



**SOMERVELL  
COUNTY  
MASTER  
GARDENERS  
ASSOCIATION**

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*SCMGA Newsletter*

# *THE GREEN PIECE*



Volume 4, Issue 6

June 2011

## *Here Chick, Chick, Chick!*

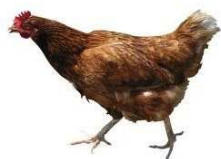
### *SCMGA Community Horticulture Education Program*

*Monday, June 13, 2011, 6:30 PM*

*Somervell County Citizen Center, 209 SW Barnard*

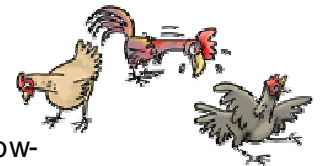
If you have ever given thought to having your very own chickens at some point in your life, well now is the time to explore that possibility more fully. June's Community Horticulture Education program will be on that very topic. Our speaker will be Beth Skinner, proprietor of Skinner Select Poultry, a small poultry farm located in Alvarado, Texas.

A former city girl, Beth began her exploration into keeping poultry a few years back starting out with the idea of just having a few laying hens for fresh eggs and entertainment. After visiting several poultry farms and experiencing the disappointing and negative consequences of being sold diseased chickens, she decided to expand her operation in order to be a source of healthy



poultry for other poultry enthusiasts. Beth is the founder of The Cowtown Backyard Poultry Group, a group she started in June 2010. She has also been a guest speaker on keeping backyard chickens at different venues including Clark Gardens in Mineral Wells and Elizabeth Anna's Old World Garden in Fort Worth. We know you do not want to miss hearing Beth speak on this timely subject. In case you don't know, raising chickens is becoming extremely popular not only in rural areas, but also in suburbia!

So, please join the Somervell County Master Gardeners this coming Monday, June 13 at 6:30 p.m. at the Citizens Center, 209 SW Barnard in downtown Glen Rose. See you there!



## *2011 Community Horticulture Education Series*

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. Some of the topics planned for 2011 include:

\* Water features \* Fall Vegetable Gardening - \* Gourds

\* Composting \* Pruning trees & shrubs and Native grasses \* & More

Please check our website [somervellmastergardeners.org](http://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!

## June Garden Tips

Submitted by *Bonnah Boyd, Somervell County Master Gardener*

Many insects and bugs love the warmer weather. Check for spider mites on vegetables. Turn a leaf over to check for the tiny red-dish-brown mites. Mite control products are available, but the simplest is a blast of water upward from underneath the foliage or a spray of insecticidal soap or horticultural oil directed upward to cover the undersides of all leaves. Repeated treatments are usually necessary to keep pest numbers low.

Stink bugs (brown and green) are difficult to control without sprays. Try to spray early in the morning when temperatures are cool.



Grubs are a common sight in gardens and lawns. There is one generation every three years. Grubs overwinter in soil the first two years; the third winter is spent in the pupal stage. Examine one square foot of your lawn or garden; if you see five to seven grubs, treatment is not needed. The "June bugs" we see flying about

mate and lay eggs near the soil surface. The best time to control them is when most of these eggs have hatched and are near the soil surface. Beneficial nematodes, applied to the soil in May or June, before temperatures reach 80 degrees, can be used to control the grubs.

Caterpillars may also be a nuisance on some plants. Products containing Bt (*bacillus thuringiensis*) are the least toxic. Apply while the caterpillars are young.

Grasshoppers can also be a problem. *Nosema locustae* is a spore (protozoan) used to control grasshoppers. Control is extremely slow and homeowners may not be satisfied with results. Baits have proven more effective.



Source:  
*TEXAS GARDENER, May/June 2011*  
*Master Gardener Handbook*

## 2011 Bluebird Symposium



### 2011 Bluebird Symposium

The Texas Bluebird Society, in conjunction with the Somervell County Master Gardeners present the 2011 Bluebird Symposium in Glen Rose, Texas on Saturday,

August 20th 9:00am - 2:30 pm at the Somervell County Expo Center.

**Featured speaker** - Keith Kridler on ***Nestbox Basics for Success*** and ***How, What & Why of Bluebirds***.

Other presentations include:

- Nestbox installation
- Gardening to attract Bluebirds
- Sparrow control for Bluebirds
- Success with NestWatch
- Nestbox Housekeeping

### Registration Information

Early Bird Advance Registration: \$12 includes Fajita Buffet and 10 door prize tickets.

