



**SOMERVELL
COUNTY
MASTER
GARDENERS
ASSOCIATION**

**SCMGA
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SCMGA Newsletter

THE GREEN PIECE



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First Hand Observation of Extracting Honey

By Nancy Hillin Somervell County Master Gardener

Mr. Dwain Cleveland, "The BeeMan", extended a gracious invitation to the SCMGA to visit his honey extracting facility on October 18, 2009. Several Master Gardeners accepted his invitation.



Master Gardeners look on as Dwain loads frames into extractor.

Mr. Cleveland brought a box (a souper) of frames that he had just collected from his hives to be used in the demonstration. Each frame was uncapped by cutting down



Cutting the caps off the cells.

both sides with a heated serrated knife. Dwain says that he and his wife, Polly, get an added bonus from the cappings. He lets the cappings drain to produce a small but extra delicious honey. This is a much deserved reward for the arduous process necessary to produce honey. The frames were put four at a time into a mechanical drum shaped device called an extractor. Turning the drum causes the honey to be released

from the frames by centrifugal force, a sure but slow process. From the bottom of the extractor (the drum) the honey is emptied into a filtered container. It is then ready to be poured into sterilized jars.

As the extracting process continued, the smell of honey increased, filling the air with the delicious smell of one of nature's true bounties. A big Thank You to Dwain and Polly for their hospitality and for the jar of honey given to each Master Gardener.



Somervell County Master Gardeners Elect New Officers for 2010-2012

At the November monthly meeting, the nominating committee presented a slate of officers for 2010. The slate was voted on and approved and the Officers for 2010 are: Donna Hagar, President; Shirley Smith, Vice President/Publicity; Merilyn Cranford, Secretary; Barbara Lancaster, Treasurer and Jim Cheatham, Historian. These officers are elected for two year terms. Officers will assume their duties after the December 16th monthly meeting.

Put the Rose Back in Glen Rose Project 2010 Rose Bush

By Donna Hagar, Somervell County Master Gardener



Project 2010 Rosebush is well underway! On December 2nd, the first shipment of roses arrived at the Glen Rose Chamber of Commerce and were distributed to those who had ordered the roses. This first order was for 172 of Earth-Kind® Roses. With these, and the KnockOut Earth-Kind® roses already planted at Heritage Park by the Somervell County Master Gardeners, we are 10% on our way to our goal of 2,010 roses. Paluxy Valley Realty and Fossil Rim Wildlife Center each had orders of over 50 roses!



SC Master Gardener Intern Nelda Tandy helps load the over 50 roses ordered by Fossil Rim Wildlife Center.

Project 2010 Rosebush is a joint effort by the Somervell County/Glen Rose Chamber of Commerce and Somervell

County Master Gardeners. The goal of the Project 2010 Rose Bush is to have businesses and homeowners plant 2,010 Earth-Kind® Rose bushes in and around Glen Rose and Somervell County as a means of beautification and bringing back roses that were once abundant in our area. While not the native wild roses that once dotted the hills of Somervell County, Earth-Kind® Roses are a perfect choice for the landscape for both businesses and homeowners because of their high level of performance and ease of care.



MG's Becky Altobelli and Bonnah Boyd assist with delivery of the roses.

The Chamber of Commerce office is the coordinator of Project 2010 Rose Bush, while the Master Gardeners will offer advice on selection and care of the roses. Project 2010 Rosebush is an ongoing project through all of next year. Orders for the Earth-Kind® Roses can be placed through the Chamber office, their website,



Somervell County Master Gardeners Bonnah Boyd and Sandi Stringer sort the first shipment of Earth-Kind® roses.

www.glenrosechamber.com or contact

grcc@glenrosechamber.com.

All roses are in one gallon containers, are \$12 and must be prepaid.

For further assistance on selection and care of the Earth-Kind® Roses, the SCMGA has put together an informative brochure. You may view the brochure at our website, www.somervellmastergardeners.com, or [here](#). We have also set up an Earth-Kind® Rose Advisory Committee that is available to consult with local business and homeowners on selection and care of these Roses. Contact the Somervell County Master Gardeners at 254-897-2809 or somervellmq@gmail.com.



Holiday Plants

By *Bonnah Boyd, Somervell County Master Gardener*

The December calendar contains religious and cultural holidays and indoor plants help commemorate and celebrate these holidays.



