



**SOMERVELL  
COUNTY  
MASTER  
GARDENERS  
ASSOCIATION**

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*SCMGA Newsletter*

# *The Green Piece*



Volume 2, Issue 9

September 2009

***SCMGA Community Horticulture Education Program***

***Monday, September 14, 2009 6:30 PM***

***Somervell County Citizen Center***

## ***Fall Fire Ant Control***

***With Josh Blanek***



Although you may not have seen many signs of fire ants during the past few months, that does not necessarily mean they are not still around your landscape. During times of drought and extreme temperatures, fire ants just dig deeper down in the soil where conditions are more favorable to their survival. The deeper they go, the more likely there is some mois-

ture and certainly the soil temperature is more moderate.

To help control the proliferation of fire ants, Texas AgriLife Extension Service and the Somervell County Master Gardeners are spreading the word that the second week in September is Fire Ant Awareness Week. This is a great time to spread the word about fire ant management due to the fact that fall is generally the best time of year to treat for fire ants.

Josh Blanek, Somervell County Extension Agent-

Ag/Nr, will be presenting a program on Fall Fire Ant control using the Texas Two Step Method. Blanek will discuss fire ant control around the home and garden using both a broadcast bait and individually treating each mound. Using the proven Texas Two Step method, one can greatly reduce the amount of fire ant colonies present in the spring.



## ***Concrete Butterfly Puddlers and Mushrooms***



In preparation for the Texas Master Gardener State Conference being held in Glen Rose April 27-29, 2011, several Somervell County Master Gardeners attended a Workshop on making Con-

crete Butterfly Puddlers and Mushroom Yard Art. The Butterfly Puddlers are used in the garden to hold small pieces of fruit for butterflies to enjoy. The Mushrooms are fun whimsical conversation pieces for the garden. The Master

Gardeners are trying different projects to determine which will be best for the Workshops for the conference. A fun time was had by all who attended.



## *Winter Weed Control in Home Lawns*

### *Submitted by Josh Blanek, CEA-AG/NR Somervell County*



Are you enjoying the change in temperature we have experienced here the last couple of days. What a relief from the 100°F days and 80°F nights. However, if you like those temperatures I am sure we will see some more before summer ends. Either way is fine with me, all I am asking for is a good soaking rain. And with the cooler temperatures, Friday night Tiger football and the first day of autumn on the 22nd I am reminded of one very important step in home lawn landscape maintenance, our fall pre-emergent application for unwanted broadleaf winter weeds and grasses.

Each spring across Somervell County, lawns are invaded by broadleaf weeds and winter grasses. Some of the most common are dandelions, annual rye and Texas winter grass. Another culprit of ruining spring time lawns is a small clump grass called Poa Annual or Annual Bluegrass. What most homeowners do not real-

ize is that these weeds begin to germinate in early fall and will not begin to show themselves until late winter when rain and warmer temperatures begin to return.

Control of both winter and summer turf grass weeds starts with good cultural practices such as proper mowing heights, proper mowing intervals, good fertilization programs and a good watering program that supports deep root development. But when all else fails, the use of herbicides are 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. In Somervell County pre-emergent herbicides should be applied in September. Timing is everything when using a pre-emergent. Waiting too late will only cause less than desirable results.

When looking at pre-emergent it is important to look at the la-

bel to make sure the product is labeled for the type of grass that you have and that it controls the weeds you are after. After applying the herbicide at the labeled rate, be sure to water it in with at least ½ inch of water. This insures the herbicide is moved down in contact with the top layer of soil where most of the weed seeds are germinating. Allowing the product to lay out in the sunlight reduces the effectiveness of the product.

Hopefully, a little effort this fall will go a long way in getting your yard off to a good start next spring. Don't forget if summer weeds have been a problem late February is a good time to put out a pre-emergent for summer weeds such as crabgrass and grass burs.

For more information on landscape maintenance contact the Somervell County Extension Office at 254-897-2809.

## *Herb Gardening Program*



Yvonna Brown and Becky Altobelli of the Somervell County Master Gardeners will present "Herb Gardening" at Storiebook Cafe, 502 NE Barnard, Glen Rose, **Tuesday October 6th, 6:30P.M.** Storiebook Cafe will be open for your dining pleasure, so come early and join us for a fun evening of Food, Book Browsing and Herbs.



