



**Williamson County  
Master Gardeners**  
September / October 2017

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# President's Message

By Jane Bowman



Good Afternoon Gardeners,

I am enjoying this cooler weather and preparing to plant more of my fall garden. I just love going out and picking fresh spinach and romaine lettuces for salads. I am excited it is almost time to plant them. I ordered several bags of worm castings to help refresh my vegetable beds. So when I add my own compost to the beds and some coffee grounds, I think they will be in pretty good shape.

If you don't have the room to grow your own vegetables, I encourage you to go to the farmers markets in your area. The one here in Cedar Park has a big selection of vendors and assorted products for sale.

You probably have all seen our new beautiful shed purchased with the grant money. Part of the fencing is also installed and we have a rain barrel ordered to capture the rainfall off the shed. This will be used in the garden and it will also be used as a teaching tool to show our community how to hook up a rain barrel for their use. We are hoping to have this done for our next Hands on in the Garden at the end of the month.

This time of year is wonderful for putting out perennials, new trees, and wildflowers for next spring. We will be preparing our new wildflower garden area in the Demo Gardens next month. Check the calendar in VMS for all the activities.

There are several things to do for educational credit. Be sure to check the back of the newsletter for the list.

The following specialist trainings are also still available:

[Vegetables](#) – October 17-19, 2017, hosted by Bexar County in San Antonio, TX

[Plant Propagation](#) – October 30-31, 2017, hosted by Hill Country Master Gardeners in Kerrville, TX

We have several new Master Gardener students in our class as well as some new transfers from different areas. Be sure to greet new volunteers and learn their names. Please wear your badges; it makes it easier to learn and remember names. We can encourage each other to record hours. October 31<sup>st</sup> is the deadline for this year's hours to be done. November 1<sup>st</sup> starts the new calendar year for hours.

Happy Gardening and I hope to see you in the garden soon.

Jane Bowman, President

***It's Never Too Early to Save  
the Date!***



***Williamson County Master Gardener's  
Awards Dinner***

***Georgetown Country Club***

***December 7, 2017***

***Gathering and Cash Bar 6:00 P.M.***

***Dinner and Awards 7:00 P.M.***

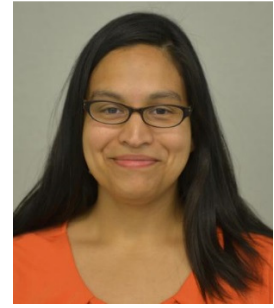
***Tickets Available At October and November  
Meetings or By Mail to: Gail Kelley before  
November 20***

***15316 Staked Plains Loop  
Austin, TX 78717***

***\$17.00/ Person (Checks Preferred)***

# Master Gardener Inspiration

By Tebaliah Martinez



*Editor's Note: Tebaliah Martinez is a Master Gardener intern working on completing her hours. This is her first article, written as inspiration for new students and current interns who wonder if they have the time to commit to Master Gardeners. I think we can all find inspiration in her story.*

What inspired me to pursue becoming a Master Gardener? Well I love children, gardening and sharing my passion for healthy eating with others. I thought becoming a Master Gardener would be the best way to learn more about growing my own fruits and vegetables and sharing that knowledge with others. I am currently working on getting my degree so I can become a teacher. I plan on promoting and being involved with the school garden programs at whatever school I am employed by.

In the spring of 2016 I decided I would apply to the Master Gardener program. Classes started that August, and a few weeks into the course I found out I was pregnant with my second child. While it was definitely a blessing, I worried about being able to get my volunteering hours done. Between working, going to school, taking care of my active 4 year old and being pregnant it would be a challenge. If you are concerned about being too busy, don't worry. If I can find the time, you can too. Trust me! Everyone in the Master Gardener program is so supportive and wants you to become certified. Find ways to complete your hours as soon as possible in case something happens. Reach out to others if you really need help.

**Key learning**--Although I have learned so much from the classes, I guess I thought I would magically become a gardening expert after attending all the classes. I was wrong. I learned that becoming a Master Gardener doesn't happen from just taking classes. It's a process, and you will learn more as you go to events, practice and volunteer. This is why we work so many hours to become certified and stay certified. Everyone has varying degrees of knowledge and different passions. Be patient! It took expert Master Gardeners years of experience to obtain the knowledge they have.

**Last words of advice**--When you're new, it can be a little overwhelming. Try to volunteer in different areas if you're not sure what your niche or passion is just yet. Interns, reach out and don't be afraid to ask for advice or help. Certified Master Gardeners, please take an intern under your wing or at least welcome all new faces you see.



