

2023 Smart Gardening Symposium

Working with Mother Nature – Gardeners’ Dirt by Linda Lees – Victoria County Master Gardener – October 7, 2023, Victoria Educational Gardens Pavilion



Getting a Good Start on Learning

A good start would be by attending the Victoria County Master Gardener Association “2023 [Smart Gardening Symposium](#),” on Oct. 7. [Four speakers](#) will show us how to work with Nature so we may make wiser gardening decisions.

The symposium will be at Victoria Education Gardens Pavilion, 283 Bachelor Drive, across from the Regional Airport control tower. Check-in will begin at 9 a.m. and activities will conclude at 3:30 p.m.

Advance Registration Required

A registration fee of \$60 per person includes the cost of a box lunch, beverages, water, snacks, goodie bags and multiple door prizes.

Registration must be completed in advance. To obtain a form go to txmg.org/victoria/symposium-registration. Print it out and mail it along with the fee to VCMGA, Attn.: Symposium, P.O. Box 3822, Victoria, Texas, 77903. Checks and credit cards will be accepted.

Registration forms will also be available at the Victoria County Texas AgriLife Extension Office, 528 Waco Circle. Registration must be received by Sept. 23 unless the deadline is extended. There will be no refunds after Sept. 30. For more information call VCMGA Treasurer Bea Flores at 361-676-1144.



Drought Proofing With Brad Voss

The program will begin at 9:30 a.m. with Brad Voss, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Agent for Collin County. He is especially concerned with growing drought-tolerant plants following the working with nature concept. In “Drought-proofing: Working with Nature,” he will outline practices we can adopt to protect our plants when Mother Nature challenges us. He will introduce us to the “WatchMyYard” program and the Earth-Kind Selector.



Jason Alfaro and Understory Trees

Former Victoria City parks director, Jason Alfaro, of Houston, will follow at 10:45 a.m. Alfaro, a certified arborist, is now employed as a marketing manager with Tree Mann Solutions, a tree consulting firm. He will discuss “Native Understory Trees for Victoria and the Crossroads Area.” He will acquaint us with the proper placement and selection of trees. This presentation

will include native trees for smaller spaces in this vicinity. He will introduce us to the purpose of an arborist and the process of becoming certified.



Saving the Monarchs with Christine Anastas

Following the lunch break Master Gardener/Naturalist Christine Anastas of Santa Fe, Texas will elaborate on “Monarchs, Migration and Milkweed.” An active member of the Native Plant Society of Texas, she has grown native milkweed plants and has participated in a Monarch Citizen science project since 2012. She is a participant in the beta testing conducted by the University of Michigan M3 Monarch Migration Project. As a presenter for the National Wildlife Federation on monarch and milkweed topics, she has conducted Monarch Larva Monitoring Project training along with programs on monarch and milkweed conservation.



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Lauren Simpson and Pollinator Paradise

Concluding the program will be Lauren Simpson, an associate professor at University of Houston Law Center. She is an award-winning educator and the creator of the celebrated St.

Julian's Crossing Wildlife Habitat, a digital project involved with the Instagram and Facebook communities. The title comes from the name of her family's Monarch waystation. In her presentation "Creating a Pollinator Paradise at Home," she will teach us how we can aid in pollinator survival. She will hand out native plant seeds taken from her own gardens to symposium attendees.

Master Gardeners attending the event may claim six CEUs.

The event is sponsored by Victoria County Master Gardeners Association (VCMGA) and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Victoria County.

The Gardeners' 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 vcmga@vicad.com, or comment on this column at VictoriaAdvocate.com