Poinsettia

The most popular of the holiday plants, the poinsettia, is native to Central America and Mexico. When selecting a poinsettia, choose one that has small, tightly closed flower buds (surrounded by colorful bracts). Also, choose a plant that is about as wide as it is tall.

Amaryllis

This is a great holiday gift. All you need to do is plant the bulb in a small pot with good potting soil and have the top (pointed end) of the bulb sticking up out of the soil about 1 inch. Add water and bright indoor light, and plant growth will begin. Keep the soil moist but not saturated.



Christmas Cactus

This is a favorite holiday plant that produces a profusion of gaudy blooms ranging from hot pink to apricot, red, purple, and white. Purchase plants with many flower buds that are just beginning to elongate and open. This is not your normal cactus that lives in the desert. The plant lives in tropical jungles in the crotches of trees, so take care when watering it. The soil should be moist but neither completely dry nor saturated. When the top 1 inch of the soil is dry to the touch, water lightly. Keep the blooming plant in bright indoor light. Bright light is required for blooming.

Source: Doug Welch's Texas Garden Almanac

Earth-Kind® Rose Program with Garey Wylie Submitted by Sandi Stringer



An Earth-Kind® Rose program was presented by Garey Wylie, Johnson County Master Gardener, at Storiebook Café. It was an opportunity for local citizens to learn about all 21 varieties of Earth-Kind® Roses and how these low maintenance, beautiful plants can be incorporated into your landscape. Additionally, this program was part of a "kick off" of Project 2010 Rose Bush whose goal is to have businesses and homeowners plant 2,010 Earth-Kind® Rose Bushes in and around Glen Rose and Somervell County. For further assistance on selection and care of the Earth-Kind® Roses, contact the Somervell County Master Gardeners at 254-897-2809 or somervellmg@gmail.com. The roses can be ordered from the Chamber of Commerce, the coordinator of the project. Contact them at grcc@glenrosechamber.com or www.glenrosechamber.com. Let's continue to beautify our unique and special community!



Christmas Gifts for Gardeners

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

With the arrival of December, the minds and thoughts of even the most avid gardener turn away from the yard and garden toward Christmas and the holiday season. Gardening chores are temporarily laid aside as the sights and sounds of Christmas fill the air. If you have gardening friends on your gift list this year, consider surprising them with a 'green thumb' type of gift, which can be used and enjoyed year-round as they pursue their favorite hobby. Garden items make unusual, welcome, and unique gifts, and the selections are vast. There is something for nearly everyone in any price range. The following gift suggestions may just fit into your gardener's stocking this Christmas.



to please. Consider one of the

1. Garden Tools. From a hand trowel to a riding lawn mower, gardening tools are guaranteed

many time- and work-saving electric lawn or garden products. There are many from which to choose.

2. Garden Accessories. Many unique and interesting objects fall into the garden accessory group. Sculpture for the patio or garden can last for years. Or, you may choose to be more casual, with wind chimes, a bird feeder, flower pots, or hanging baskets.

3. Gardening Books and Magazines. Although the selection of gardening books is wide, choose a book that is adaptable to the recipient's interest. One of the popular monthly gardening magazines



will be appreciated throughout the year. Two magazines that come to mind with material pertinent to our region are Texas Gardener and Neil Sperry's Gardens. The Texas AgriLife Extension online Bookstore has many publications that will delight every interest, in addition many publications can be found

on Aggie-Horticulture. These two web sites can be accessed at <https://agrilifebookstore.org/> or <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu> respectively. There are also links to each of these sites at the Somervell County Extension website, <http://somervell-tx.tamu.edu> under the link tab. There are many good books on gardening in Texas at your local bookstore and some nurseries.

4. Garden Plants. Although seldom considered, outdoor plants can make welcome gifts. The Christmas season is ideal for planting all major trees and shrubs. You might want to consider a pecan or fruit tree for your gardening friend. Select one which will complement the recipient's landscape. Regardless of the choice, plants make a delightful and lasting gift.

5. A Gift Certificate. If all else fails, why not consider slipping a gift certificate into the stocking of the 'green thumb'? Your local nursery or garden center will be most happy to fulfill your wishes here.

