



**SOMERVELL
COUNTY
MASTER
GARDENERS
ASSOCIATION**

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SCMGA Newsletter

THE GREEN PIECE



Volume 3, Issue 3

March 2010

FROM GOURDS TO BIRDHOUSES

SCMGA Community Horticulture Education Program

Monday, March 8, 2010, 6:30 PM

Somervell County Citizen Center, 209 SW Barnard

The Lang Sisters of "Granbury" will be the featured free Community Education Program Monday, March 8, 6:30pm, at the Glen Rose downtown Citizens Center located at 209 SW Barnard St. and sponsored by the Somervell Co. Master Gardeners...Come learn from these ladies who sold approximately 700 of

these delightful bird-houses last year alone! They will share tips on growing the gourds, instructions on cleaning, drying & painting the gourds with a few laughs along the way. See a variety of their creations with questions & answers encouraged. Come join this fun meeting for an educational

AND entertaining topic that will inspire you for our upcoming spring in Glen Rose!

Free refreshments are served along with door prizes. And who knows, you might WIN one of these gourds!



March Tips

by Donna Hagar, Somervell County Master Gardener

Plant vegetables

seeds: Beets, chard, collards, leaf lettuce, mustard, peas, radish
EARLY MARCH: Beans, endive; **LATE MARCH:** Cantaloupe, corn, cucumber, eggplant, black-eyed peas, pumpkin, New Zealand spinach, summer squash, watermelon

Plant vegetable plants.

Broccoli, chard, collards, endive, leaf lettuce, mustard, **LATE MARCH:** Pepper, tomato

Plant herbs and seeds:

All hot-weather herbs, such as basil, chives
March is the last reasonably mild month to plant such things as trees and big shrubs. Any later and these plants will encounter too much stress in the summer heat.

Plant bulbs: Caladium, calla, canna, daylily, and elephant ear are the main spring and summer ornamentals that can be planted the second half of this month.

Aerate the lawn: It is best to aerate after mid-March, when there is less chance of a freeze damaging the opened-up lawn. Add compost before or after aerating for greater benefits.

Clean up debris from winter: Remove the hiding places for bugs and diseases by raking up leaves and gathering fallen limbs and fruits.

excerpts taken from http://www.omasgartenpflanzen.com/Monthly_Hints.html

Favorite Plants of Master Gardeners - Armenian Cucumber (Yard Long Cucumber)

By Nancy Hillin, Somervell County Master Gardener

Common Name/Scientific Name: Armenian Cucumber/
Cucumismelo

Native/Adapted: This plant is a native of Armenia that grows well here.

Height: Armenian Cucumbers grow in vines.

Spread: Runners need a lot of space or provide a trellis for the plants.

Light: Requires continuous direct sunlight six to eight hours a day.

Evergreen/Deciduous: The Armenian Cucumber is an unusual annual vegetable plant.

Seasonal Interest: Tolerates heat and sun better than other varieties. It is best to sow seeds when night time temperatures are above 60 degrees.

Color/Features: Boosts showy yellow flowers that produce a fruit 30-36 inches long and two to three inches in diameter.

Water: Heavy on the water, but should be in soil that drains well.

Maintenance: Fertilize a week after plants blossom with a 10-10-10 fertilizer and every three to four weeks thereafter. Do not to over fertilize as it could have a negative effect on the fruit.

Wildlife: The bright yellow flowers of the Armenian Cucumber will be a temptation to some wildlife including deer.

Comments/Experience with the plant: If you desire a long straight cucumber, plan on using a trellis for your plants. Otherwise, if left to grow on the ground, the cucumbers will grow in shapes that often resemble a curled-up snake. In that case, you will have grown the "snake melon". Although, the Armenian Cucumber tastes like a mild regular cucumber, it is actually in the melon family. It produces very few seeds and is at its burp less best when picked at 15-18 inches long. It is not necessary to peel this cucumber, as the skin is thin and usually has no bitter taste. After all danger of frost has passed, plant the seeds in hills three feet apart with five seeds in each hill at a depth of one-half to one inch. Planting in hills allows the root system to start from the center of the hill and grow to the outside where each plant will find their own nutrients. After the seedlings come up, thin the hills to three plants each. Try to keep a three inch layer of mulch around the plants to help them grow faster. Companion plants that will help deter harmful insects include radishes, peas, beets, carrots, dill, nasturtiums and marigolds. It is best to plant any type of cucumber away from tomatoes, sage or any aromatic herbs. If cucumbers beetles do come around, use the safest control by hand picking them from the plants. Other small winged insects such as thrips and whiteflies can be deterred with a steady shower of water. Just remember to apply the water during daylight hours so the plants will have time to dry out before dark. This way the plants are not a draw for other insects in the evening hours. Keep your plants watered well and in 55-70 days they will produce in abundance and will make for great conversation for those who have never seen the Armenian Cucumber.



