educational seminars. Also take advantage of local gardeners who are always happy to help.



2011 Conference Committee Meeting



On July 7, members of Somervell County Master Gardeners and Lake Granbury Master Gardeners began monthly planning sessions, working towards the 2011 Texas Master Gardener State Conference. The conference will be held at the Expo Center in Glen Rose, on April 27-29, 2011.

Doug Richards and Donna Hagar, conference co-chairs,

came dressed in attention getting attire to emphasize thinking outside the box to make this a unique and special conference. The goal for this conference is to bring over 1000 Texas Master Gardeners together for 3 days of educational sessions, tours, workshops and shopping.

Several committees have already made progress. The Publicity committee is well on it's way to developing a logo for the conference. The Accommodations committee has been working with both Glen Rose and Granbury CVB's.

The Vendor/Sponsor committee already has over 20 potential vendors. The Reception committee is close to securing a location for the first night reception. The Workshop committee has held a trial workshop, with another scheduled in the upcoming weeks.

This will definitely be a conference that Master Gardeners, as well as the entire community, will never forget. It will be one of the most exciting and unique Texas Master Gardener Conferences ever held.

IRIS

By Julie Conner, Somervell County Master Gardener

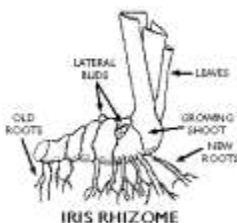


The stately Iris is a garden favorite with its elegant and graceful bloom. The Bearded Iris has a sword

like leaf foliage on a tall stalk with three petals which arch upward and three which fall downward, they come in a large range of single color and multi colored petals. Iris is a Texas favorite as they are hardy in drought and hot summers. Depending on its genetics the iris will bloom during the spring to early summer with some blooming again in the fall. The best time to plant the

Iris rhizomes in North Texas is August - September in a well-drained site allowing 12 to 16 inches between. Plant

the iris with the top of the rhizome just below ground



level. Water well then water again in a few days. The Iris does best in full sun to part shade but to meet the max bloom they need 5 to 6 hrs of sun a day. Plant in a well-amended bed of organic matter but have your soil tested in case additional nutri-

ents are needed. Do not over water as the moisture can rot the rhizomes.

If your Iris fails to bloom it is usually due to overcrowding. To avoid this issue divide the rhizomes in late summer every 3 to 5 years keeping the ones with white roots and green leaves. When the blooms wither cut them back to one inch above the rhizome, do not trim the foliage.

The best way to enjoy your Iris is to share the rhizomes with family, friends and neighbors.

Source: Ft. Worth Star Telegram



The Troublesome Trio

By Yvonna Brown, Somervell County Master Gardener

Strolling through the garden one morning I was awed by all the beauty that surrounds us. The pallet of reds, blues, greens, yellows and purples blooming there was truly a beautiful sight to see. As I continued my stroll I noticed something odd about some of the leaves and buds on the roses and mums. I wondered, what is that little brown hole in the rose bud, why are those leaves so speckled, and what in the world are those little black things leaving that sticky goo on the mums? Upon closer inspection I realized it was the work of the Troublesome Trio- Aphids, Spider Mites, and Thrips.



Aphids are a variety of common pests that attack plants and feed on the juices. They can be black, red, yellow, gray, or white in color. They have needle-like "piercing sucking" mouthparts that allow them to puncture plant

tissue and remove the sap or cell contents. They are very small, usually less than 1/8 inch in size and reproduce very rapidly. Aphids seldom kill the plant but when in abundance they will reduce the vigor and stunt its growth. They take in more sap than they can absorb or use so they excrete the excess on the leaves of the plants. It appears as a clear, sweet sticky substance, known as "honeydew". Ants love this honeydew.



Spider Mites are an almost microscopic relative

of spiders and ticks, which tend to feed on the under- side of rose leaves, especially older leaves. They have rasping mouthparts, which pierce the skin of the leaves and inject some of their saliva in the process. This causes minute chlorotic spots to appear as the leaf tissue collapses. The rose foliage will take on a bronzed color and look speckled. The leaves will look yellow and dusty from a dis-

tance. Heavily infested leaves will turn brown, curl and fall off. Spider mites are common in dry low rainfall areas so keep plants watered and apply mulch during high drought conditions.



Thrips are small cigar shaped insects approximately a millimeter in length whose mouthpart rasps leaf and flower tissue and feed on the plant juices. In roses the female thrip makes a small slit in the side of the bud and lays her eggs inside. Evidence of this happening is the small brown hole the slit leaves on the bud. In a few days the eggs hatch and the Larvae, which resemble the adults in general body form, begin sucking the plant fluids until they are fat enough to pupate. If you break the bud open and pull back the petals and see small slivers of cream, yellow, brown or black scurrying about this is the thrip larvae. If you have thrip damage the

bud may not open at all and if it does the petal edges look brown or discolored.

If these three pests are identified in the early stages of infestation, a frequent high pressure water blast will dislodge them from the plant. Be sure to blast both upper and lower leaves for aphids and spider mites. Beneficial insects such as ladybugs and green lacewings are also a good defense. If stronger measures are needed, consult a reputable Garden Center for products that are safe for humans, pets, and the environment, but won't destroy the beneficial insect population as well.