## September Garden Tips

*By Barbara Lancaster, Treasurer, Somervell County Master Gardeners*

Fall is a perfect time for gardening in Texas. An increased frequency of cooler temperatures and decreased day length combine to make fall an ideal time for gardening, especially vegetable gardening.

Doug Welsh, in his book "Texas Garden Almanac" states that fall is time to act quickly, as you still have time to plant "quick-harvest" warm-season vegetable crops. These crops include green beans and radishes. Cool season vegetables should be planted now: broccoli, cauliflower, leaf lettuce and spinach oftentimes will have much better crops during the fall than in

the spring. You will notice that vegetables that mature in cooler temperatures are usually of higher quality. Other cool season vegetables can be used in flowerbeds as ornamentals. These include cabbage, kale, leaf lettuce and spinach.

Herbs also enjoy fall cooler temperatures. Basil, chives, cilantro, dill, mints, and oregano transplants can be planted now for quick high quality crops. Some herbs can also be used as ornamentals in flowerbeds. Mexican oregano produces pink flowers; rosemary in the upright form will produce blue blossoms in the fall; Mexican

mint marigold is a fall bloomer which produces small, daisy-like yellow flowers.

Fall is also the time to plant your wildflower seeds.

Texas has an abundance of wildflower species that adorn our natural landscape, roadways and even in cultivated landscapes. Planting wildflower seed in September ensures you can enjoy wildflowers in your yard the following spring.



## 2011 Texas Master Gardener State Conference Update

The 2011 Texas Master Gardener Conference plans are well underway. The Conference is scheduled for April 27-29, 2011 at the Expo Center in Glen Rose. All 18 committees, comprised of Co-Hosting Somervell County and Lake Granbury Master Gardeners, have been meeting and putting together plans to make this an exciting and unique conference. The Texas Master Gardener annual conference is an opportunity to bring Master Gardeners together from all over the state for further education and the ability to introduce new and innovative technologies, products and methods pertaining to and supportive of all things gardening. Attendance at our 3 day conference is open to all 6400 Texas Master Gardeners and their spouses.

We are making great efforts to bring well known speakers to our conference. To that end, Co-Chairs Doug Richards of LGMG and Donna Hagar of SCMGA recently traveled to Dallas and Austin to pursue Key Note speakers and reach out to potential sponsors. On August 15, the pair trav-

eled to Dallas to attend the Texas Nursery and Landscape Association Expo and had an opportunity to meet well known Texas gardener and author Neil Sperry. They followed that with a visit to Austin for the Austin Fall Home and Garden Show on August 22. The primary purpose was to visit with Paul James, "The Gardener Guy", host of HGTV's Gardening by the Yard. No final decisions have been made but everyone is working hard to make this an unforgettable conference for all. But next time, Donna holds the camera!



Donna Hagar with Neil Sperry at TNLA Expo in Dallas. Photographer Doug Richards



Donna Hagar with Paul James "The Gardener Guy" in Austin. Photographer Doug Richards



## *Highlight on a Master Gardener*

### *Wade Moore*

#### **THE GROWING PATTERN OF WADE MOORE**

##### *Benbrook (Tarrant County)*

I drew my first breath in the middle of Benbrook Lake. No, I didn't slip out from under an old mossy rock; the lake was not in existence then.



Mom, Dad, two sisters (not nuns [my kin]), and I were subjected to black-land farming here until 1950. We were heavy into corn, oats, and beef cattle production.

Water started rising in Benbrook Lake ergo we moved to Aledo in 1950.

##### *Aledo (Parker County)*

My sisters, both registered nurses, stayed in Tarrant County to pursue their careers. Mom, Dad, and I (mostly Mom and Dad) ran an oat hay, and beef cattle operation.

A good life, a good school, and a good woman (Sharon Truscott, who I later married) are fond memories of my teenage formative years. That little lady and I went our different ways for



a few years; college, work, and etc., but wedded into each others lives in 1966 and moved to Arlington.

##### *Arlington (Tarrant County)*

Sharon and I bought our first house here; a 3br. 2ba. brick (1750 sq. ft.) on a nice wooded lot on a cul-de-sac for a cost of \$19,900.00. The payments were \$62.50 per month, including taxes and insurance. Ah. Sharon taught junior high and high school and I worked at General Dynamics as a tool designer. After my F-11 days, I had a car wash with gas pumps. Bad idea. Too many rules, not enough quarters, new baby girl (Shelly), groceries on the credit card: HELP!!!