Deadline July 20, 2011.

Advance Registration: \$12 includes Fajita Buffet and one door prize ticket.

Deadline August 6, 2011.

At-the-door Registration: \$6, no meal or door prize tickets.

Free Nestbox to members who pledge to "NestWatch" at least two nestboxes.

For more information or to Donate Silent Auction items:

Jimmie & Benni Konvicka  
jkonvicka@gmail.com, 254-968-6663

[More Information and Registration Form](#)





## *Wade's WallyWorm Word - "Earthing"*

*Submitted by Wade Moore, Somervell County Master Gardener*

WallyWorm, being of sound mind and healthy body, maintains these positive qualities by being in close contact with the earth. "EARTHING" is a grounding concept that has been with all of us for all of man's existence. Not being like WallyWorm and literally contacting the earth on a daily basis, man has chosen in just the last few generations to insulate itself from the earth. The absence of actually coming in contact with the soil has become the norm; even though a lot of Master Gardeners may not fit this profile. Insulating our bodies, with rubber soled shoes, from earth's negative charged free electrons has become a way of life for a large group of humanity.

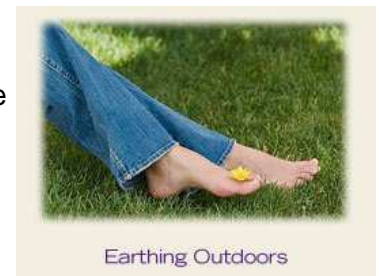


Our bodies need to be in contact with the negative charged free electrons so abundant on the earth's surface. Our bodies need to be in con-

tact with these electrons in order to stabilize the complicated circuitry of our electrical bodies; in other words, our bodies need to be equalized to the earth's energy level. These electrons are the source of power for antioxidants, which in turn supply electrons to free radicals in your body, keeping them from stealing electrons from

healthy body tissue. This stealing of electrons from healthy tissue can result in tissue damage and chronic inflammation.

"EARTHING" can increase energy, reduce chronic pain, improve sleep, relieve muscle tension and headache, and even promote quicker healing from an injury. "EARTHING" can also decrease ones exposure to the harmful electromagnetic fields that originate from wiring in our homes, computers, appliances, power lines, cell towers and other sources. In essence, "EARTHING" is simply grounding our bodies, for substantial amounts of time, to the earth. Going barefoot, swimming in 'natural' waters and sleeping on grounded devices are just a few ways of "EARTHING". Devices that hook into the ground wire of your home electrical system are available for making "EARTHING" more convenient.



Earthing Outdoors

So, as you can see, WallyWorm is "EARTHING" all the time and is in tune with Mother Earth.

Gathered from an article by Calvin F. Bey in the March 2011 issue of Acres USA magazine.



### **Garden Definitions**



- Knee - A device for finding rocks in your garden.
- Green Fingers - Something everyone else has plenty of.
- Perennial - This year, possibly; next year, unlikely.
- Seed catalogue - A work of fiction with fantasy photos.
- Spade - Highly efficient back-pain generator.
- Weed - a plant that has mastered every survival skill except for learning how to grow in rows.





## *Favorite Plants Of Master Gardeners*

### *Texas Bluebell*

*By Donna Hagar, Somervell County Master Gardener*

**Common Name/Scientific Name:** *Eustoma grandiflorum*

**Description:** Gray-green soft, velvety texture foliage on upright stalks; tulip-shaped flowers solitary or in clusters; flowers last for several weeks; hybrids have compact form and double flowers.

**Native/Adapted:** This is a native annual or short lived perennial wildflower

**Height:** 18 to 24 inches

**Width:** 8-12"

**Light Requirement:** high to medium

**Flower Color:** native in various shades of blue or purple, hybrids in blue, purple, pink and white

**Blooming Period:** summer

**Foliage Texture:** medium

**Heat Tolerance:** high

**Water Requirements:** high

**Wildlife:** Unpalatable to grazing animals, deer resistant



Because Bluebells are not a favorite of grazing animals such as cattle, it is not uncommon to see herds grazing among large fields of this beautiful wildflower.

