



SCMGA NEWS

SOMERVELL
COUNTY MASTER
GARDENERS
ASSOCIATION

sommervellmastergardeners.org

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Earth-Kind Experimental Rose Garden Update



Fall is in the air and summer is slowly fading and hopefully you had an opportunity to drive by Heritage Park lately to observe the progress of our Earth-Kind Experimental Rose Garden. Presently most of the roses are in full fall bloom and really add a nice color to the park entrance. As a reminder these roses were just planted in March of 2008, using selected varieties suggested by Dr. Steve George's Earth-Kind Rose Program. Our instructions were to plant the roses, mulch and for the first year water weekly or as needed. Throughout the summer these plants have been checked and watered by volunteers of the Somervell County Master Gardeners. Periodically we have worked the rose beds to remove weeds and unwanted grasses and to replenish the mulch layer.

These plants will not receive any fertilizer, insecticides or fungicides for the duration of the three year trial period. The roses cannot be dead-headed (old blossoms removed) either. Starting next year in March we will back off the water and begin our evaluation, using prescribed guidelines, to rank or judge the performance of each rose variety. Works in progress are plans for a nice split rail fence around the roses and additional signs that will explain the purpose of the trial garden. So if you have not had a moment to smell the roses lately stop by Heritage Park and check out our Earth-Kind experimental rose garden. The roses should be blooming hopefully until the first frost.



Monday, October 13
6:30 pm

Somervell County Citizens Center

Topic: Oak Wilt

Join us for the next installment in our Educational Lecture Series. This month Monty Swatzel, a Johnson County Master Gardener, will discuss the devastating tree disease Oak Wilt. This disease is severely affecting Red Oak and Live Oak trees around the state. Come and learn what measures you can take to avoid losing some of our most beautiful and precious trees, and what to do if you suspect you may already be affected.



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October Gardening Tips

Submitted by Sandi Stringer

Whew! Fall is finally here and this month is a great time to plant—both for you and the plants because of milder temperatures. While you are noticing colorful plants this month, think about planting some native grasses such as Little Bluestem, Gulf Muhly, Inland Sea Oats, and Bushy Bluestem or fall blooming perennials such as Mexican Bush Sage and Mexican Mint Marigold (the foliage has a licorice scent) and of course Chrysanthemums. You can actually keep planting through the fall and into winter. After planting, you want to mulch, as it will trap soil warmth, which will benefit the roots. And yes, mulch will help keep winter weeds at a minimum. If there is no rain, watering once every 3-4 weeks is sufficient to keep your plants alive through the fall and winter.

This is also the month to plant wildflowers. It is best to control existing weeds prior to planting or to at least mow them very close to the ground. Rake the soil surface so that the seeds have a place to fall into, sow the seeds, and tamp the ground.

Now through November is an ideal time to plant woody ornamentals such as Crepe Myrtles.

Last but not least, as the leaves start falling from the trees, think of putting them in a compost bin or just create your own compost pile.

For a more extensive list of native and adapted plants to plant during the fall and additional information, go to our library at the County Extension Office.

Composting Seminar



Left to right: Elaine Bell, JCMG, Karen Bitnar, LGMA, Jim Cheatham, Becky Altobelli and Shirley Smith.

At the September Somervell County Master Gardeners Composting and Vermiculture Program, Johnson County Master Gardener, Elaine Bell, spoke on the ease and benefits of making our own Composting Bins. Lake Granbury Master Gardener, Karen Bitnar, presented a hands on **demonstration on “vermiculture” or composting** with worms, and how to start a Worm Bin. Both Speakers related how the benefits of both these practices will save money, promote recycling of items we send to the landfills, i.e. fruit and vegetable scraps, tree trimmings and newspapers, and produce a rich compost for use in supplying nutrients for our Flower Beds and Gardens. It was a very informative evening for all who attended.

