



**SOMERVELL
COUNTY
MASTER
GARDENERS
ASSOCIATION**

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SCMGA Newsletter

THE GREEN PIECE



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“Good Bugs - Bad Bugs”

SCMGA Community Horticulture Education Program

Monday, January 10, 2011, 6:30 PM

Somervell County Citizen Center, 209 SW Barnard



This month's Community Horticulture Education Session will be presented by Curt Decker. Curt is the Natural Resources Director at Fossil Rim Wildlife Center and extremely knowledgeable about things that grow outside or crawl about on the ground. He will be

speaking to us about what constitutes a “good” bug or a “bad” bug. Not every bug in your flowerbed or vegetable garden is bad. Each and every one has a role to play and the more you know about the subject the better off your growing plants will be. Curt will tell us about bio-control bugs and their role in the environment. Sound interesting?! Join us at the Citizens Center in Glen Rose, 209 SW Barnard, at 6:30 pm, January 10, 2011.

Community Horticulture Education Series for 2011

Our CHES programs will continue as always in 2011 on the 2nd Monday night of the month at 6:30 pm at the Citizens Center. We are still finalizing specific dates and speakers, but some of the topics planned for 2011 include:

- * Water features
- * Vegetable Gardening - Spring and Fall
- * Gourds
- * Hummingbirds
- * Urban Chickens
- * Hands-on Rain Water Harvesting
- * Composting
- * Pruning trees & shrubs and Native grasses.

Please check our website somervellmastergardeners.org for updates as we plan our programs for 2011!

If you have a request for a specific area of interest, please let us know!

Wade's WallyWorm Word - "THANKS"

Submitted by Wade Moore, Somervell County Master Gardener



WallyWorm has surfaced to get a little sunshine on a mild winter day.

"Wade, what are you doing?", asks WallyWorm.

"Planting snow peas", answers Wade.

"But we don't have any snow; it's almost balmy" says WallyWorm.

"That is just what these peas are called. They do not have to be planted in the snow." Wade responds.

"Well, just what are snow peas?" asks WallyWorm.

"Snow peas have a flat and thin pod with the bulge of the tiny seed barely visible when they are at their best for eating. The crisp pods are a bright green and contain five to seven seeds and are two to three inches long. You will notice I am planting the seed about eight weeks before the last killing frost, in my well-drained sandy soil. I plant the seed about 1 inch deep and about five inches apart. When the legume pea vines surface, I will have trellis installed for them to climb on to prevent the pods from touching the ground. I will have to



irrigate in order to maintain soil moisture sufficient to produce the most tender and sweetest pods." answers Wade.

"Notice, I am planting the peas in full sun even though they can tolerate partial shade. I added phosphorus and potassium prior to planting. I also soaked the seed for 24 hours and dusted them with a legume inoculant powder prior to planting. In 63 to 72 days I should be harvesting the first

pods. I will do this in the cool of the morning, picking the young pods before the seeds start to develop in order to eat the whole pod. If I miss a few, I can shell the seeds out and just eat the peas. Harvesting from the bottom up will give me a higher yield. Very soon after harvesting, I will rinse the peas in cool water and refrigerate them in an air tight container." concludes Wade.

"Well, I will be looking forward to your turning under the pea vines after you complete the years harvest. Thanks for the info," WallyWorm responds.

Info. harvested from:

<http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu>

<http://vegetable-gardening-online.com>



Veggie Garden To-do's

By: Donna Hagar, Somervell County Master Gardeners

"Lettuce up" Your Winter Veggie Garden

It is a great time to get in another crop of the cool weather veggies. Plant transplants of broccoli, lettuce, chard, cabbage, kale and others. Or, you can plant seeds for lettuce, radish, peas, beets, kale, spinach and other cool weather crops.

Seed Starting and Planning

It is time to think about seed starting for the summer garden. The back of most seed packets will give information on when to start inside. Generally this will be from 6 to 12 weeks before the last average frost date. See article on page 3 for some tried and true seed starting tips!