## SPIDER MITES

By Wizzie Brown

It's hot. It's dry. It's time to look for spider mites! You'll need to head into the garden for this task as these pests are small and often found on the underside of leaves. Feeding can cause leaves to discolor, causing a speckled appearance. With severe infestations, leaves discolor to a silver or bronze color which may result in the leaves dropping from the plant. While mites feed on the underside of leaves, damage is more apparent on the tops.

Spider mites are arachnids, closely related to spiders and ticks, and are able to produce silk. They often cover leaves with webbing, especially in large populations. Webbing helps protect the mites and their eggs from natural enemies and harsh environmental conditions, and may sometimes protect them from pesticides.



Spider mites lay their eggs along the leaf vein during the growing season. Eggs are round and large in size when compared to adult mites. Some species of spider mites peak during warmer months of the year while others become more active in the cooler months of the year. The mites are able to develop more quickly when temperatures are warmer, with some spider mites going from egg to adult in less than 1 week. Spider mites thrive in dry conditions while their natural enemies require more humid conditions. Dry conditions allow spider mite populations to grow with little predation or parasitism that would help to keep the population at an acceptable level.

There are many predatory arthropods that feed on spider mites. Some of these include predatory mites, spider mite destroyers (a type of ladybug), minute pirate bugs, big-eyed bugs, and predatory thrips.

Proper watering of plants may help to reduce spider mite outbreaks as it can reduce stress brought on by drought. Using strong jets of water to hose plants can also help to dislodge spider mites. Miticides or acaricides can be used to manage spider mite outbreaks. Look for active ingredients such as horticultural oils (watch temperature when you use oils), insecticidal soaps, abamectin, bifenthrin, dimethoate or acephate.

For more information or help with identification, contact Wizzie Brown, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Program Specialist at 512.854.9600. Check out my blog at [www.urban-ipm.blogspot.com](http://www.urban-ipm.blogspot.com)

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# Basil Pesto

## And Ways to Use It

### By the WCMG Herbies



Basil is abundant in the garden right now. Put that basil to good use by making pesto. It's easy to whip up and tastes sensational. Prepare several batches so you have some to savor now and some to tuck away in the freezer for later. Here is a recipe for pesto and 25 amazing ways to use it. Enjoy!

#### **Pesto Recipe**

2 cups basil leaves  
1 clove garlic, peeled  
¼ cup lightly toasted nuts - pine nuts, almonds, OR walnuts  
½ cup olive oil  
½ cup parmesan cheese, finely grated  
Salt, to taste

Pulse garlic and nuts in a food processor until finely chopped. Add basil and pulse until fine. With the processor's motor running, pour in olive oil slowly until the mixture forms a paste. Stir in parmesan cheese (as long as you're not freezing this pesto) and add salt to taste. Serve immediately or see below for storage tips.

#### **Pesto Storage Tips:**

**Refrigerator:** Pesto can be refrigerated for up to one week. Portion into glass jars and tamp down to remove any air bubbles. Top each jar with a thin layer of olive oil. This will minimize exposure to air and preserve the pesto's brilliant green color. Put lids on the jars and pop them into the refrigerator.

**Freezer:** Pesto can be stored in the freezer for a couple of months. Make the pesto without the parmesan since the cheese loses texture and flavor when frozen. Portion pesto into zip top bags, removing as much air as possible before sealing. Label the bags with the contents and date. Store the bags flat in the freezer. When ready to use, thaw, and add freshly grated parmesan before serving.

#### **25 Ways to Use Pesto**

- \* **Pesto Pasta:** Dress pasta or spiralized vegetable noodles. Add halved cherry tomatoes if you like.
- \* **Pesto Butter:** Mix with softened butter. Slather on grilled corn or spread on baguette slices.
- \* **Pesto Salmon:** Spread on salmon, sprinkle with breadcrumbs, and bake in the oven.