I packed a sack lunch, followed a "hard hat" vehicle to a H. B. Zachry Co. road project in Duncanville and got a job on a survey crew. They started me at \$2.25 an hour which was about \$7.00 an hour more than I had been making.

H. B.'s company was good to me and I spent fifteen years with them. Three of those years were spent in Sri Lanka.

##### *Sri Lanka (off the Southern tip of India)*

I was in the engineering department, supervising about twenty Sri Lankan graduate engineers. They were an extremely well educated group of young people.

Sharon taught K through 12th~ Grades for the American camp. The camp was located in the jungle about 135 miles North-east of the capitol city of Columbo. No Safeway or Kroger here.

We bought most of our produce from local farmers, becoming accustomed to very "healthy" foods and thus intolerant to altered and/or enhanced products that we experienced upon our return.

We purchased a small acreage in Aledo after our Sri Larikan experience.

##### *Aledo (2~ Time)*

Garden raised vegetables were always so welcome. We had a garden as did most of our nearby neighbors. We also had enough animals between us that mostly composted manure was used for "garden groceries". By now I was beginning to believe that maybe I could grow a few vegetables.

So much for the good gardening in Aledo: We are moving to the Chalk Mountain area.

##### *Chalk Mountain (Somervell County)*

The topsoil was rocks with a thin layer of smaller rocks. I toted enough soil from the Rough Creek bottoms to build a small garden.

During this time I read about the first class for Master Gardener training in Somervell county being offered. 'I really want to do this'. OOPS — dinked around too long and didn't get signed up.

I did get signed up for the second class (2 years later). It was an awakening. I had been leaning toward the "organic" meth-

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## *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](http://www.somervellmastergardeners.org) No program in July and December.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Speaker</b>
September 14	Fire Ants	Josh Blaneck
October 12	Bees	Dwayne Cleveland
November 9	Trees for Somervell County	Carrie Smith

### *Butterfly Gardening Program*



The Somervell County Master Gardeners and Guests enjoyed a very interesting and informative evening at the August Community Horticulture Education Program. Polly Parmer from the Lake Granbury Master Gardener Association

presented the program on Butterfly Gardening. She shared tips on identifying Butterflies native to our area, picking the right location for the garden, the use of colorful native plants, and how to arrange our plantings. She stressed the importance of selecting plants that will not only attract the adult Butterflies but also the Larva. Just a few of those rec-

ommended host plants for the adult Butterfly were: Butterfly Weed, Common Milk Weed, Zinnia, Lantana, and Blue Mist Flower. For the Larval stage: Snapdragons, Coral Vine, Hollyhocks, Queen Anne's Lace, Dill and Lilac. She advised that Caterpillars are very fussy eaters so to be prepared to have your host plants chewed up. More photos on last page.

### *Wade Moore, Somervell County Master Gardener cont.*

(Continued from page 4)

ods but this course leaned toward the "chemical" methods. I stubbornly stuck to my "mostly organic" methods and achieved some success at Chalk Mountain.

That beautiful land became very expensive, so Sharon and I downsized by selling that property and buying a small acreage in Hico.

#### *Hico (Hamilton County)*

I have a large garden here. Even though not certified, I practice what I think is a good "organic" program. The compost I use is from the local dairies and contains some things I probably don't want to know about. Oh well, the 160 degree Fahrenheit composting



put me in charge of establishing a local farmer's market. It is in it's second year, doing fair to middling, even though there hasn't been any cotton so far. I have been encouraging local folks to plant extra crop for the farmer's market with some success. After giving a presentation to the Hico Civic Club on establishing a fall garden; I was really surprised at the positive response. The June vegetable gardening course

temperatures should rid it of most of the bad stuff.

The City of Hico

gave me enough information to feel comfortable about giving a presentation to some folks who have been gardening from way back.

This year's fall garden is well under way with a new crop of tomatoes, summer squash, southern peas, bush beans okra, radishes, potatoes, and corn. Peppers and Swiss chard have been carried over. Mid September will finish the fall planting.

If I have any regret about hooking up with the Texas Master Gardeners, and especially the Somervell County group, it would be that I waited so long to do so.

IT HAS BEEN FANTASTIC!