For information on future SCMGA Horticulture Programs visit our website at www.somervellmastergardeners.org or call the AgriLife Extension Office at 254-897-2809

French Kitchen Garden or Jardin Potager By Dove Johnson

In the 16th and 17th centuries, the royal palaces of Europe often had extensive vegetable gardens. In some cases, these gardens were designed to be both beautiful to look at as well as productive. The Chateau de Villandry and Versailles are two of the most famous examples of this period. The gardens were planted out in blocks rather than in rows, with the vegetables filling in geometric patterns that were often defined by clipped boxwood or other low hedging. By grouping vegetables in blocks rather than in rows, their foliage texture, color and structure became an integral part of the overall pattern. Blocks of flowers were often used to help create the tapestry-like patterns. Over time, these palace gardens, which often covered many acres, were mimicked on a much smaller scale by home gardeners. This was especially true in France, where the humble kitchen garden, or potager, has long been considered an opportunity for beauty as well as utility. A recent government survey revealed that almost a fourth of the fruit and vegetables consumed by the French were home-grown. More and more of today's home gardeners, be they in France or Texas, are discovering that potagers make sense for many practical as well as aesthetic reasons.

Americans seem to be following suit, because in the last few years kitchen gardening has really taken off. For those of you wondering what a kitchen garden is; the best description is that it is a place to grow the things you bring into the kitchen--herbs, vegetables, fruits and berries, and even the cutting flowers for your table. That's the beauty of the kitchen garden--its vegetable gardening with style!

When choosing the location for your garden, keep in mind that most vegetables and herbs need as much sun as possible to do their best. Good drainage is also a must, so avoid low-lying areas where water collects. Another consideration is the distance from your garden to the kitchen. Many kitchen gardens are basically an herb and salad garden. When you've chosen the best site, prepare the area just as you would for a new perennial bed. You will need some stakes and string to lay out your chosen design. To form a rectangle, position the stakes at the four corners, with the string running between them. Triangles may be marked off on the diagonal, and diamonds created by positioning a center stake midway between each corner stake. To create a circle, measure a length of string equivalent to the radius of the finished bed and attach the string to a stake anchored at the circle's center. With the end of the string in your hand, walk the circle's circumference, etching its outside edge as you go. You can choose to use the traditional four-square layout, which is simply a rectangle split into four equal parts and where the parts meet in the center place a focal point. Garden art you may want to use as a focal point in your own four-square garden might be a woven bee skep, beautiful rosemary topiary or a terra cotta sundial.

This simple design has raised beds. On the practical side, small, well-defined garden spaces are much easier to tend. For today's busy gardeners, that's a big plus. Because the beds are planted intensively, there's little room for weeds, and the plants tend to shade each other, which cuts down on watering chores. Potagers, because they're attractive to look at, they are usually located relatively close to the house. Harvesting vegetables

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French Kitchen Garden or Jardin Potager

By Dove Johnson

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without destroying planting patterns is a challenge in a potager. Two techniques can help: Edge plots with contrasting plants, including herbs and flowers, which will mask bare spots as the season progresses. Choose varieties in keeping with the scale of the garden. After harvesting, use fast fillers such as chervil or cut-and-come-again salad greens. In addition to herbs and vegetables, there should be cutting flowers in the beds to provide beauty at the table and dwarf or semi-dwarf or espaliered fruit trees nearby as well.

A year-round garden, however, doesn't mean there isn't down time for some vegetables. You can plant summer vegetables in April or May, and more tomatoes in July so they'll go right through into winter, and winter vegetables in October or November. Every six weeks, put in interval crops, like pole beans, green onions, beets and carrots. When you alternate full growing seasons you can rotate crops very easily. You put in your tomatoes in the summer, then you put in something else in the winter, and then you can do tomatoes in the same spot the following summer."

Plants for Kitchen Gardens

The list below is a rough guideline that can be helpful when you're figuring out how many plants will fit into a given space. The measurements are the approximate width you should allow for each plant. Keep in mind that if you live in Texas and know that your tomato plants get to be 3 feet across, rather than 18", you'll want to allow more space. So use your judgment and be prepared to make adjustments as you go along. Have fun!