#### **Sources**

*aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu*  
*texasgardener.com*  
*wildflower.org*

**Comments/Experience with the plant:** Bluebells are one of the most striking wildflowers we have! I've seen fields of bluebells so dense it appears like a lake or large pond. I have collected seeds from Bluebells and spread them in my flower beds, but they do tend to grow where they prefer, rather than where I plant them!

They definitely prefer moisture, as they grow in the lowest spots of our yard and where seeps occur in our pastures. Because of their moisture preferences, they are more prominent in wet years, but will still produce beautiful blooms, even during dry times. We have many blooming right now!

The Bluebell is disappearing in the wild, presumably because of their beautiful showiness, they have been picked without allowing them to go to seed. The tiny black seeds from dried pods are the size of ground pepper.



## GARDENING TIPS THAT SAVE MONEY AND TIME

*Submitted By Merilyn Cranford, Somervell County Master Gardener*

Does saving money and time in the garden sound good? Hey, I'm with you! With all we have to do every day, gardeners are very clever about coming up with way to save on the work and expense of growing plants. Through the years, I've found many and here are a few of my favorite money- or time-saving tips on tools, plants and supplies.

### **#1 BUY INEXPENSIVE WATERING TOOLS:**

Don't buy high-priced watering tools, such as wands, nozzles or sprinklers. Even the expensive ones will spring leaks, so save your money and buy cheap ones instead. Replace worn rubber washers where the tool connects to the hose to minimize leaks. And buy a good brass hose connector. The shutoff lever saves you trips back and forth to the faucet, and brass means it'll hold up for many years.

**#2 PAY NOW, SAVE LATER:** Good quality tools can make gardening tasks easier and go more quickly. But you don't have to pay a lot of every tool you use. Do invest in well-made trowels, spades and pruners—the tools you use most often. You'll save yourself the frustration and lost of time of fixing bent, broken or non-working parts. Buy from companies that stand behind their products, just in case.

**#3 GO FOR BROKE:** When you shop for bagged mulch or soil, ask for broken bags. Employees usually pull damaged ones off to the side, and stores are often more than willing to get rid of them at a reduced price. While you're at the store, look for chipped or cracked terra-cotta or glazed containers, as well. You can get several years' use from a slightly damaged pot, and often the plants will hide any defects.



**#4 SPOT TREAT WEEDS:** If you don't have lot of broadleaf weeds in your yard, don't apply weed killer to the entire lawn. Instead buy liquid ready to use with a hose-end sprayer and spot-

sprayer weeds rather than applying granules with a drop spreader. You'll save time, and the liquid spray works better anyway.

### **#5 DON'T THROW OUT YOUR POTTING MIX:**

Anyone who plants up large containers knows how expensive it can be to fill one with potting mix. Well, unless your plants had disease problems during the year, you don't have to empty your big pots completely at the end of the season. Remove just the top 8 to 12 inches of mix—the depth the roots of most annuals will reach. In spring, use a trowel to loosen up the mix left in the bottom of the pot, refill it with fresh mix and plant!

**#6 KEEP 'EM TOGETHER:** A good way to save money on tools is to not lose the ones you have. Keep the land tools you use most often in a lightweight cleaning tote. Totes with openings are easy to clean with a spray of the hose.

**#7 START PERENNIALS FROM SEED:** Want a lot of perennials but don't need them right away? Save money by buying seeds and starting your own plants right out in the garden. For the best selection buy seed online. Coneflowers (*Echinacea purpurea*), pinks (*Dianthus*), salvias (*Salvia* hybrids) and blackeyed Susans (*Rudbeckia* hybrids) are all easy to grow. Some plants will bloom the first year, but most will take two to three years to reach full size and bloom. If you're willing to wait, you'll save big.

**#8 WHAT'S THE BEST BUY?** You might think that you'll save money at the garden center by buying small plants rather than large ones. However, that's not always the case. So compare the plants and prices before you decide. Purchasing a large plant that can be divided into several small ones will give you more plants for less money.

I hope at least one of these tips will leave you with a little more spare change in your pocket and the time to enjoy it.

HAPPY GARDENING!



**SOMERVELL  
COUNTY MASTER  
GARDENERS  
ASSOCIATION**

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[somervellmq@gmail.com](mailto:somervellmq@gmail.com)

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 the Somervell County Extension office at 254-897-2809 or you may email the SCMGA at [somervellmq@gmail.com](mailto:somervellmq@gmail.com).



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