Reference: Texas A&M University Horticulture Website

See recipe using Armenian Cucumbers on page 4!

Rose Program at Citizens Center

Submitted by Shirley Smith

Monday night, Feb. 8, at 6:30 pm the SCMGA hosted their regularly scheduled education program. Two of their members, Dove Johnson and Wade Moore, who are recently certified Vegetable Gardening Specialists, spoke to the group.



Wade Moore began his portion of the program with his own very enjoyable and original piece of prose "**Ode to a Grumpy Garden.**" After everyone regained their composure, Wade talked to us about how to begin from scratch in preparing a new garden spot. Of utmost importance is the location, how much sun/shade the garden will get, the lay of the land to just men-

tion a few. He said it is always a good idea to top-dress the garden for the first two years with mulch. Do a soil test and find out what your soil needs. Use cover crops in the winter. Companion planting is encouraged and some of the advantages of this type of gardening are larger and earlier harvests and better tasting produce. He further spoke about some of the insects you will be seeing in any garden and also some of the problems and their solutions when growing tomatoes. Dove Johnson was our next speaker and she talked about the wonderful advantages of composting. She told us how to build a simple yet very effective compost bin and how to start actually making compost. It is always a good idea to take a couple of handfuls of already completed compost as a

"starter" to your new pile. Now, you can begin to toss in all sorts of kitchen scraps. She

stressed to NOT use any meat products or protein products (i.e. cheese, milk products, etc.). If you have placed the problem ingredients in your compost pile it will not smell badly. It should only smell like the forest floor. She also told us to never use pet pooh in our pile. Animal manure from animals that graze (horses & cows) is ideal. Dove then changed the subject and talked to us a little about heirloom vegetables and their advantages.



Armenian Cucumber Salad Serves 4 as a side dish

1/2 cup cider vinegar
1/4 cup water
1T sugar
1 small cove of garlic, crushed
Healthy pinch of salt
1 Armenian cucumber, thinly sliced, about 2 cups
1/4 cup thinly sliced red pepper*
2T finely diced red onion
2T finely diced yellow pepper
1 tsp dried dill weed
1/2 tsp black mustard seeds (optional)
Combine cider vinegar, water, sugar and garlic in a small sauce pan and bring to a boil. Stir and remove from the heat when the sugar is fully dissolved. Add a pinch of salt and let cool. Meanwhile, toss all the remaining ingredients



together in a medium sized bowl. When the dressing is cool, pour over the vegetables; you may not want to use all the dressing if you prefer a drier salad. Toss and serve right away. Also, since the salad improves with sitting, it's fine to do this up to several hours ahead of time. Alternatively, carefully lay out the cucumber slices on four white plates. Sprinkle on the red and yellow peppers and the red onion. Follow with the dried dill and black mustard seed. When dressing is cool, drizzle over the vegetables and serve.

* I used another wonderful Mystery Box treat for the red pepper in this recipe: the red piquillo pepper which is a nice blend of juicy-sweet and slightly hot. You can substitute all red bell pepper or a combination of red bell pepper and something with a little heat, like a red jalapeno.

Source: www.thekitchn.com



"WALLY WORM WORD" - "NEMATODE "

by Wade Moore, Somervell County Master Gardener

"Oh WallyWorm--
-Hey WallyWorm--
-- HEY! HEY!

WallyWorm, WAKE UP!!", bel-
lowed Wade.

"Sorry, I didn't hear you. I was-
n't asleep, only down under a
little deeper because of the
snow", retorted WallyWorm.

"Well, I am sorry too. I didn't
mean to upset you. Why you
could have had several heart
attacks all at once since you
have so many hearts", replied
Wade.



"Oh,
that's
okay. I
was vis-
iting
with my
little

sleek roundworm amie, Made-
moiselle Nematode. I just love
her pointed head and her round
mouth with the six lips. She may
be a parasite, but she is the

best looking pseudocoelomate
that lives around here", ex-
plained WallyWorm.