Information for this article was obtained from gardening books in the Somervell County Master Gardener Library located at the Texas AgriLIFE Extension Office 1405 Texas Avenue and gardenguides.com

Iron Chlorosis in Home Lawns

*Submitted by Josh Blanek, CEA-AG/NR
Somervell County*



Are the new leaves of your lawn grass turning yellow?

If you look even closer, are the veins on these new leaves remaining green? It could be that your lawn grass is suffering from iron chlorosis. Iron chlorosis presents a significant problem to crop production in the southwestern United States. It is most prevalent in high pH, calcareous soils (heavy clay soils), as well as sites with excessive phosphorus levels. It also occurs in sites during wet and cool conditions, the type of conditions we have not experienced for several weeks. Never the less it could still effect your home lawn or landscape.

Iron chlorosis results when green chlorophyll in leaf tissue fails to develop. Although iron is not part of the chlorophyll molecule, it is one of the nutrients essential for chlorophyll synthesis. Iron chlorosis first develops in new growth and appears as yellowish-green leaves, usually as an interveinal yellowing, giving the leaf a striped appearance. As the condition worsens leaves appear yellow to almost white. In severe cases

of iron chlorosis, loss of turfgrass and other plants occur in irregular patterns. Iron chlorosis is attributed to reduced availability of iron in calcareous soils and may also be associated with high levels of bicarbonate and phosphate in plant tissue. Management practices can also contribute to iron deficiencies. Well aerated soil is needed for plants to take up iron. Excessive irrigation and soil compaction result in poorly aerated soils and reduced iron uptake. High phosphorus levels resulting from excessive fertilization and high levels of bicarbonate in irrigation water also interfere with iron uptake by plants.

Environmental factors such as temperature, rainfall and light intensity also impact iron uptake and assimilation by plants. Low soil temperatures reduce soil microbial activity which, in turn, reduces iron uptake. Wet soils, or excessively dry soils, and low light intensities also reduce iron uptake. For example, iron chlorosis is common in St. Augustine grass under shaded conditions.



The foliar application of products containing iron sulfate directly to the plant is the most widely used method to correct iron chlorosis and usually will provide a quick recovery. The problem with this method is the short longevity of the effect and repeat applications may be needed. Typically, iron applications improve the color of turfgrasses for only 3 to 4 weeks. In soils, iron is rapidly oxidized to form insoluble iron oxides. In grasses, iron is immobile and is removed with the clippings. Thus, the response is of short duration. Soil-applied iron products may or may not provide a response due to the fact that this iron supplement could be tied up in the soil. For best results, use a chelated (plant available) iron formulation. Always read the analysis on the label to find if iron (Fe) exists and what formulation is in it.

In addition to proper application of iron products to your lawn, always remember to avoid getting these products on sidewalks, patios, driveways, etc. Many of these iron sulfate products will leave stains that are difficult, if not impossible, to remove.

*St. Augustine grass
showing iron Chlorosis*

Favorite Plants of Master Gardeners
Lamb's Ear
By Joan Orr, Somervell County Master Gardener

Common Name/Scientific Name: Lamb's Ear/*Stachys byzantina*

Native/ Adapted: Well adapted to this area

Height: 6-12 inches

Spread: Leafy mat

Light: Full sun to partial shade/the more sun the stronger the plant

Evergreen/Deciduous: Deciduous, cold hardy in the South

Seasonal Interest: Flowers in early summer

Color/ Features: Silvery gray foliage with purple/pink spikes

Water: Low to medium / keep water off leaves to prevent leaf rot

Maintenance: Prune plants in late winter



Wildlife: No pest or wildlife problems

Deer Resistant: Yes

Comments/Experience with the plant:

The leaves of this plant resemble a lamb's ear. Lamb's Ear is a deceiving name for this most aggressive and hardy plant. Its growing habits are not gentle as a lamb and in order to keep it under control, one must keep it thinned and trimmed. But its other attributes are definitely worth the effort. The beauty of this plant is its ability to survive with little water, which makes it a very desirable plant for water wise landscaping. It is versatile in that it makes a fine border plant. Because of its silvery gray color, Lamb's Ear is a great contrast against vivid color throughout the garden. Keep a watchful eye wherever you plant Lamb's Ear. It can surprise you and multiply in "a shake of a lamb's tail". Lamb's Ear is a fun thing for everyone to touch because the leaves are soft as lamb's ears. So soft, that as the story goes, our ancestors utilized the leaves long before Charmin came along. Today, we find it as a reliable beautiful and versatile garden choice. Lamb's Ear has been given the designation of being an honorary herb

By Joan Orr Somervell County Master Gardener





Concrete Leaf Workshop

Nine members of the Somervell County Master Gardeners Assn. recently held a workshop to learn how to make Concrete Leaves. Concrete Leaves are a form of Yard Art made by using a formula of sand and cement, and a large leaf from any plant such as: Canna, Elephant Ear, Squash, Hosta, Caladium, etc.

The hands-on workshop was conducted by Kristi Brooks, with assistance from Carolyn Myres and Mary Jane Willig, all members of the Lake Granbury Master Gardeners Assn. A fun informative time was had by everyone who attended, including a guest from the Brazoria County Master Gardeners Assn.

Submitted by Yvonna Brown



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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 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 j-blaneck@tamu.edu or you may email the SCMGA at somervellmg@gmail.com.

We're on the web!

<http://www.somervellmastergardeners.org>

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