Community Horticulture Educational Series - Trees

Submitted by Sandi Stringer

Texas Forest Service, Staff Forester 1, Carrie Smith spoke at the SCMGA Community Horticulture Education Program held in November. Her topic was trees suitable for Somervell County. According to Smith there are 3 factors to consider in planting trees.

- Why: Ask yourself why you are planting the tree. Is it for shade, energy, or cosmetic purposes?
- Limitations: Pay attention to power lines and know the expected mature tree size before planting, both height and width. Know the amount of light a particular tree needs; i.e. full sunlight or

(See *Trees* page 5)

"WALLY WORM WORD" - "Mineralized"

by Wade Moore, Somervell County Master Gardener

"WallyWorm, it sure is good to see you again. What's up?" "Brix" WallyWorm replies. "Whoa, back up, just what are you talking about?"

"Well, the crop above us has a high Brix reading, or in other words a high sugar content, which is a result of "MINERALIZED" soil." says WallyWorm.

Tell me more WallyWorm. "You need to read an article by Jon Frank in the November '09 issue of ACRES USA. Jon points out the necessity of having a mineralized soil." Here are some of his basic thoughts on mineralized soil. Four basic areas of a mineralized soil are soil energy, foundation minerals, humus and biology, and trace elements.

Soil energy is its ability to grow a crop to maturity. Some of this energy is used to digest limestone and other rock powders. Various fertilizer types can enhance this energy. Using organic farming methods, high nitrogen fish and Chilean nitrate are the best fertilizers to produce a high energy soil.

Foundation minerals are primarily adequate calcium and phosphorus. Few soils have natural adequate supplies of these minerals, hence, insoluble rock powders such as limestone, soft rock phosphate and gypsum are added. These powders are broken down by soil energy and soil biology. Soil needs at least one ton of available calcium per acre. Ample available phosphorus allows plants to capture more energy through photosynthesis, giving higher Brix readings. This increased sugar production also increases the sugar content of root exudates, thus better feeding the soil biology.

Humus and biology relate to the living, breathing aspect of soil. As the biomass dies off they decompose into organic residues which increase the soil humus. Humus can also be increased with cover crops, green manures, compost and such. Soil biology can be stimulated by microbial inoculants, liquid humates, compost tea, molasses and such.

Trace elements, such as boron, copper, iron, manganese, and zinc along with other rarer elements are supplied by sulfates and chelates of seaweed, sea minerals, and rock powders. All of these four areas of soil health need to be in balance as well as available for good healthy food production. Trace minerals are very important in that they are a major supplier of nutrition for the internal organs.

Optimum healthy foods should be produced on mineralized soil; which has to be "manufactured" by the addition of correct amounts of fertilizer (energy), minerals, humus and biology, and trace elements. "Well, WallyWorm, I sure am glad you tuned me in on this very important concept in our food production pathway. I hope my 'Brix' is up too. Thanks"

"You bet; see you later. I have to go and deliver some more castings now. Adios."

Source: Acres USA, www.acresusa.com

(Continued from page 4) **Trees**

an under story tree that does not require full sun. Know the type of soil you have and the type of soil that the tree requires.

- Consider the variety of tree you want to plant. Native and adapted trees will require less care, water and fertilizer, than trees not typically found in the local landscape

This program was the last in our 2009 Community Horticulture Educational Series. We will begin a new series in January 2010. The programs are held at the Citizens Center, the second Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m. For more information, visit our website at

www.somervellmastergardeners.org

We hope to see you next year!

Care for a Live Christmas Tree

by Dove Johnson, Somervell Co. Master Gardener



Displaying a live and living Christmas tree perks up the season plus provides a tree for your yard. There are quite a number of people who really hate to buy a tree then turn around and just throw it away. But on a more personal note, some Christmas celebrations are important enough to commemorate by planting the tree that was an intimate part of a special Christmas. To some people, they are all special and important!

Difficulty: Average

Time Required: 10 Days

Here's How:

Gradually introduce your living tree from outside to inside over three or four days via the garage or enclosed porch. A tree that is dormant and exposed to immediate warmth will start to grow. You want to avoid any quick resumption of growth.

While the tree is introduced into the house via porch or garage, check for critters and insect egg masses as the tree acclimatizes.

