



**SOMERVELL
COUNTY
MASTER
GARDENERS
ASSOCIATION**

**SCMGA
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SCMGA Newsletter

THE GREEN PIECE



Volume 3, Issue 8

August 2010

“Herbs for Every Day”

SCMGA Community Horticulture Education Program

Monday, August 9, 2010, 6:30 PM

Somervell County Citizen Center, 209 SW Barnard

Master Gardeners Present Commu-
nity Horticulture Education Series
“Herbs for Every Day”
August 9, 6:30 pm
Citizen’s Center, 209 SW Barnard St.
in downtown Glen Rose

Jean Marsh, Past President & Green-
house Chair of Walker County Master
Gardeners & present Chair of Texas
Thyme Unit of Herb Society of Amer-
ica will be our guest speaker. With an
extensive herb garden herself, her
presentation will include a PowerPoint
presentation including a brief history

of herbs, the use of herbs in our land-
scape, concluding w/ the use of herbs
in our everyday foods. A demo of
making pesto will be shown & avail-
able for sampling. Jean will be ac-
companied by her husband, Darwin
Marsh, who grew
up here and gradu-
ated from GRHS.
Come on down and
say “hi” and enjoy
this informative
meeting.



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.

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

SCMGA Website has a New Look!

Submitted by Donna Hagar, Somervell County Master Gardener



It may not have been at our choosing, but with a server change mandated by our hosting servers from TAMU to use the WordPress platform, we have gotten a whole new look to our website. It is still a bit of a work in progress to get it set up exactly as we would like. But we are pleased with it's clean lines and easy navigation. If you have specific requests of how we can improve it or what you'd like to see included, our ears are open!

Visit the site at the same address:

<http://somervellmastergardeners.org/>

Wade's WallyWorm Word

Submitted by Wade Moore, Somervell County Master Gardener

"Wade, what's going on to-day?" asks WW

"Well, I have decided to put paramagnets in the garden." replies Wade

"Oh! Wade. I am hurt. We are so close. Please, don't put a pair of maggots in here with me. They are really icky and not nearly as handsome as I am. Why? Why? Why?" pleads WW

"WallyWorm calm down. I didn't say a pair of maggots, I said paramagnets. You know, like in paramagnetic." says Wade

"No, I don't know. Please explain paramagnetic to me." Says WW. "Well, paramagnetic refers to a force found in nature called paramagnetism.

Paramagnetism is the ability of a substance to collect or resonate to the magnetic

fields of the Cosmos. This may cause a phenomenal result in plant growth and vitality when paramagnetic rock dust is incorporated into the soil. These rock powders use crystals or crystal-like forms to collect subtle cosmic energies." explains Wade

"Volcanic rock contains the greatest concentration of paramagnetism. The forces of paramagnetic silica rock dust travel in an upward spiral while lime rock dust forces travel downward. While paramagnetic matter is attracted to a magnet, diamagnetic matter is repelled by a magnet. When these two opposite forces are present in the soil, because they are "insulated" from each other by organic material, they have a Yin/Yang balance effect. If I were to use a salt fer-

tilizer, it would form an ionic solution which can conduct electricity and short circuit the paramagnetic/diamagnetic polarity and ruin the soil. If a soil is not paramagnetic, the moisture in the soil will not rise in the morning and fall in the evening as expected. The paramagnetic forces keep plant saps circulating, making plants more resilient to winter

weather and much more disease resistant as well as repelling insects. Now, surely you grasp the concept and the inner crux of what I just told you; don't you WallyWorm?" concluded Wade

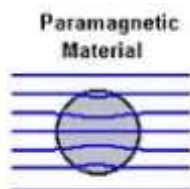
"Why I am just absolutely "polarized"." was WallyWorm's sarcastic reply.

Material gathered from:

http://www.energizewater.com/index_files/paramagnetism.htm

www.dirtdoctor.com/view_question.php

Acres USA September 2000 by Thomas M. Dykstra PhD



August Gardening Tips

Submitted by Joan Orr and Nancy Hillin, Somervell County Master Gardeners

When you boil or steam vegetables don't pour the water down the drain. After all, it's



full of nutrients and they need not go to waste. So, after

it cools, use it to water potted patio plants. You will be amazed at how the plants respond to the vegetable soup. Make sure you cook with unsalted water because excess salt can be toxic to plants. If you don't want to put the brew on your plants just put it in the compost pile.