- \* **Pesto Dip:** Combine with lemon zest, and sour cream or Greek yogurt to use as a dip for roasted, grilled, or raw vegetables.
- \* **Pesto Chicken Pizza:** Use in place of tomato pizza sauce. Top pizza with chicken, cherry tomatoes, and mozzarella.
- \* **Pesto Garnish for Soup:** Drizzle over a hot bowl of vegetable soup.
- \* **Pesto Hummus:** Add to hummus.
- \* **Pesto on Crackers with Tomatoes:** Spread on Triscuits and top with cherry tomatoes. Use yellow and red tomatoes for a pretty presentation.
- \* **Pesto Cream Cheese on Crackers:** Mix with cream cheese and spread over crackers.
- \* **Pesto Crostini:** Spread on crostini and top with a thin layer of parmesan. You can add sun-dried tomatoes too.
- \* **Pesto Tomatoes:** Drizzle over fresh cut tomatoes.
- \* **Pesto Grilled Chicken:** Brush on grilled chicken.
- \* **Pesto Cottage cheese:** Mix with cottage cheese.
- \* **Pesto Chicken Cutlets:** Drizzle over chicken cutlets and top with parmesan.
- \* **Pesto Baked Eggs:** Dab on baked eggs.
- \* **Pesto Quiche:** Fold into quiche filling with goat cheese and roasted tomatoes.
- \* **Pesto Scrambled Eggs:** Stir into scrambled eggs.
- \* **Pesto Vegetables:** Use on sautéed vegetables (like zucchini) or steamed vegetables (like potatoes and green beans).
- \* **Pesto Turkey Meatballs:** Combine with ground turkey, breadcrumbs, and egg. Bake in the oven.
- \* **Pesto Shrimp:** Toss with pan-seared or grilled shrimp and fresh lemon juice.
- \* **Pesto Vinaigrette:** Whisk together with Dijon mustard, white wine vinegar, a touch of honey and olive oil. Dress greens or tomatoes, or make pasta salad.
- \* **Pesto Sandwiches:** Spread pesto on bread slices. Layer half the bread slices with mozzarella cheese, tomato slices, deli ham, and more cheese. Top with remaining bread slices. Grill sandwiches using a Panini press until the bread is toasted and cheese is nicely melted.
- \* **Pesto Stuffed Mushrooms:** Stuff hollowed-out cremini mushroom caps with pesto, breadcrumbs and cheese. Bake in the oven.
- \* **Pesto Stuffed Portobello:** Smear pesto on a roasted or grilled Portobello mushroom cap. Top with tomatoes and cheese and pop under the broiler until the cheese is brown and bubbly.
- \* **Pesto Rice:** Toast long grain rice in butter. Add chicken broth and pesto and stir. Bring liquid to a boil, cover the pot, reduce heat to a gentle simmer and cook until the rice is tender.



# The Garden at Grace Place

By Ann Harmon

There is a new little garden in Taylor, Texas because of one inspiring Master Gardener, Grace Bulgerin. In fact, it is an award winning garden. Grace's garden was presented with the "Keep Taylor Beautiful" award in June.



Grace at 86 is as active and involved as many half her age. Grace joined Master Gardeners in 2009 and became certified in the same year. She had recently retired and was looking for something to do. She attended a master gardener meeting and decided "They were a wonderful group with such fellowship and they were improving the environment." so she signed up. Grace says she was taken aback by the required forty hours of volunteer time. In reality, she found that one hundred hours was more like it for the first four years. After she got a little older she cut that back a bit.

When Grace was working she was employed by the Health Department. In the course of her work she found many elderly farmers and their wives still living on the farm. They did not have the income or savings to move into town. Some were living in very poor conditions and some did not even have Social Security. She still remembers one person living with no running water and an outhouse. This upset Grace greatly and she set out to do something about it. That "something" turned into Grace Place Senior Subsidized Housing, an independent living community in Taylor.

Grace now serves as President of Grace Place. While there one day, she almost fell over large roots that had taken over a corner of the property. She feared someone would fall and decided to do something about it. Grace obtained a grant from an insurance company and submitted the Garden at Grace Place to Williamson County Master Gardeners as a project. With a small grant and some help from Master Gardeners, they turned that corner into a perennial garden with a thirty-eight inch wide path made for wheelchair access. This path is made from a "Technisoil" product and granite, which Grace says holds up well and can even be applied over roots. The garden is doing well and Grace very happily accepted the June "Yard of the month" from "Keep Taylor Beautiful".

Our very active Master Gardener is also very busy elsewhere. Grace sits on the board of Jonah Water Special Utility District; she is a member of the New Century Club, President of the aforementioned Grace Place and very active in her church. She has downsized recently to a small house between Walberg and Weir that was a gift to her from her parents...a part of the original family farm. There she plans to begin painting again and tends a small garden where she "does a little every day".

Thank you Grace. You are really an inspiration.

# Garden Tips

By Winola VanArtsdalen



## MG September/October Gardening Tips

### Watering/Planting:

Water trees and shrubs deeply/slowly at the dripline and beyond. Water containers until water comes out the drainage holes.

Prune back Mexican butterfly weed early fall through March, as blooms send message to butterflies, "Don't migrate!" If you have native butterfly weed, those blooms can stay.