Visit your nearest lawn and garden supply store. Purchase a spray with an antidesiccant or antiwilt product to minimize needle loss (do this during the introduction phase). This particular product will not only reduce needle loss, it will contain the loss of valuable moisture lost to a climate controlled home.

If possible, locate your tree in the coolest part of the room and away from heating ducts. This will work with the antiwilt product to keep the tree moist and prevent the loss of valuable moisture.

Place the tree in a large galvanized tub including root ball. This tub stabilizes the tree and ball (or pot) and confines water and needles into a more manageable and cleanable space.

Stabilize the tree in the tub in a straight and vertical position using rocks or bricks. Water only in the tree's container if not a balled-in-burlap tree.

If balled-in-burlap, fill empty space around and on top of the ball with mulch to retain as much moisture as possible. Then water your tree as often as necessary to moisten the roots but not soggy.

Leave inside no longer than 7-10 days (some experts suggest only 4 days). Never add nutrients or fertilizers as that may initiate growth which you

don't want to occur in a dormant tree.

Carefully introduce tree back outside using the reverse procedure and plant as instructed in my How to Plant a Tree feature. If you live in a climate where soils freeze, you should have prepared a planting hole during moderate temperatures.

Tips:

You can skip the galvanized tub and stabilization steps if the tree comes packed in a plastic bucket. Remember to protect floor and carpet from water by using a pan.

Antidessicants and antiwilt products are sold under the names of Wilt Pruf or Cloud Cover.



Sources:

Steve Nix, About.com Guide

www.suite101.com

[www.greenpromise.com/
lifestyle.suite101.com](http://www.greenpromise.com/lifestyle.suite101.com)

Highlight on a Master Gardener

Merilyn Cranford

The Journey of A Master Gardener



Merilyn receives her Master Gardener Certification in January, 2008

Since I was a small child, I've always enjoyed watching plants grow. I come from a long line of farmers and gardeners. So I guess growing things is in my DNA. As a child I

used to watch my great-grandmother till and plant her backyard, making it into a wonderland of vegetables, flowers and herbs. Of course, her son, my uncle, had the equipment for tilling, but she did all the grubbing, watering and planting. Thinking about how hard she worked just makes me tired. But I truly believe her garden kept her active even into her 80s at which time she had to give it up.

Along with the garden, she also planted fruit trees. During the summer months, my mother usually helped her can the fruit or make jellies. I was there watching all the activity and learning from what I saw. Grandmother passed her love of gardening on to my mother, but mother was mostly a flower-bed gardener. She had some of the most beautiful flowers blooming around our home from one season to the next. At my

home today, I have some of her irises and when they bloom I always think of her and am so grateful for the blessing she passed on to me.

I can think of nothing better than leaving a legacy of gardening to the next generation. Of my three children, all have inherited the gardening DNA (if there is such a thing!) and we have such fun trying new varieties of this or that and sharing the results with each other.

I spent my childhood in the Dallas area and grew to understand what it takes to garden successfully in the blackland of Texas. But as the years passed I have found myself living in many areas of Texas, from the coastal plains to the areas that border west Texas. In each, I found a challenge that opened up new vistas of learning. I became what I call a "trial" gardener. Try growing something, if it produces, great! If it doesn't, dig it up and try something else. Through this trial and error method, I've learned what works and what doesn't. But it wasn't until 2007 that I really began to learn what it means to know about gardening and put that knowledge into practice.

In the spring of 2007, my husband noticed an article about the next Master Gardeners Training to be held and mentioned it to me in case I might be interested. So I sprang into action and enrolled. How glad I am that I did! The

training was interesting and enlightening and as a result I now don't depend on my trusty "trial and error" method of gardening any more. Best of all, I met some of the most interesting people. People who were interested in gardening, just like me. I might also add that my sister-in-law, who lives in Tennessee, was also enrolled in the master gardeners training in her state. As a result, we have so much in common and so much to share. So the timing for the training was just right and I truly enjoyed all the different lecturers, field trips, and hands-on activities.

Of course, I'm not an authority, but feel like I have just begun learning to garden with a sense of confidence I didn't have before. I feel a sense of accomplishment when I step back and survey what has been accomplished in a day's time. I'm tired, yes, and sore as well. But the feeling is good. Why not try it yourself?



Merilyn and husband Aaron make a trash can rain barrel and SCMGA Rainwater Harvesting program.



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

