

# Over the Garden Gate



[www.txmg.org/wichita](http://www.txmg.org/wichita)

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The months seem to pass so very quickly. It seems only a few days ago since our last meeting; however, another month has passed and time is drawing near for our March meeting on March 6. Maybe the weather will be warmer than it has been for our previous two meetings. One of the main topics of discussion will be the evaluation our participation at the Home & Garden Show. We have learned much over the years by the evaluation of our participation at the show, and I value each one of your opinions as to how we may be even more effective at the show in the future. Please make plans to attend our March meeting.

Also, as a reminder, it is not too late to register to attend the Texas State Master Gardener Conference to be held at College Station on April 4-6, 2018. There is a slate of excellent speakers that are to be at this conference, and all of us who attend should learn a great deal from some of the best teachers and speakers that the state and region has to offer. The conference also allows for the meeting of other fellow Master Gardeners from around the state as well as renewing old acquaintances from years past. If you are wondering how to obtain the required training hours (CEU's) for maintaining your Master Gardener certification, your attending the conference sessions will more than fulfill all the training hours you need to maintain your certification at this one time and setting for this calendar year. I hope you will consider attending this conference if it is at all possible.

I hope to see each one of you at our March meeting.

Sincerely,

Jeff Smith, President, Wichita County Master Gardeners



We enjoy watching the birds at our feeder. However, the squirrels crawled up the pole, despite "greasing" the pole. Our neighbors saw a squirrel take a Slinky-ride. So far, the Slinky trick has worked. Photo & comments by Becky Trammell.



## Local Events

**March 3, noon:** The Benson Iris Society will meet at Jason's Deli in Parker Square in Wichita Falls. It is a buy-your-own lunch with a program on how to show iris.

**March 6; 5:30pm:** The Wichita County Master Gardener Association meets at Rolling Meadows, 3006 McNeil, in the Media Center upstairs. We will evaluate our participation at the Home & Garden Show.

**March 15, 5:30pm:** The Burkburnett Garden Club meets at First Bank, in their Community Room. Wild Bird Rescue will bring our program.

Enter your volunteer (15) & Training (6) hours in the MG

volunteer management system <https://texas.volunteersystem.org/>

**Association Contacts:** Jeff Smith, President, 806-259-2751; Mary Rhoads, Vice-president, 940-704-5606; Michelle Howard, Secretary, 940-689-9184; Ernie Putthoff, Treasurer, 940-592-5463.

**State Directors:** Mary Barry and Grant Barry; alternates: Becky Trammell and Dennis Dohrer.

*Educational programs of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, genetic information or veteran status. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating.*

I would like to thank the H&G committee--Anne Dohrer, Janet Parker, Marilyn Putthoff, and Kaye Rickson. They put in untold hours getting ready and bringing plants, pallets, plant stands, arbors, tables, ad infinitum. And a huge thank you to all the members who helped staff the booth in addition to committee members--Dennis Dohrer, Ernie Putthoff, Arthur Bea Williams, Sandy Ledy, Peggy Scarlott, Grant and Mary Barry, Michelle Howard, Jean Payne, Barbara Man- nen and Bonnie Jones. If I've missed someone, please forgive me--my brain is mush and my feet dead after the last three days. Nothing like carting in tons of stuff in the rain and being on your feet for three days. Mary Rhoads

# H & G Show



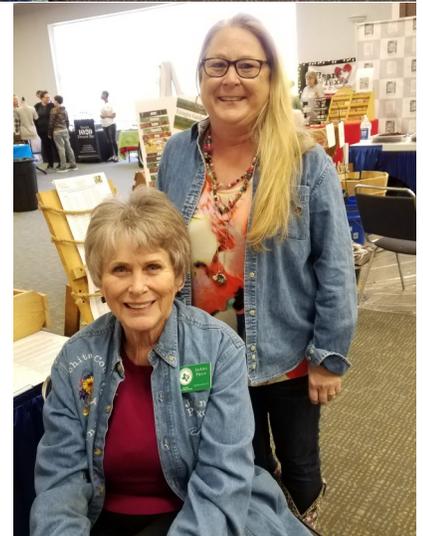


# TEXAS A&M AGRI LIFE EXTENSION



Jean Payne, Anne McKurtis, Bonnie Jones, JoAnne Plaxco, Jeff Blacklock & Jill Miller helping with the AgriLife Extension displays. Jeff must be a compost microbe!

Photos by Gail Elmore





# Plant Beauty

**Top, left:** First blooms of this year-- winter jasmine which started blooming the end of January. If I can get it watered it will bloom through the end of February into March. **Right:** Part of the winter jasmine clump I have-- Since it was a cloudy day, the color is not very bright. Photos & comments by Mary Rhoads. **Center:** This is a raised garden planter we made out of old fence panels. The bottom is reinforced by 2x4s. Made entirely from recycled wood and just the right height. Photo & comments by Jill Miller. **Bottom, left:** Sedum reappears in patio pots. **Right:** Spring !!! Photos & comments by Sandy Ledy.