## ***Favorite Plants of Master Gardeners***

### ***Hardy Hibiscus***

***By Yvonna Brown, Somervell County Master Gardener***

**Common Name/Scientific Name:** Hardy Hibiscus / Hibiscus Moscheutos

**Native/Adapted:** This particular species is adapted , however, Desert, Heartleaf, Halberd-Leaf, Rock, and Yellow Hibiscus are listed as Texas Native Shrubs at <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/>.

**Height:** Can grow to heights of five to six feet.

**Spread:** 2 to 3 feet wide.

**Light:** Full sun to part shade.

**Evergreen/Deciduous:** Deciduous in our area. Dies to the ground in the winter.

**Seasonal Interest:** Beautiful huge Crepe Paper looking blooms from late June to early fall. In the center of each bloom a prominent pistil and stamen structure adds to their beauty.



**Color/Features:** The Hibiscus in my garden are a beautiful crimson rose and white, however, thanks to plant collectors and breeders, they can now be purchased in incredible vibrant colors such as raspberry, blood red, plum, hot pink, and many others. Blooms can be up to 12 inches in diameter. Although the blooms only last a day or so, this repeat bloomer is seldom without flowers. The robust bushy plant has attractive medium green leaves which compliment the beauty of blooms. Bees, Butterflies, and Hummingbirds are frequent visitors.

**Water:** Likes fairly moist soil.

**Maintenance:** None other than monitoring moisture in soil. Dead heads itself.

**Wildlife:** Deer

**Deer Resistant:** Our deer “love” the blooms, so be prepared to cage them if you want to grow them in deer country.

**Comments/Experience with plant:** The beautiful crimson rose colored hibiscus, which I believe to be either “Southern Belle” or “Fantasia”, have been a part of my garden for several years and have proven to be maintenance free with minimal insect damage. I started with one plant and it has multiplied several times. When they are all in bloom it is a mass of color. About four years ago, beautiful white blooms started appearing in the midst of all the crimson ones. I have never planted a white Hibiscus so this is a bit of a mystery but not one I mind at all. Hardy Hibiscus are late returnees each year, sometimes I think they have died, then there they are around mid to late June. This must explain why they do not appear in the Nurseries and Garden Centers until late June or early July. Be cautious when looking for Hardy Hibiscus as their sisters”, the Tropical Hibiscus, rg. start arriving in May. While just as beautiful and colorful as the Hardies, they do not winter as well here and may not return year after year if planted in the ground.



Parts of this article were researched at: [www.gardening-tips-perennials.com](http://www.gardening-tips-perennials.com) and [www.bachmans.com](http://www.bachmans.com).



## *Fall Gardening In Central Texas*

*By Dove Johnson, Somervell County Master Gardener*

Growing vegetables in Central Texas is a real challenge. We all agree that vegetables and fruits are much harder to grow than our landscape plants or trees. Diseases and insects are always a challenge, as is our soil and our water.

Here are some general rules to help you grow some great vegetables:

Be diligent about soil preparation. Enrich the soil with the addition of up to one-half the volume of your beds in organic matter. Organic matter includes decomposed manure, compost, and decomposed leaves. Do not use peat moss; it causes water to bead up, and it does not add anything to the soil that is needed. Work these additions into the top 12 to 24 inches of the soil.

Cover all of the soil in your beds with at least 3 inches and up to 6 inches of mulch. Leave the ground bare around the seedlings until they have produced their second or third set of true leaves, usually when they are about 6 inches tall. Then gently pull the mulch up around them so that it covers the soil around them but does not touch their stems.

The ground should be moist, but never soggy. Overwatering is also a leading cause of death in all plants. If you can, collect rainwater and use it to water. Water deeply so that the roots will go deep, and water at ground level but keep water off of leaves and fruit as it will cause diseases.

Fertilize regularly with a good complete fertilizer with N-P-K. Read the instructions and follow the recommended amounts and application times. Remember that "if a little is good, a lot will be better" is not true always.

Your plants will need to receive full sun for 8 hours of the day but a little afternoon shade is good, if the 8 hour requirement is still met. Know what time of the year to plant. Some vegetables are for the cool times of the year and some are for the warm. Planting at the wrong time will almost ensure failure. Fall vegetable crops are categorized as either long-term or short-term crops. Long-term, frost-tolerant vegetables include beets, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, chard, collards, garlic, kale, lettuce, mustard, onions, parsley, spinach, asparagus, and turnips and should be planted at the same time.