Don't toss out coffee or tea grounds, either. Both can be used to acidify the soil around acid-loving plants such as rho-

dodendrons, gardenias and camellias. Sprinkle about one fourth of an inch of grounds around each plant to help keep the PH of the soil on the acidic side. Coffee and tea grounds are also beneficial for earthworms. Chamomile tea does a great job controlling damping-off (an especially nasty fungal disease that attacks young plants quite suddenly.) Just add a spot of cool tea to the soil around the base of seedlings once a week for great results.

If you can't stand dirt under your fingernails, but don't always wear gloves, the solution is bar soap. Not after a day of digging, but before you start! By drawing your fingernails across a bar of soap, it will effectively seal the underside of

your nails so dirt can not collect underneath them. Then when you are done working, you can use a nail brush to remove the soap and your nails will be sparkling clean. This little trick will also protect the nails of mechanics or anyone working with greasy items.



The quickest way in the world to dry herbs is to lay some newspa-

per on a seat of your car and spread the freshly picked herbs in a single layer on the paper. Make sure the windows are rolled up in the car. Your herbs will dry perfectly and your car will smell great!



Mulches - Reduce Work and Water Use

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

Mulching is one of the most commonly used and best management practices for homeowners in maintaining flower beds and vegetable gardens. The use of mulch can be helpful in reducing the need for weeding, conserving moisture, improving soil quality, and improving the looks of your landscape. You receive all of these benefits simply by mimicking Mother Nature's use of dead plant material.

If you have ever walked through an area of thick trees, you probably noticed lots of

leaves and twigs piled up. And generally underneath the mat of material it is wet and very few weeds are germinating. It is exactly this concept that we are implementing when we apply mulches to our landscape. The first thing to remember about mulch is that it can be any dead plant material. Organic materials such as dead leaves, twigs, grass clippings and shredded trees all make excellent mulches.



The first and most common use of mulch is to conserve water. Mulch insulates and protects the soil from drying out and baking in the sun's heat. Mulch allows the soil to have less fluctuation in temperature and gives the plants roots a more favorable growing environment. During the hot part of the summer non mulched bare soil often becomes caked over and can reach temperatures of around 120F. At this rate it doesn't take very long for soil moisture to be depleted.

Drip Irrigation in the Garden

By: Bob Lancaster, Somervell County Master Gardener

We have a small raised bed garden where we have grown a few tomatoes, potatoes, onions, lettuce, spinach, squash, turnips, mustard greens, sweet corn and a few other vegetables each season. Since it is a raised bed garden, it dries out frequently and I really have to watch the plants to make sure they do not get too dry. Also being blessed with a dark heavy soil, the watering has to be slow and deliberate or most of the valuable water runs off the vegetables and on to the surrounding ground. So after the first year I decided to install a drip irrigation system to ensure my water is used efficiently and to promote better plant production.



Drip irrigation systems can be as simple as the drip hoses that you just hook up to a water facet and water a tree or a row of vegetables or you can get more sophisticated depending upon your specific needs and your budget. Many different devices can be used to drip water such as bubblers, sprinklers, emitters, hoses. There are many providers of drip irrigation supplies. I chose for my application to use a system called T-tape sold by Drip-



WorksUSA, a low cost system for rows and raised beds. The T-tape comes in a roll and you just roll it out to fit the area you want to irrigate. Simple tools are used to work with the system. After measuring the length of my rows and ordering my tubing, I also installed a pvc pipe header system on which to attach the T-tape allowing me to water several small raised beds at the same time. It is also recommended that you install a pressure device and a filter, each costing about \$10 dollars. A couple of advantages in using the T-tape is that the system works great in low pressure systems, provides equal water distribution along the row, can be buried or mulched over and does not clog easily due to high mineral water. My first T-tape system



lasted over 5 years in the garden before I had to replace some of the T-tape.