Vegetables

Tomatoes 18"	Broccoli 12"
Peppers 12"	Bush Summer Squash 18"
Kale 8"	Bush Cucumbers 18
Lettuce 6"	Bush Beans 8"
Red Cabbage 12"	Beets 4"
Fennel 6"	Celery 8"
Spinach 6"	Cauliflower 12"

Herbs

Basil 8"
Parsley 12"
Sage 10"
Chives 10"
Oregano 8"
Thyme 6"
Cilantro 6"

Edible Flowers

Bee Balm (<i>Monarda</i> spp.) P	Daylily (<i>Hemerocallis</i> spp.) P
Lavender (<i>Lavandula angustifolia</i>) P	Pinks (<i>Dianthus</i> spp.) A
Begonia, tuberous (<i>Begonia x tuberhybrida</i>) A	English Daisy (<i>Bellis perennis</i>) A/B
Lemon Marigold (<i>Tagetes tenuifolia</i> 'Lemon Gem') A	Pot marigold (<i>Calendula officinalis</i>) A
Borage (<i>Borago officinalis</i>) A	Geranium, scented (<i>Pelargonium</i> spp.) A
Nasturtium (<i>Tropaeolum</i> spp.) A	Rose (<i>Rosa</i> spp.) P
Chives (<i>Allium schoenoprasum</i>) P	Gladiolus (<i>Gladiolus</i> spp.) A
Pansy (<i>Viola x wittrockiana</i>) A	Sunflower (<i>Helianthus annua</i>) A
Cornflower (<i>Centaurea cyanus</i>) A	Hollyhock (<i>Alcea rosea</i>) B
Petunia (<i>Petunia x hybrida</i>) A	Violet (<i>Viola cornuta</i>) P
	Johnny-Jump-Up (<i>Viola tricolor</i>) A

Red Caboose Winery Field Trip

Submitted by Sandi Stringer



Several members and friends of the Somervell County Master Gardeners recently went on a field trip to The Red Caboose Winery located a few miles outside of Meridian, TX. It has been in existence just over 5 years but already has hundreds of grape vines that include several varieties of grapes. The winery has been making wine the past 2 years and has already won accolades for their wine at Texas Wine Festivals. After a very informative walking tour explaining how the vines are planted and trimmed, we moved

on to see some of the equipment used for crushing and seeding the grapes. Then it was on to the wine tasting room, followed by lunch on the patio overlooking the vineyard. A special field trip indeed!



Gary explains how the grape vines are trained on the supports.



Gary McKibben of Red Caboose beginning the tour of the 9.5 acre winery.



Gary explains the fermenting process and describes the wines we are about to taste.

Upcoming Educational Programs

Monday, November 10
6:30 pm
Somervell County Citizens Center

In the last few years we have all seen and some possibly experienced the devastating affect of wild fires. As homeowners, there are several things we can do in our landscaping to diminish or even avoid having our homes threatened by these terrifying tragedies. Lake Granbury Master Gardener Phyllis Webster will give us tips and suggestions for what and how to plant a Fire Wise Landscape to protect your most valuable asset.

Exciting News!

The Somervell County Master Gardeners are teaming with the Lake Granbury Master Gardeners to put in a bid to host the Texas Master Gardener Association State Convention in Glen Rose in April, 2011. Originally conceived by LGMG Doug Richards and SCMGA President Donna Hagar, the idea was to hold the conference in Granbury. But upon further investigation, it was quickly determined that the Expo in Glen Rose was better suited for the venue. By 2011, it is expected that the conference will draw between 800 and 1000 Master Gardeners from all areas of the state! This will definitely be a huge undertaking, both by Glen Rose and by the Master Gardeners. **But with the joint effort of both county's Master Gardener Associations and the enthusiastic support of Billy Huckaby with the Glen Rose Convention and Visitors Bureau this should be a conference for all to remember!**



Somervell County Master Gardeners Association

Visit Our Website

<http://www.somervellmastergardeners.org>

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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 2009. 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.