For new and existing beds, prepare planting area now in advance by adding compost and covering with mulch. Give microorganisms time to work before that important fall planting! For new beds, add at least a third compost and any additional materials like granite sand or expanded shale to give additional drainage. For existing beds, add compost spring and/or fall, as well as when adding new plants.

You have heard, "Plant in the fall or not at all." Fall is the best time to plant all plants except tropical like lantana, Esperanza, and Pride of Barbados. You should plant now in the fall so plants can develop a strong root system to be prepared for next summer. Think about it. Where did you spend your time watering, shading, pampering plants to make it through the hot summer? Was it the native plants you put in last fall? No! This spring when you responded to the gardener's "call of spring" and put in all those little plants that are now begging for water and shade, you set yourself up for this extra water and work needed during the summer.

When shopping for plants, be aware that cultivars of native plants bred for characteristics such as less thorns or more flowers may not be as friendly for wildlife.

Clean up iris beds and divide large clumps of iris every 2 to 3 years to encourage more blooms. Use a sharpshooter shovel to divide the clumps and transplant healthiest bulbs, discarding old. Trim foliage to 6 inches.

Purchase new spring-blooming bulbs now while there is a good selection. Add generous amount of organic matter such as compost. Bulbs need good drainage, so raised beds are best. Keep new bulbs in cool, dry place for a few months and then plant when soil cools off in late November.

Plant cool-season herbs: arugula, chervil, parsley, borage, cilantro/coriander, salad burnet, dill, and winter savory.

Wildflower seeds i.e. poppies, columbines, bluebonnets, gaillardia, mealycup sage, Indian paintbrush and others should be planted mid to late fall. I use target date of October 1. Good way to broadcast is to mix one-part seed to four-parts clean sand, vermiculite or potting soil. Spread one-half one direction and then remainder in a perpendicular direction. Press seeds into ground. Keep moist 4 to 6 weeks. You plant now to establish a healthy root system before winter. If you see birds feasting on seeds, cover with bird netting temporarily, if possible.

**Turf/tools:** September 1, apply pre-emergent for annual winter weeds.

Apply one-fourth to one-half inch top dressing after temperatures lower, usually mid-September.

September 15-30. If you have large brown, circular areas appearing when the weather cools, you may have brown patch. Avoid extra water and fertilizer. Do not walk on or mow turf when wet to avoid spreading. If problems continue, contact the county help desk for recommended treatment.

Drain gas from powered equipment tanks and apply a light coat of household oil before putting tools away.

**Trees:**

Paint all wounds on oak trees susceptible to oak wilt any time, any size, immediately. There is no need to apply pruning paint to other trees.



# Gardeners Who Cook

## Escarole and White Bean Soup

By Ann Harmon



3-4 Sweet Italian Sausages, casings removed

1 cup yellow onion, diced

2 carrots diced

5 large cloves garlic diced

¼ tea. Crushed red pepper

1 tea. Fennel seeds, crushed

1 large head escarole or romaine, roughly chopped (12 cups)

8 cups chicken stock

3 cups cannellini beans (two cans) drained and rinsed

Salt and Pepper to taste

Grated parmesan for serving

In a large soup pot, sauté the Italian sausage. Crush with a potato masher as it cooks to break the sausage into small pieces. Add the yellow onion and carrot. Cook for 3-4 minutes to soften. Add the garlic, red pepper flakes and fennel. Cook, stirring occasionally for 3-4 minutes more. The sausage should be deep brown in color. Add the broth and bring to a boil. Add the escarole and simmer for 15-20 minutes.

While the soup cooks, measure out 1 cup of the Cannellini beans and mash them. Stir into the soup and cook for 3-4 more minutes. Stir in the rest of the beans and salt and black pepper to taste. (You may not need the additional seasoning as the sausage and beans will add some sodium as it cooks.) Simmer an additional few minutes to warm the beans.

Serve sprinkled with grated Parmesan cheese. Makes 6 to 8 servings

*Note: I had a difficult time finding escarole here in Williamson County. Sprouts does have it sometimes. For this batch, I substituted romaine lettuce as it is considered a bitter green. This worked well although the escarole retains a little more of the bitter flavor that is traditional.*

# Educational Opportunities in Our Area

Schedules are subject to change. Please direct all questions regarding continuing education hours to Jane Bowman.