After installing and operating my system I was convinced the water application in my garden was evenly distributed and the plants received a more thorough watering for the time applied. Also once the system was turned on I could forget it for the time I had selected to water. One could also use a



timer to turn on and off the water too. I also observed a more consistent production in my vegetable garden. For example one of the causes of blossom end rot in tomatoes could be inconsistent water application and I felt this system helped correct that problem for me.

So whether you want to water an individual plant, a border, trees and shrubs, a garden bed or a row crop there is a drip system available for you. These versatile methods of drip irrigation conserve our valuable water and efficiently place the water on the plant of interest minimizing the feeding of the grass and weeds.

Everything is Coming Up.... Bugs?

Submitted by Donna Hagar, Somervell County Master Gardener

Insects in the City—A significant portion of phone calls to county Extension offices each summer relate to insects around the home and landscape. The new Insects in the City <http://citybugs.tamu.edu/> website could help you understand and manage those pesky critters

The site is designed to provide information for agents, volunteers and the public on insects, arthropods, and even a few other pests. The site is a major update of the old citybugs website that has been in place for over 10 years. The web address is even the same, <http://citybugs.tamu.edu>

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We Need Those Bees!

Submitted by Donna Hagar, Somervell County Master Gardener

Do you have beautiful vegetable plants but no vegetables? Do you see flower set on your veggies but they fail to produce fruit? It could be a lack of pollination from bees. Here is a list of a few things you can do to increase your bee population and maybe your veggie crop!

- **Plant where bees will visit.** This is probably the most important. You can have colorful flowers of all shapes and sizes, but the bees need to find them. Bees love sunny spots that are sheltered from the wind.

- **Don't use pesticides.** Most pesticides are not selective and can kill off beneficial bugs along with other pests. If you must, use the least-toxic formula and follow the directions carefully.

- **Plant native.** Native plants are far more attractive to native bees than exotic flowers. Natives also are usually well-adapted for your climate and growing conditions.



- **Choose colorful flowers.** Bees have good color vision. To help them find flowers (and thus the nectar and pollen), plant bright colors. Blue, purple, white and yellow all attract bees to your garden.

- **Plant in groups.** Clusters of flowers are most attractive. This is why bees flock to your flowering containers and pots.

- **Plant flowers of different shapes and sizes.** There are 4,000 different species of bees in North America, and they are all different sizes. Providing a range of flower sizes means all bee species can find nectar and pollen using their tiny legs and tongues.

- **Have a diversity of plants flowering all season.** Having a range of flowering plants means you can support a wider range of bees flying by your garden at different times in the season.

By Janice Cox— excerpt taken from <http://www.herbcompanion.com>

Highlight on a Master Gardener

Carolyn Norman



As a little girl growing up in the Southeast (Alabama and Georgia), my first memory that involved a plant was at age 5. I decided to bury a raw peanut in my mom's flower garden. I checked on it daily and when I saw the little green shoot emerge – I was hooked – it was LOVE. My mission everyday (in the summer) was collecting flower seeds. I loved to pop open the 'touch-me-not' pods, check the four o'clocks to see what time they bloomed plus get a handful of black seed balls from them. I especially liked the way these flowers attracted something I really loved Butterflies.

Yes, my fascination with plants/flowers/bugs/reptiles began at an early age and continued on through the years. Hey, I was a city girl and we were fairly limited to small stuff, but when visiting my grandmother's house in Alabama – she

showed me a REAL vegetable garden. She grew everything from figs to roses to okra. At her house I knew I could always find at least one nice big caterpillar on the tomato plants. She was the Master of Gardening and passed it on to my dad. I grew up around an affinity for the outdoors. One of our family's favorite pastimes was whitewater canoeing and kayaking on the beautiful East Tenn. and N. Carolina rivers.

I suppose it's not surprising that I pursued a degree in Biology. After finishing at Middle Tenn. State Univ., my dream job was to be a National Geographic photographer, but the only problem was that I had no equipment or training.....or money! I decided to further my education at this point and study Medical Technology so I could become a registered Lab Tech and with the money – pursue my dream. That dream has been on the back burner now for 34 years, but that's ok for I couldn't be happier with the life the good Lord has given me.

