



Master Gardeners Lunch and Learn with the Masters begins Feb. 13

Gardeners' Dirt article by Cindy Brewer February 4, 2023

The Victoria County Master Gardener Association continues its free horticultural program, Lunch and Learn with the Masters, this month. The program begins at noon Feb. 13 and continues the second Monday of the month through July.

These hour-long talks and demonstrations provide a wealth of information on Texas gardening and are free to the public. Presenters have become knowledgeable about their topics and will provide slides and handouts. Time will be allowed for questions.

If you're new to the area, new to gardening or just love to be in the garden, these presentations are for you. Visitors from neighboring counties are also welcome to attend.

This year will make 16 years for the program. Victoria County Master Gardeners Helen Boatman, Sandy Knief and Jolene Molder arranged and hosted the first Lunch and Learn with the Masters in 2008. The COVID-19 virus closed the program halfway through the 2020 presentations. VCGMA was able to get back into operation the following year by moving Lunch and Learn presentations to its pavilion at the Victoria Educational Gardens. The pavilion provided plenty of space for distancing people from one another.

We still hear of new variants even into the fourth year since COVID-19 began. Therefore, the VCMGA has decided to continue Lunch and Learn at the pavilion, 283 Bachelor Drive, across from the Victoria Airport Control Tower.

The 2023 dates and topics of Lunch and Learn with the Masters include:

Feb. 13 - Beneficial Bugs

Marcia Kauffman and Cindy Brewer, Victoria County Master Gardeners

Not all bugs in the garden are pests. Nearly 98% of insects are either beneficial to your garden or innocent bystanders. Kauffman and Brewer will identify bugs that are beneficial to your garden and teach Integrated Pest Management.

March 13 - Improve Garden Yields with a Self-Wicking Container Garden

Dale Hartman, a friend to the Victoria County Master Gardeners

Hartman, a resident of Victoria County, will teach how we can substantially improve our garden yields while reducing the time we spend watering containers. He will explain how a self-wicking container garden works and how to make these containers.

A tomato plant growing in a self-wicking container.

Contributed Photo by Dale Hartman



April 10 - Growing Hydrangeas in Victoria County

Brenda Heinold, Victoria County Master Gardener

Acid-loving plants like hydrangeas can grow in South Texas but they need a little help from their friends. Heinold will teach us how to grow hydrangeas in low-acidic areas, making our yards showstoppers.



Hydrangeas create show-stopping curb appeal.

Contributed Photo from "Hydrangeas: Blessings or Curse?" article in Neil Sperry's Gardens, the Definitive Word in Texas Horticulture, <https://neilsperry.com>.

May 8 - Composting and Improving Soil

David Hensley, Victoria County Master Gardener

Hensley, a 2022 graduate of the Victoria County Master Gardener program, will teach how we can change garbage to compost, a rich amendment to improve soil. Composting is nature's process of recycling decomposed organic materials into fertile soil.

June 12 - What's This? Vol. 6

Matt Bochat, Victoria County AgriLife Extension Agent

This is the sixth year that Bochat will test our knowledge on identifying plants, plant diseases and pests that wreak havoc on them. Come join the fun.

July 10 -- Going Native; Where to Source Native Trees and Plants

Janet McCrea, Victoria County Master Gardener

McCrea has presented many programs about native plants and the pollinators that love them. This year, she will teach us where we can purchase trees and plants that are native to South Texas.

Master Gardener Janet McCrea hands out native plants at a recent Lunch & Learn presentation.

Contribute Photo by Cindy Brewer/ Victoria County Master Gardener



We hope that many will attend these informative sessions. Remember you're invited to bring your lunch and a drink. In addition to attending the programs, you can stroll through the Victoria Educational Gardens and see living examples of plants and trees described in the programs.

The Gardener's Dirt is written by members of the Victoria County Master Gardener Association, an educational outreach of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Victoria County. Mail your questions in care of the Advocate, P.O. Box 1518, Victoria, TX 77901; or vcmg@vicad.com, or comment on this column at VictoriaAdvocate.com.