"I'll admit, she is a bit horizon-
tally challenged, being only
about 1/10 of an inch long; but
those four nerves that run the
full length of her slender body
make up for her having no
blood cells", sighed WallyWorm.

"I offered to take her out for a
dinner of bacteria and fungus,
but she said she would rather
stay around your garden plant's
root system and eat her cousins
before they were able to bore
into the roots and cause dam-
age. Isn't she sweet, watching
out for you?", bragged Wally-
Worm.

"She is a free living predatory
roundworm with relatives that
consume bacteria and suck the
fluids from fungus. Other rela-
tives are omnivores and feed on
a variety of organisms. Her non
free living kin are root feeders,

thus
being
plant
para-
sites; you

know, the ones she likes to
gobble up", explained Wally-
Worm.

"She and her free living kin are
important in mineralizing or re-
leasing nutrients in plant avail-
able. When they consume bac-
teria or fungus, ammonium is
released. If they don't get too
romantic and over populate,
they can stimulate bacteria and
plant growth", touted Wally-
Worm. "I can see why you are
so enamored with Miss Nema-
tode. Gotta run, see you in a
few weeks. Adieu WallyWorm",
waved Wade.

Data taken from Wikipedia and
Natural Resources Conserva-
tion Service.



Somervell County Master Gardeners

Set 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 somervellmaster-gardeners.org for updates.

January—Roses
February—Vegetables
March—Gourds/Bird House
April—Rainwater Harvesting
May—Bees
June—Worm Composting

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



Pre – Emergent, Start Now for a Weed Free Lawn

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

As with most things, the saying goes better late than never. We are getting to the later part, but it is not too late to get a pre-emergent herbicide applied to your yard. You may be thinking it's not time to put out weed control, it is still winter time, but for pre-emergent control of summer weeds we need to apply the herbicide between February 25th and March 15th on most years.

Control of both winter and summer turf grass weeds starts with good cultural practices. Things such as proper mowing heights, proper mowing intervals, good fertilization programs, and a good watering program that supports deep root development go a long way in controlling weeds. In fact, failure to follow these principles is often

the cause of the weed problem. However, in some cases the use of herbicides is needed to get these weeds under control. A good first step is to use a pre-emergent herbicide to prevent the weed seeds that are present from germinating and becoming problem. With the adequate moisture we have received this winter, as soon as it begins to warm up the seeds will begin to germinate. The key to success with a pre-emergent is to have the herbicide in place prior to the seeds germinating.

When looking at pre-emergent products it is important to look at the label to make sure the product is labeled for the type of grass that you have and that it controls the weeds you are after. Most of the time, we are

looking at controlling grass burs, dandelions, or crabgrass with our spring pre emergent. After applying the herbicide at the labeled rate, be sure to water it in with at least ½ inch of water. With that being said it would have been great to have your pre emergent put out before the light rain we received on March 1st. Allowing the product to lay out in the sunlight reduces the effectiveness of the product.

Hopefully, a little effort this spring will go a long way in getting your yard off to a good start this summer. Don't forget if you have a bumper crop of winter weeds then early September is a good time to put out a pre-emergent for winter weeds such as Poa annua and henbit.



Project 2010 Rose Bush

By Donna Hagar, Somervell County Master Gardener

Project 2010 Rose Bush is ongoing throughout the year. Roses can be ordered at any time. When we have accumulated orders for approximately 100 roses, we will call for delivery, which usually happens within 10 days. Roses can be ordered from the Glen Rose Chamber of Commerce. Order forms can be obtained on the Chamber website at www.glenrosechamber.com.

The Somervell County Master Gardeners have also put together an information sheet with order form attached. Find it on our website at: <http://www.somervellmastergardeners.org>.

More information on Earth-Kind® Roses can also be obtained on a recently updated Earth-Kind® website at: <http://earthkindroses.tamu.edu> Texas A & M has updated the entire Earth-Kind® website.

Please visit <http://earthkind.tamu.edu> and for Earth-Kind® Roses specifically, visit <http://earthkindroses.tamu.edu>

New features include:

- * Updated look, with new logos and navigation.
- * New and revised publications
- * Updates to the Earth-Kind® Roses site, including the cultivar information. And much more to come...



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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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