I met and married my husband while working in Nashville at Vanderbilt Hospital at the ripe old age of 27. He worked for American Airlines which required a move away from my beloved Tennessee and all my family. We relocated in Ft. Worth in 1982 and made our way to Denton where I worked at Denton Regional Medical Center Lab for 10 years. We built a house there, cleared the

lot ourselves and did the landscaping – a lot of fun. The pine trees we planted still are living and look great. Both of our children, Charles (age 25) and Nöelle (age 22) were born during these years.

A window of opportunity opened up for us to move back to Tennessee in 1993 so we packed up our family and made the journey. It's a long story but we ended up moving back to Texas a year later. The time there though was good and we know it was something we needed to do. When we moved back, we chose Glen Rose. We wanted to raise our kids in a smaller town, plus I had a few relatives in the area. When I accepted a job offer at the hospital lab, it cinched the deal. We soon began to get involved in our new community and the kids fit right in to playing sports and making friends at school and church. Our temporary housing while building our home in the country didn't offer much room for my love of sewing, growing, or mowing but in due time, we finally moved into our rural log home where the kids could run free and we once again could put our landscaping skills to the test. We did a lot the work ourselves finishing out the inside of our home as my husband acted as the general contractor. Between 1994 and 2000 we all were also actively involved in "The Promise" from May thru October – so needless to say we were a busy family.

I'm sure I did some gardening during these years, but I really don't remember.

Fast forward 6 years..... One hot July 4th in 2006, I was walking around the town square enjoying the festivities, when I came upon the dedicated Master Gardeners group selling plants. My daughter would be headed off to college soon, so when I saw the signup sheet for information, I decided to put my name down, although I had to ask the ladies there what it was all about.

When the time came for classes to start the next spring, my employer worked with my schedule to allow me to attend all the classes. I'm sure I've enjoyed the wonderful people I've been privileged to know in the MG program as much as any knowledge and experience I've benefitted from. I enjoy working in my community that has been so dear to me and my family. I'm

probably one of the few in the SCMG who are still working outside the home and not retired yet; consequently I'm prevented from being as involved as I'd like. I have learned so much about what it takes to be a successful gardener and a good steward of the elements. I'm still not there yet but it sure has been an enjoyable learning ex-



perience. I've also learned what a key role the County Extension Agent plays in the ongoing success of MG program. My 84 year old Dad has the most beautiful yard on his street in Pensacola and he has told

me so many times how proud he is of me to be a "Master Gardener".

Presently I'm in my 16th year at Glen Rose Medical Center Lab working part-time. Besides playing in the dirt, I enjoy refinishing furniture, sewing, crafts, traveling with my family and attending SFA and Aggie football games.

I consider myself undeservedly blessed to have a supportive husband who has been an encouragement to me through the years no matter what kind of 'crazy' ideas and projects I get myself into.

One thing my fellow MG may not know about me is that a year ago, I raised 3 black crows from fledgling to adult. It was one of the most memorable experiences of my life.

Favorite Plants of Master Gardeners

Rudbeckia or Black-Eyed Susan

by Bonnah Boyd, Somervell County Master Gardener



Common Name/Scientific

Name: Black-eyed Susan/
Rudbeckia hirta

Annual or short-lived perennial
native

Usual Height: 1-2 feet

Spacing: 9-12 inches apart

Bloom: May or June, to Sep-

tember with water; yellow; 2-3 inches

Soil: Sand, loam, clay; well drained

Light: Dappled shade, part shade, full sun

Propagation: Seed sown in fall or spring

Black-eyed Susan will be lush with good rains or deep watering. It lasts longer if it is shaded from the afternoon sun. Mixed in among lanceleaf coreopsis, it bides its time as small rosettes until the coreopsis has bloomed and then cut back. You can leave the seed heads uncut for bird food and to seed out for next year.

Source: Native Texas Plants

Sally Wasowski and Andy Wasowski



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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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