Asparagus: This is one of the few perennial vegetables that we can grow. First pick a spot that can be devoted to it for years. You will need rich, deeply dug soil and full sun. You must also have good drainage. Make the planting bed three to four feet wide and however long you want. After you have dug and enriched the soil with lots of compost, dig a trench 10 to 12 inches deep. Place the crowns into the trench and carefully cover with soil and then mulch. Harvest only a few of the spears after

two years. Then you can increase your harvest in year three. Remember, don't let your beds get weedy in the mean time.

Beets: Plant beets 3 inches apart in full sun in well-drained fertile soil. This is a cool season vegetable so it is best to plant the seeds in September through October or about the last week in January through first week of March. Thin the seedlings to get larger roots. Fertilize when they are six inches tall.

Carrots: Grow in full sun, in deep, rich soil without any rocks. Do not over fertilize carrots. Plant them in January and February. You can also try for a fall crop, planting the middle of September through October, but the heat may prevent a good harvest. Mulch around the growing carrots to help prevent weeds and preserve moisture.

Garlic: Garlic needs to be planted in the fall just after the weather cools off in your area. Plant a long row of garlic along the border of your garden or flower bed. Garlic can take a light shade for part of the day. The plants will grow all winter. In the spring, check the bulbs to see if they have matured. You will probably harvest in late May. Let them dry with the stems attached, and you can hang them up in a braid. Garlic is very good for you, especially fresh from your garden.

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## *Fall Gardening Continued*

*(Continued from page 7)*

**Onions:** Bunching onions need to be planted in the fall after it starts to cool off. The best variety for larger onions is the 1015 onions. You may have a hard time finding these until November. They are supposed to be planted from seed on October 15th--that is the source of the name or from bulb (transplants) in January or February. These are the big sweet yellow onions you find in the spring in the grocery store. Don't overwater.

**Spinach:** Spinach must be planted and grown in cool weather. You can plant in the fall through the spring. The usual bed preparation is all that is needed. The secret is timing. You have to grow it and harvest it before it gets hot, or before it freezes in the winter. And once it starts to go to seed the quality will be lost.

**Swiss Chard:** This is the only vegetable we consider fool-proof. You would have a hard time killing Swiss Chard with a black thumb, Really. Plant it in the fall or early spring. Swiss chard can live through freezing weather or boiling summer heat. You will have to water it

in the summer. Most insects don't like it and most diseases don't affect it. We have had all the plants around it eaten by pests, while the Swiss Chard lived on unaffected. You may be wondering what to do with it. Use it in salads or lightly steam it like spinach. It is very healthy for you too. Swiss Chard can live several years. Don't pull up the whole plant; just harvest the leaves you want and it will make more leaves for the next time. Swiss chard sometimes will develop a stalk and can get a few feet high in a couple of years.

Plant short-term, frost-susceptible vegetables together so that they can be removed after a killing frost. Frost-susceptible vegetables include beans, cantaloupes, corn, cucumbers, eggplants, okra, peas, peppers, Irish potatoes, sweet potatoes, squash, tomatoes and water-melons.

Late August (~20th): Plant Broccoli, Cabbage, Brussels sprouts, & Cauliflower transplants. These usually go in right after my melons have exhausted themselves. I clear the old melon patch and prep

for the winter garden around Aug 20th. At the same time I direct seed plant Kale, Collards, Carrots, & Turnips. Around Halloween is when some of the winter harvest begins with collards & kale, and the carrots will last until early Feb. As long as temps are moderate, everything listed will survive ok. But once there's 2-3 nights in the teens then things go downhill quickly. In such an event you can use row cover to protect your vegetables.

Be adventurous and try something new like Chinese Cabbage, Kohlrabi, Leeks, Sugar Pod English Peas (cook in pod, no shell peas), Bok Choy and Daikon just to name a few.

One of the benefits to living in Texas is the extra-long growing season. The Lone Star State actually has two growing seasons, spring and fall. The intense heat of summer compels most gardeners to take a break during the hottest months and plant their second vegetable garden in fall. Take advantage of the weather and learn how to grow a fall vegetable garden in central Texas.

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### *Butterfly Gardening Program*



Greg Marsh, SCMGA Education Chairman, introduces LGMG Polly Parmer, seated, before her Butterfly Garden Program.



The audience listens intently to Polly Parmer's Butterfly Garden program. Many people went home to begin preparing and planting their own butterfly gardens.



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