From naturalgardener.com

January Garden Tips

Submitted by Shirley Smith, Somervell County Master Gardeners

Now that winter has at long last settled in, you may be wishing there were some things you could do outside on these pretty days. Well, let me help you out. If you have leaves still lying around, go ahead and gather them up and put them into a sturdy garbage can. Use your weed whacker to shred them. If you have a shredder, use that. Don't have that many leaves? Well, how about asking some of your neighbors to save for you what they have raked up.



Do you have houseplants that are dusty and in need of cleaning? Move over and share the shower with them. Just put them in the bathtub,

turn on a light spray of warm water and allow the soil to become soaked. You'll rid your plants of grease and dust and wash away infestations of mites, mealybugs and whiteflies. Do this in the early morning (to prevent fungal

diseases), and keep the plants out of direct sunlight until they have dried. You can always wipe them with a soft cloth, too.

We all know using rainwater on your plants is best. So think about putting in a rainwater catchment system this winter. We have begun to get a little rain lately and it is a shame not to save it. By using rainwater, you can protect your houseplants from the harmful effects of hard tap water and fluoride salts (browning leaf tips, injured roots, bound nutrients). There are many, many websites that can help you out if you decide to do this.

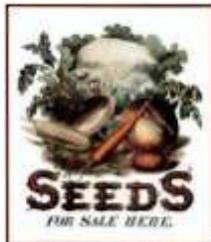


If you do use tap water, treat your plants to a monthly sip of vinegar tea. Mix 1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar in 1 gallon distilled or rain water. Soak plants thoroughly.

Source: Trowel & Error by Sharon Lovejoy

Seed Starting 101

By Ben Oefinger, Johnson County Master Gardener



1. Start now - get your seeds from feed stores, big box retailers, catalogs, internet, etc.
2. Most seeds need bottom heat to germinate quickly, so get SHALLOW dishes to begin with. Egg cartons, plastic dishes, disposable dishes from microwave dishes, etc.
3. Put 1/2" to 3/4" of loose, seed starting medium in each - vermiculite works well, too.
4. Moisten material fully and pour off excess water. Plant your seeds in shallow depressions made with a pencil, dowel rod, fingertip, and cover LIGHTLY with 1/4" of dry material. Press firmly so seeds make good contact with material.
5. Cover the container with clear glass, plastic saran wrap to trap and hold moisture.
6. Place on top of refrigerator, not water heater, dryer or heat pad.
7. When seeds sprout, remove cover and place in BRIGHT light. Ideally, place them under shop lights or fluorescent lights, as close to the light as possible - 1-2"
8. Keep soil moist and when 1-2 true leaves appear, lift the seedlings and re-pot in 4" pots filled with loose, friable potting soil.
9. Don't let them dry out and keep seedlings under the brightest light you can provide.



Favorite Plants Of Master Gardeners

A Non-Evasive Honeysuckle- The Coral Honeysuckle

By Nancy Hillin, Somervell County Master Gardener



Common Name/Scientific Name: Coral Honeysuckle/
Lonicera Sempervirens

Native/Adapted: Native to Texas

Height: 3 to 20 feet runners

Spread: Can be grown as a shrub, ground cover or trellised vine

Light: Full sun to part shade

Evergreen/Deciduous: Evergreen

Seasonal Interest: Normally blooms mid spring and intermittently thereafter

Color/Features: Fiery red to orange slender-trumpet shaped flowers with yellow on the inside followed by bright red berries in the fall

Water Requirements: Moderate watering unless summer is very dry

Maintenance: Every two years prune sparingly in the winter or after blooming in the spring to allow good air circulation /heavy on the mulch/ feeding is usually not necessary

Wildlife: Flowers attract hummingbirds, bees and butterflies. Berries that follow the flowers attract Cardinals, Goldfinches and Robins.

