



**SOMERVELL
COUNTY
MASTER
GARDENERS
ASSOCIATION**

**SCMGA
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SCMGA NEWS

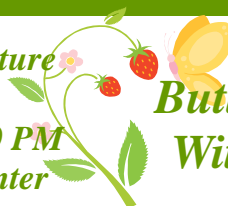


Volume 2, Issue 7

July 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 but-

terflies, 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.



Fossil Rim Butterfly Garden Workday

The Butterfly Gardens at Fossil Rim Wildlife Park are once again a showcase because Fossil Rim volunteers, Master Naturalists, and Somervell County Master Gardeners met early

one morning to do some serious weeding and cleaning up of the beds. The camaraderie was apparent as everyone worked together and there were often discussions ask-

ing "is that a weed or not." Some were from the school of when in doubt, pull it out but others said let's "wait and see." It was a fun and productive morning.



When all you see are the "bent-overs", you know everyone is working hard!



Highlight on a Master Gardener *SCMGA Vice President - Sandi Stringer*



Unlike many of my fellow Master Gardeners, I had very little gardening experience while growing up. When we moved to Glen Rose and built a new home on acreage, I immediately realized that I wanted and needed to learn all that I could about landscaping and gardening, plus it would be a good opportunity to meet people. I saw a MG meeting notice in the Glen Rose Newspaper, began attending the meetings and almost 2 years later attended the MG training program. That was one of the best decisions I ever made because I learned so much from experienced gardeners and made so many lasting friendships. More importantly, I became a part of the community and in many small ways I am giving back to the community through the Master Gardener Association.

I came to Texas as a teenager by way of California, North Dakota, Idaho, Wyoming, and Kansas. Since we moved every year or year and a half, it seemed that we spent much of our time unpacking, packing, and adjusting to a new place. There didn't seem to be any gardening taking place although I'm sure that someone, most likely my Dad, because my Mother was busy with 4 girls. I spent much of my free time being outdoors, playing sports, or practicing the piano. I do have fond memories of visiting a

great aunt and uncle on their farm and would help them harvest some vegetables and my dear grandmother had a love of gardening that she passed on to me. Long after I married, she would fly from Florida "smuggling" some of her plants on board so that she could share them with me.

I graduated from Texas Women's University with a degree in nursing, what a joy it was to live someplace for 4 straight years. I worked at several hospitals until I met and married my husband Herb. We bought our first house and began our attempt at landscaping and gardening. He grew up on a farm in New Mexico and knew all about irrigating cotton crops and growing cantaloupes but both of us were novices in lawn care and flower beds. We did have fun and had more than our fair share of failures. We then welcomed our son Jeff and almost two years later our daughter Amy. When they were 2 and 4 we moved to Alice Springs, Australia for 3 ½ years. We were in the "red" center of Australia, without Mexican food and quickly learned from the other Americans there, that a garden was a must for jalapenos and fresh veggies. By then, we thought we were semi-experienced gardeners but I'll never forget digging into the red soil, not black clay! Well the red soil was a challenge, just like the black clay, but we did manage to grow and pickle our beloved jalapenos and a few other

vegetables that the neighbor's chickens didn't eat.

Upon returning to the U.S., we moved to Plano. With both kids in school, I went back to work part time and eventually returned full time. Because I was busy with work and the kid's activities, my gardening at this stage consisted of planting "pretty seasonal annuals" and keeping the lawn in our typical suburban yard weed free and green. I did love being outside and digging in the dirt because it was very calming.

We retired in 1998, started looking for our little piece of paradise away from suburbia and discovered Glen Rose. Gardening has become one of my loves, I'm still no expert but I've come a long way and I always have my trusty MG Manual as a resource. When I'm not gardening, I'm often doing genealogy research and have discovered Revolutionary War veterans, Mayflower ancestors, as well as a few dubious characters in our lineage. Lastly, we have two young adorable grandchildren who live in Austin and being with them whenever possible is a joyous time for us.



Sandi accepting SCMGA Association Award at 2009 State Conference in Marshall in April.

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 Parmar
September 14	Fire Ants	Josh Blanek
October 12	Bees	Dwayne Cleveland
November 9	Trees for Somervell County	Carrie Smith

July Garden Tips

By Donna Hagar, Somervell County Master Gardener

After enduring several days of 100° heat, the idea of suggesting you get out in your gardens seems to fall a little flat! But as we all know, a gardener's work is never done. So don those wide brimmed gardening hats, fix a tall glass of cool, refreshing lemonade and let's get to it.

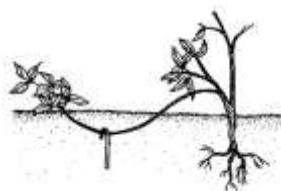
Vegetables

Many of our spring season vegetables are spent and need to come out. Be sure to compost the plant material as you pull up those not strong enough to hold on until fall. Mix in organic material into the beds, keep moisture available and cover with a good layer of mulch. This will prevent weeds from taking over and get your beds in tip top shape for your fall gardens. The heat, with the moisture, will enable the organic material to compost into soil-building humus.