***Landscaping Texas Style*** 3151 SE Inner Loop A, Georgetown, TX 78626  
Day-long seminar at the Williamson County Extension Office. Learn about EarthKind landscapes, irrigation, trees, turf grasses, plants, and insects. Pre-registration required. \$50 fee.  
<https://txmg.org/williamson/landscaping-texas-style/>  
Sat, Oct 14 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

***Hands on in the Garden*** 3151 SE Inner Loop A, Georgetown, TX 78626  
Meets on the last Saturday of the month at the Williamson County Extension Office.  
Sat, Sept 30 8:30 a.m.-10:30 a.m.: Fall planting

***Williamson County Master Gardener Association Monthly Meetings*** 3151 SE Inner Loop A, Georgetown, TX 78626  
Meets on the second Monday of every month (except Dec) at the Williamson County Extension Office. Open to the public. Social time starts at 6:30 p.m., presentations start at 7:00 p.m.  
Mon, Oct 9, 7:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m.: Shade Gardens with Darlene Cottier and Jane Bowman  
Mon, Nov 13, 7:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m.: Cacti and Succulents with Richard Stamper

***Travis County Extension Service***  
<http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/travis/local-extension-resources/calendar-2/>  
Sat, Nov 4, 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.: Garden Decorating 101 – Recycle, Reclaim, and Re-purpose at Zilker Botanical Garden

***The Natural Gardener*** 8648 Old Bee Caves Road, Austin, TX 78735 (512) 288-6113  
Classes are free and meet under the Revival Tent.  
<http://www.naturalgardeneraustin.com/event-calendar.html>  
Sun. Oct 1, 10:00 a.m.: Organic Veggie Gardening  
Tue. Oct 3, 10:00 a.m.: Organic Veggie Gardening  
Sat. Oct 7, 10:00 a.m.: Overthrow Monoculture, Manageable Lawn Reduction  
Tue. Oct 10, 10:00 a.m.: Organic Veggie Gardening  
Sat. Oct 14, 10:00 a.m.: The Amazing World of Sedge  
Tue. Oct 17, 10:00 a.m.: Native Grasses  
Tue. Oct 24, 10:00 a.m.: Beneficial Insects

***Hill Country Water Gardens*** 1407 N. Bell Blvd., Cedar Park, TX 78613 (512) 260-5050  
<http://www.hillcountrywatergardens.com/calendar/>

***Countryside Nursery and Landscape*** 13292 Pond Springs Rd, Austin, TX 78729  
(512) 249-0100  
<http://www.countrysideaustin.com/garden-classes-and-events/>

**Round Rock Gardens** 901 Sam Bass Rd., Round Rock, TX 78681 (512) 255-3353  
<http://roundrockgardens.com/workshops-events/>

**Georgetown Garden Club** Georgetown Parks and Recreation Community Room,  
1101 N. College, Georgetown, TX 78626  
<http://www.georgetowngardenclub.org/Pages/CalendarofEvents.aspx>

**Native Plant Society of Texas Williamson County Chapter** Meets the second Thursday of each month.  
<https://npsot.org/wp/wilco/meetings/>

**Monument Market** 500 S. Austin Avenue, Georgetown, TX 78626 (512) 240-4715  
<http://www.themonumentmarket.com/>  
Class fees apply.

**Red Barn Garden Center** 12881 Pond Springs Road Austin, TX 78729 (512) 335-8093  
<http://redbarngardencenter.net/special-events.html>

**Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center** 4801 La Crosse Avenue Austin, Texas 78739  
(512)232-0100  
<https://www.wildflower.org/>  
Class fees apply.

**Austin Community College Continuing Education Program**  
See online course catalog for details. Locations vary. Tuition and campus parking permit fees apply.  
<http://continue.austincc.edu/>

**Garden Club Meetings at Zilker Botanical Gardens** 2220 Barton Springs Rd, Austin, TX 78746  
(512) 477-8672. See the website for listings. Fees for parking and meetings may apply.  
<http://www.zilker garden.org/aagc/clubs.html>

# **Williamson County Master Gardener Association 2017 Board of Directors and Sub-Committee Chairs**

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**Keyhole Garden** – John Clifford

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**Newsletter** – Ann Harmon

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Wayne Rhoden  
Jane Bowman

## **Alternates**

Teresa Wilts  
Jeanne Barker



This issue of the *Williamson County Master Gardener Newsletter* was made possible because of the contributions of the following Williamson County Master Gardeners: Jane Bowman (President), articles by: Tebaliah7 Martinez, Wizzie Brown, The WCMG Herbies, Winola VanArtsdalen and Ann Harmon.

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If you would like to contribute to the November/December 2017 *Williamson County Master Gardener Newsletter*, please send your submission to Ann Harmon at [aharmon@sonic.net](mailto:aharmon@sonic.net) by October 20, 2017.

As you garden, volunteer and learn, please take a moment to share your stories and experiences with others.



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