

*Somervell County Master Gardeners*

***THE GREEN PIECE***

TEXAS A&M  
AGRI LIFE  
EXTENSION



September 2013

## New Newsletter Distribution System!



Powered By MailChimp

Welcome to the first edition of our new newsletter distribution system! In an attempt to keep up with the ever-changing technology environment, we are changing our email distribution system over to MailChimp. This will enable us to streamline the articles with our website and our Facebook page! We hope you like the new look! As always, we welcome your comments or suggestions. Let us know what you think!

# Weed Killer from Your Kitchen!

By Joan Orr, Somervell County Master Gardener

If you have large areas of weeds that you want to get rid of, this recipe is for you. It will kill any vegetation it comes in contact with. Care must be taken to spray only the weeds you want to kill, avoiding spraying lawns and flowers.

1 gallon distilled vinegar

1-cup household salt

1 tbsp dish detergent

Spray bottle

Mix all ingredients in large kettle and heat over medium heat until the salt is completely dissolved. It is not necessary to boil the solution. Set aside to cool.

Pour in spray bottle and get to work!



**\*\*Before you apply this weed-killer in your garden, here are some **guidelines**:**

– This weed-killer is non-selective, which means that it will also damage/kill your desirable plants. So be careful when applying to weeds.

– Apply on a sunny day with NO wind. The sun helps the vinegar to dry out the weed. You also want to wait for a windless day so that your spray won't inadvertently spray onto other plants.

– This weed-killer may or may not kill the root of the weed. You may need to reapply it if green growth shows up afterward or pour a little of the weed-killer over the root zone to thoroughly kill large weeds

So, next time you need to kill weeds, simply open your cupboard and make your own with vinegar, salt and soap. It's natural, effective and cheap!

## Iris – Favorite Plant of Master Gardener

*Submitted by Julie Conner, Somervell County Master Gardener*

Did you ever drive by an old homestead where only the chimney remained standing. Yet in the corner of the foundation there is a growth of Iris. Why does that Iris come up each year? The Iris is from the family of flowers that grow from a bulb and when planted in the right spot they require a minimum of care, as the Iris on the old homestead prove.



Rhizomes, corms, tubers and bulbs are a group of plants that grow their stems underground. Many of these bulbs require a low temperatures for a period of time before they send up new growth. Most of these plants prefer sunny spots because their leaves need the exposure to sunlight in order to product food which is stored in the bulb for the next season growth.

Iris can adapt to almost any soil but for best results prepare a bed for them and in a location that gets at least 6 hours of sun. Allow at least 3 inches of organic matter in the bed then place the bulb approx one inch below the surface then layer 2 inches of mulch on top and water thoroughly.

Iris bloom spring through summer depending on variety. Once the blooms have done their thing the bloom stalks can be removed. Do not trim back the leaves or blades much as the bulb still needs to produce food for the bulb. You can fertilize in the spring as new growth appears. A good rule of thumb for the bulb plants “if it blooms in the spring or summer then you will dig, divide and plant in the fall”.

There is a large variety of Iris from bearded to dwarfs and range in heights of 3 inches to 27 inches. There is a Ft Worth Iris Society which is having a sale Sept 28th at the Ft Worth Botanical Gardens. This would be a great time to investigate the possibilities of Iris in your garden.

## Fall is Just Around the Corner

*Submitted by Marilyn Cranford, Somervell County Master Gardener*

Another hot summer is almost behind us and everyone should be looking forward to cooler weather and Fall time. However, those fantastic gardens that were planted last spring are now looking downright shabby. Daylilies and hostas are starting to look tired, with yellowing foliage and spent bloom stalks.

But just because it's nearly Fall doesn't mean you have to give up on the garden and wait until spring to clean it up. In fact, this colorful season offers some of the most pleasant weather for working outdoors. It doesn't take a lot of time and money to have a beautiful fall garden, but you need to get started by cleaning up what's left over from spring before adding anything new for fall.

Cleaning up may not mean more work than a swift tug of the old plants for quick removal. But if you're more proactive and get to work while the old plants are still somewhat green, just snip tall stalks back with pruners. Cut near the base of the plant, down to the foliage, to keep plants looking tidy. With cleanup taken care of, you can see what holes need filling and go shopping.

Some suggestions for your consideration might be Hamelin fountain grass, Indian blanket, Pineapple sage (salvia), Chrysanthemum, Blue mist, Sedum, Mexican heather and other ornamental grasses. Play with color, be creative and don't be afraid to be different. Also, don't forget that fall is bulb planting and dividing time.

# Community Horticulture Education Series

Monday, September 9, 6:30 pm

Somervell County Citizens Center

209 SW Barnard, Glen Rose

Free and Open to the Public

*“Pollinators, Pests and Predators”*

Speaker Curt Decker, Natural Resource Specialist, Fossil Rim Wildlife Center



Join us on September 9, 2013 for our Community Horticulture Education Series program “Pollinators, Pests and Predators”. Curt Decker, Natural Resources Specialist at Fossil Rim Wildlife Center will examine the various arthropods we might come across in the garden and the various roles they play. By nearly any measure, the most successful animals on the planet are the arthropods . . . the REAL rulers of the Earth!

Curt will explore those commonly considered “beneficial” (pollinators and those that control “pests”) as well as some that might surprise us in how they fit into a garden's health. Discussion will involve ways we can encourage the desired ones and what we can do to discourage those we would rather not have. Each and every critter has a role to play and the more you know about the subject the better off your growing plants will be. Curt is extremely knowledgeable about all things that creep and crawl about on the ground or buzz about in the air and loves to share one of his favorite passions. You are sure to learn AND be entertained as well!

This program is FREE and open to the public! Children are certainly welcome and encouraged, too! Door prizes will be given out as well!