Many plants may be able to survive through the dry, heat with supplemental water, plenty of mulch and tender loving care and make it through until fall. Many tomatoes will

stop setting fruit with the higher temperatures but return to full production come fall. If your tomatoes are leggy, consider tip layering to make new plants. Here's how from Skip Richter:

"You want to take a section of vine, remove the leaves from it, and then dig a little hole in the ground and bury that tip section of vine. It doesn't have to be very deep, just a few inches deep is enough.



Place the vine in the trench and cover it with soil. Then water that spot. Tomatoes love to root along the vine and, within a couple of weeks, you'll start to have roots already growing into the ground. And this new daughter plant or baby plant is ready to go.

At that point you just cut it loose from the mother plant, and then remove the mother plant along with all the mites and diseased leaves and everything, and this is your new star, rooted and ready to go for fall."

Believe it or not, our attentions do need to start turning toward our fall gardens. By the end of July into early August, we should be planting beans, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, peas, potatoes, and winter squash. When planting these veggies in the intense heat of the summer, be sure to provide some sort of shade cloth cover for the tender seedlings as they emerge and to protect them primarily from the intense west sun. Keep shade protection in place until the plants are well mature, and of course, keep them moist and mulched well.

Perennials and Annuals

Moisture and mulch are again the best bet for keeping your beds in top color. Dead head

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Interns Complete Training

Seven Interns completed the 10 weeks of training towards becoming Somervell County Master Gardeners. They must now complete 50 hours of volunteer service over the next year to earn their certification and title - Texas Master Gardener.

Congratulations to Shirley Smith, Virginia Reynolds, Nancy Hillin, Nellie Cathey, Pat Ashcraft, Glenda Marsh and Nelda Tandy. We are excited to have you a part of our team!

You Know you're A Master Gardener When:

10. You rejoice in rain...even after 10 straight days of it.
9. You have pride in how bad your hands look.
8. You have a decorative compost container on your kitchen counter.
7. You can give away plants easily, but compost is another thing.
6. Soil test results actually mean something.
5. IPM rules!
4. You'd rather go to a nursery to shop than a clothes store.
3. You look for gardens open to the public whenever you go on vacation.
2. Your non-gardening spouse is actually getting involved with your garden endeavors...digging ponds, building bird houses, watering, pruning, turning compost piles, planting...
1. You are surrounded by terrific people who share your passion!

Created by [Audrey](#), Emmitsburg, Md.

July Tips continued

(Continued from page 3)

spent blooms of flowering annuals. A good shearing of tough perennials such as Autumn Sage (*Salvia greggii*), zexmenia and copper canyon daisies will enable them to put out a flush of new growth for a good fall showing. Remove heat stressed dead and dying leaves and stems to keep plants looking their best.

Trees, Shrubs and Vines

Even the most established plants will benefit from a good thorough soaking every couple of weeks in the absence of rain. Newly (less than a year) planted trees, shrubs and vines, will need a little more attention as their root systems are not fully developed. Be sure to moni-

tor the moisture level and provide supplemental water as needed. Keep the soil moist, but not soggy and of course, maintain the ever important layer of mulch to keep the soil temperature down as well as weeds at bay.

Lawns and Groundcovers

Provide lawns and groundcovers with a good soaking on a weekly basis. Control fire ants in the lawn with mound treatments as opposed to baits, as the ants are foraging less. Be on the lookout for



grubworms in the lawns – dead patches of grass that pulls up easily from the roots. Serious infestations (5 or more grubs per square foot of lawn)

can be controlled with granular insecticides.



And lastly, don't forget our flying friends, birds and butterflies. Provide water in the birdbaths and puddlers and keep them cleaned regularly.

Resources:

Texas Gardener Magazine
Doug Welsh's Texas Gardener Almanac

[http://
gardeningwithskip.tamu.edu](http://gardeningwithskip.tamu.edu)



Recent SCMGA Workday

Several members of the Somervell County Master Gardeners gathered for the monthly workday. This month we concentrated on the Bird Sanctuary in downtown Glen Rose.



Footprints in the Garden

By Nancy Hillin, Somervell County Master Gardener Intern

Most gardeners know that the best deterrent for any problem in the garden is the gardener's own footprints. Whether it be an early morning inspection of the underside of leaves searching for pests, or the evening discovery of a volunteer plant, it is our closeness and observation in the garden that will render the most good. But, not until we lose a partner or spouse do we finally realize how much those second set of footprints will be missed. That pesky weed that you had not seen in years suddenly grows with a vengeance. And the ever aggressive Bermuda grass rhizome takes aim and crawls directly into your flower garden, as if they were destined to be there. It was definitely that second set of footprints tending to the mundane tasks of the garden. That second pair of faithful working

hands will be missed in many ways. The every day tasks that we often taken for granted will have to be rethought and re-assigned. Who will lift those heavy bags of potting soil and mulch? Who will remove the last screw high up on the last project that both pairs of hands had started? And by the way, who will take out the trash?