# Notre Dame JMGs



**Top:** JMGs at ND adding water to the compost. **Bottom:** JMG students "stirring" their compost.

Photos & comments by Marilyn Putthoff.



## Grass Fires and Your Home

By Beth Turlington – Wichita County Master Gardener

We've already had a number of grass fires in our neck of the prairie and without some really good rains the risk for more will increase with all the dead vegetation.

Now is a great time to take a look around your house and property to see if you need to make any changes to help protect yourself. Keep up with the Fire Weather Watches and Red Flag days. Smart phones will get you news updates pretty quickly. Get to know your neighbors so you can reach each other in case of an emergency.

One big step is to move the firewood off your porch and away from the house by at least 30 feet. It's really nice to just open the door and there it is, but that turns your porch into a fireplace with the wood stacked next to your home.

Keeping leaves from piling up around the house, out of the gutters and off the roof is another precaution you can take. Sparks from a fire can travel up to ¼ of a mile. A 20 mph wind is moving at just over 3 city blocks per minute. That is a dangerous combination.

I always use my home as my "Best, Worst Example"! I live on 5 and half acres and keep a large area around the house and shed mowed down. Except for that spot by the shed that got away from me last summer. It's grown up, dead, dry grass and fuel for a fire. I will need to get out with the weed eater loaded with heavy line and get it cut down and then raked up. I won't use a mower because they heat up as use them and can catch the dead grass on fire. Keeping the grass low helps reduce what the fire can use for fuel.

There are shrubs in the back that need to be trimmed away from the roof line and rose bushes in the front that will be getting cut back as well and eventually moved out from under the eaves altogether. Fire is very opportunistic and sneaky. It will swallow up anything that it can find and will go right up shrubs like a ladder in to your house. Keep a hose by your water hookups. Mine are on the ground and hose bibs are covered for winter, but I can hook up quickly if I need to.

The idea behind Firewise landscaping is to create a defensible space around your home.

I live outside the city limits and depend on our Volunteer Fire Department, so I make every effort to protect myself, so they can work where they are most needed. I also have a "Go Plan" as well if I have to evacuate. There's a list of what to grab, pet crates and supplies, lap top, chargers and the necessities if we have to be gone.

Please remember, if you are told by Law Enforcement, or Fire Fighters to leave your house, GO! They don't need to waste time arguing with you. Hard as it may be, a house can be replaced, your life or theirs can't be.



Tarrant County Master Gardeners is providing Propagation Specialist training on March 23 & 24, 2018 in Fort Worth. This is a full two days of training, learning hands-on a variety of propagation techniques. Trainees will come away with starter plants, propagation equipment, and thumb drive with resource materials. The fee for the course is \$225.00 and includes one dinner, two lunches, and snacks.

Registration is limited to two certified Master Gardeners per county. The training will be taught by propagation experts and specialists.

The registration form, schedule, and hotel information is available on the Texas Master Gardener website: [www.txmg.org](http://www.txmg.org). Click on the Specialist Training link on the right side of the home page and then choose Specialist Training Offerings.

Deadline for registration for the course is February 26, 2018.

If you are interested in obtaining this training please let David Graf or Jeff Smith know.

#### Master Gardener Specialist Training by Beth Turlington **Reprinted From February 2017 Newsletter**

Once you have become a certified Master Gardener, you have the opportunity to attend advanced training in disciplines within Master gardening. The classes are usually 3 days, some are 5. The areas covered include Vegetable Gardening, EarthKind Landscaping, Irrigation, Rainwater Harvesting and Entomology, to name just a few.

Classes are hosted in counties around the State with MG chapters, usually at the AgriLife facility in that county. The courses are taught by AgriLife Agents and staff, Professors from A&M and industry professionals. They can be as close as Fort Worth and as far as Galveston.

You will come away with a head full of new information, as well as loads of reference materials and contacts within the Extension Service to help you along the way. Depending on the instructor, you will have either a project to complete or a specified number of volunteer hours to complete, within a year from your class. You will turn your information in to the instructor when you've completed your requirements. Certificates are presented each year at the Annual Texas Master Gardener Conference. For those who do not attend, your certificate will be mailed to your County Agent.

Once you've completed class, it is expected that you will return to your home county, and teach what you have learned, to your fellow MG's and the public. That can be accomplished in a number of ways, including, writing newspaper articles, doing presentations for local groups, working with youth in the community as well as working in our MG booth at the Home and Garden Show and the Farmers Market.

Our Association budgets monies each year that will cover the cost of the course registration fee. Depending how many people go in a given year, you will receive all or part of that fee. Travel, meals and lodging are up to you (part of your registration fee generally covers several meals during the class). Payment is made at the end of year. The Texas Master Gardener Association will also pay you \$50.00 when you meet the requirements for certification.

Training opportunities are listed on the Texas Master Gardener web page, [www.txmg.org](http://www.txmg.org), on the right hand side. They will also be in our newsletter each month.

Having gone to four of these, I can tell you, that you will meet MG's from all over the state, make some really great friends, get to know the instructors, go to new places, and have a really good time to boot!