Deer Resistant: Deer do not seem to show an interest in Honeysuckle

Comments/Experience with the plant: Coral Honeysuckle is not aggressive as the common honeysuckle or many of the some one-hundred eighty cultivars of the species. It is a great companion plant to many other plants such as Coreopsis, Shasta Dai-



ies, and Victoria Blue Salvia. It will lend itself to any fashion you wish it to be, whether you choose to trellis it or use it as a ground cover. Hummingbirds, songbirds, bees and butterflies will rush to this honeysuckle, one of nature's perfect habitats. The slender-trumpet shaped flowers and the berries that follow in the fall are the draw for many types of birds and insects. Coral Honeysuckle is a host plant for the Spring Azure Butterfly larva and the Snowberry Clearwing larva. This honeysuckle is not fragrant, but makes up for it in the showy red to orange colors and with the sweet nectar that brings in many beneficials. Coral Honeysuckle will tolerate a wide variety of soils, but will fair better if it is mulched frequently. Propagation may be done by layering at the end of spring, cutting in the summer and by seed in autumn. Try one of the following named cultivars for your landscape.

Alabama Crimson (scarlet in color)

John Clayton (yellow) named for a botanist from Virginia

Superba (red coral)

Dreer Everlasting (bright scarlet)

Magnifica (red outside-yellow inside)



Sources: *Tamu.edu*
Simon and Schuster's Guide to Plants and Flowers

Determining Fertilizer Needs: Time to Test Your Soil

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



It is hard to imagine with the cool weather we have had the last couple of weeks, but with spring green up

just around the corner a lot of us are going to be itching to get out in the gardens and fields.

We are also going to have questions about the nutrients available in our soils and how much fertilizer to add to get those big juicy vegetables and lush green yards. Properly conducted soil sampling and testing can be a cost effective indicator to those questions.

Soil tests can be used to estimate the kinds and amounts of soil nutrients available to plants. They also can be used as aids in determining fertilizer needs.

The results you get from adding fertilizer depend greatly on the level of nutrient already present in the soil. If a soil is very low in a particular nutrient, yield will

probably be increased if that nutrient is added. By comparison, if the soil has high initial nutrient levels, fertilizer will result in little, if any, increase in yield.

There are three easy steps in obtaining a soil test.



First, your local County Extension office provides free of charge, soil sample bags, sampling instructions and information sheets for mailing samples to the Soil, Water and Forage testing laboratory of Texas AgriLife Extension Service.

Second, you want to take a composite sample that repre-

sents the entire area to be fertilized. In small gardens and lawns, five to six cores may be adequate. In large fields 10 to 15 cores need to be taken. As you are collecting core samples, place each core into a clean plastic bucket. Once you've finished collecting cores, mix the soil thoroughly in the bucket and you will have a composite sample. The depth of the soil core sample should be 6 inches. The depth is measured from the soil surface after decomposed plant materials are pushed aside.

Finally, fill the soil sample bag, select the proper test and complete the information sheet and mail to the Soil, Water and Forage testing laboratory.

For more information or for soil sampling bags contact the County Extension office at 254/897-2809, or stop by our office at 1405, Texas Dr. in Glen Rose.

New Master Gardener Training Scheduled for Spring 2011

Plans for the next training class for Master Gardeners is well underway. The new class is scheduled to begin March 24, 2011 and will continue, once per week, either on a Tuesday or Thursday, until May 26th, 2011. (No classes during the last 2 weeks of April due to TMGA Conference). Classes will rotate between Granbury, Cleburne, and Glen Rose and will be taught by Texas A&M educators. Trainees will receive a large handbook/manual that contains extensive horticultural information.

If you are interested in participating in the Master Gardener program, contact the Somervell County Extension office, 254-897-2809 to obtain an application. In the meantime, we invite you to attend our monthly meetings held the 3rd Wednesday each month at 10:00am at the Somervell County Extension Office. Our next meeting is Wednesday, January 19th, 2011!



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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](mailto:blaneck@tamu.edu) or you may email the SCMGA at somervellmg@gmail.com.



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