No one will ever be able to replace those thoughtful helping hands and those gentle footprints. You must slip into their old garden shoes, still sitting by the back door, even though they might be just a little too large. You will surprise yourself at the new things you can learn to accomplish. Your gardening friends appear to be a reliable alternative



source, always there to lend a helping hand and give the greatest moral support. It is amazing to witness the power of a

group of gardeners on their spiritual hands and knees, just listening to the outcry of one who has just experienced a loss. And often, just a few words of encouragement by phone will be the medicine to help heal a broken heart.

So, for those who are still blessed with a second set of footprints and willing, working hands, try giving a simple acknowledgement of the simplest chores. Give a Thank You when it is not necessary. Relish the times spent pulling those pesky weeds, revel in the discovery of a new plant and enjoy the fruits of your labor together in your own special ways.

Master Gardeners contribute to their communities in numerous ways. They participate in beautification projects around the county. In April, 2011, Hood and Somervell County Masters Gardeners will host the

Texas Master Gardener Conference in Glen Rose, bringing an economic boost to their communities.



In loving memory of those Gardeners and helpers we have lost over the years.

- Dottie Marks, SCMG member
- Clara Merrill, SCMG member
- Bill Orr, husband of Joan Orr, SCMG
- Howard Brawley, brother of Bonnah Boyd, SCMG



Growing Pumpkins for Fall



It's summer and you're probably enjoying a plentiful harvest of warm-season crops such as tomatoes, peppers, squash, cucumbers, and beans. But have you thought about fall crops? In most parts of the country, early July is a great time to plant pumpkins for a fall harvest. Planting now allows the fruits to get off to a quick start in the warm soil and many varieties will mature in October, just in time for Halloween!

However, planting pumpkins in mid-summer can be a little tricky. There are a few specific concerns you'll need to address. Here's how to get a pumpkin patch going.

Pumpkin Varieties

Choose a variety that reflects its intended use. Small pumpkins are great for kids and decorating. Other varieties are good for cooking. Carving types are great for Halloween displays. Really large pumpkins are just plain fun to grow, but usually require a longer growing season. For instance, [Big Max](#) and [Dill's Atlantic Giant](#) are best planted in early summer -- try growing them next year.

The varieties listed here will have enough time to mature before frost or Halloween if planted now. All are open-pollinated and mature in 90-

100 days after seeding.

[Baby Boo](#): This decorative mini-pumpkin features 2- to 3-inch-diameter fruits with white skin and flesh. Harvest before frost, because cold weather turns the skin an ivory color.

[Cinderella](#): The reddish-orange fruits on this unique French heirloom are flat topped, 15 inches wide, and weigh about 25 pounds. They're good for decorating or making pies.

[Jack Be Little](#): This orange-skinned mini-pumpkin is truly a midget. Mature fruits fit in the palm of your hand and weigh only 3 to 4 ounces. They're great for decorating the holiday table.

[Connecticut Field](#): This classic cooking pumpkin features uniformly sized, bright orange-skinned, 25-pound fruits. The fruits have deep orange flesh suitable for pies and savory dishes.

[Little October](#): This is a good variety for painting and carving. The smooth-sided, one-pound fruits have burnt orange-colored skins.

Growing Pumpkins in Summer

The biggest problem with planting pumpkins in summer is finding garden space. Consider reclaiming space from spinach, peas, and lettuce plants that have finished producing for the season. Amend the soil with a 1- to 2-inch-thick layer of compost

and plant seeds directly in the soil in hills spaced 4 to 5 feet apart.

In most parts of the country, getting pumpkin seeds to germinate in July is easy. They love the warm soil and literally pop out of the ground in a few days. However, in the South, the soil temperatures can actually be too warm. In those areas moisten the soil the day before planting and shade the bed with cloth to keep the soil cool enough for the seeds and young seedlings to grow.



Once up and growing, thin to 2 to 3 feet between the seedlings in each hill. Remove the weakest seedlings. Keep the young plants well watered, especially early in the season. The hot summer sun can dry out the soil and seedlings quickly.

Once the vines begin to run, sprinkle a small handful of an organic granular fertilizer, such as 5-5-5, around the plants. Add another handful when the first fruits form. Keep the plants well weeded.

Reprinted from Whillhite Seed Company News, July, 2009

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Dr. Joe Masabni, TAMU Extension Vegetable Specialist and a panel of 3 guest speakers, Tom Leroy, Bill Adams and Patty Leander, addresses question posed by those Master Gardeners in attendance at the Vegetable Specialist Training in Somervell County.



Texas Master Gardener Vegetable Specialist Training

On June 29 and 30th, Somervell County Master Gardeners and the AgriLife Extension Service hosted the TMGA Vegetable Specialist

Training course at the Somervell County Expo Center. There were 36 Master Gardeners in attendance from all over the state of Texas, including San Angelo, Corpus Christi and Abilene to name a few. Somervell County Master Gardeners had 3 in attendance, Wade Moore, Dove Johnson and Donna Hagar. With the completion of the training, these Master Gardeners must now complete 20 hours of volunteer service to achieve Certification status. If your organization would like to have a program on Vegetable Growing, or you need some advice on your personal gardens, please contact the Somervell County Master Gardeners at somervellmg@gmail.com or call the Extension office at 254-897-2809 and Wade, Dove and Donna will be at your service!



SOMERVELL COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION

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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.

