



**Williamson County
Master Gardeners**

January / February 2018

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President's Message

By Teresa Wilts

January 2018

Happy New Year!

Mother Nature is starting off our New Year in Williamson County by giving us all kinds of empty space to garden in. After several days of hard freezes, there won't be much left of our vegetable gardens but there's always a positive side to every story. As one Master Gardener put it, at least we'll have fewer bugs next year. In the meantime, we have some fun events to look forward to!

The Texas State Master Gardeners Conference is April 4-6, 2018. Attendees will be able to see the on-site garden and attend classes on gardening, while celebrating 40 years of Master Gardeners Associations in Texas.

Our own Spring Plant Sale and Garden Fair is April 7th, with set up day on April 6th. This event will be held at the Georgetown Community Center. We'll need help with everything again so stay tuned for sign-ups.

If you are having trouble finding enough volunteer opportunities during the weekends or evenings, please contact me. I'm trying to keep a list of jobs that can be done during off hours.

Here's an example of one of these jobs: Before Andrea (our horticultural agent) left, she was running a class at the Heritage Community Garden in Georgetown. This was originally designed to be part of the Better Living Texas program to provide gardening and nutrition information to lower income families. The idea was to try out the curriculum on Master Gardeners and then refine it before offering the program to the gardeners at the community garden. I am looking for a certified Master Gardener to teach the classes, starting in February, until we have another agent to take over. We already have a curriculum for this program so the preparation would be somewhat minimal. If you are interested, please let me know.

Teresa Wilts
President



Green Lacewings

By Wizzie Brown



Green lacewings are considered beneficial insects and are predaceous in all larval and some adult stages. Larvae are well-known for consuming aphids and are sometimes referred to as “aphid lions”, but they feed not only on aphids, but a variety of soft-bodied insects as well as mites and insect eggs.

Eggs are laid singly or in small groupings on top of a thin stalk. Since lacewings eat insect eggs, having the eggs off the plant surface allows them to reduce cannibalism from siblings. Larvae are mottled brown and white and can grow to $\frac{1}{2}$ an inch in length. Larvae have bodies tapered on both ends with sickle-shaped mouthparts. Some larvae cover themselves with debris to camouflage themselves from predators. Lacewings spin a round, light colored, silken cocoon on the plant surface.





Adults are green and about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch in length. They have four wings of similar size and shape that contain numerous veins, cross veins, and cells. Adults can often be seen near porch lights at night. Some adults are predaceous while most feed on nectar, honeydew, and pollen.

While lacewing larvae are great when feeding on insect eggs and small insects, they can be a nuisance when they bite. While this does not happen often, it can leave a red, itchy spot on some people.

Encourage lacewing populations in your yard by providing pollen and nectar sources.

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

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Garden Tips

By Winola VanArtsdalen



January/February 2018 Gardening Tips

For healthier plants, less problems and a landscape that gives you more interest and enjoyment, begin the new year with a review of Earthkind Landscaping. <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/earthkind/>

Alkalinity in soil is a concern, especially if you live west of I-35. If you have plants with chlorotic symptoms, yellow leaves with green veins, the soil is too alkaline for them to absorb iron, which would give them a healthy green. You may choose to spread acidified cotton burr compost, keeping away from stem, or use chelated iron, but be careful to keep iron away from hardscape, as it stains. Plants native to our area are adapted to our soil and should have no problem.

Check your sprinkler system once a month, even if it is set on OFF during winter months. Water well before a freeze, but always avoid overwatering. Transplant dormant shrubs and trees now. Keep beds well-mulched.

Turf/tools:

Apply pre-emergent before February 15. Weed and feed is not recommended. The timing is wrong, and herbicides can harm bushes/trees, as well as polluting water. Clean and maintain your mower. Clean and sharpen all trimming tools to be ready for late winter/early spring trimming.

Wait to fertilize after second mowing of turf.

Trimming: If possible, avoid wounds on oak trees in the spring, currently defined as February 1 through June 30. Research has shown that both oak wilt fungal mats on infected red oaks and insects that carry oak wilt spores are most prevalent in the spring. Always paint fresh wounds on oaks, including pruning cuts and stumps, with wound dressing or latex paint immediately after pruning or live tree removal at all times of the year. For further information go to texasoakwilt.org.

Major pruning of non-flowering landscape trees and shrubs is best done while dormant. Trim vitex, crape myrtles, and other shrubs/trees that have summer bloom on this year's growth this month.

Late Winter:

In late winter, before spring growth, usually mid-February/early March, trim back roses and other herbaceous shrubs with slant cut, where stem joins another branch or at main branch. (Wait to trim spring bloomers after they bloom.) Rejuvenate older multi-stemmed shrubs/trees by removing old stems at crown. Trim to a natural shape, allowing sunlight to reach interior of bush.

Cut back above-ground growth on perennials, for example, lantana, salvias, that froze to the ground.

Divide and transplant summer and fall-blooming perennials as well as ornamental grasses. Replenish flowerbeds with compost and prepare to aerate and spread top dressing, composted organic material, on turf after spring aeration.



Gardeners Who Cook

By Teresa Wilts

Gluten Free Blueberry-Almond Coffeecake Muffins

- 1 cup chickpea flour
- 1/2 cup brown rice flour
- 1/4 cup potato starch
- 1/4 cup coconut flour
- 1 teaspoon xanthan gum
- 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 1/2 teaspoons baking soda
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 7 ounces almond paste -- Make sure it is gluten free!
- 4 ounces cream cheese -- low fat
- 2 large eggs
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon almond extract
- 1 whole lemon zest -- (zest of 1 whole lemon)
- 1 1/2 cups blueberries
- 1/4 cup light brown sugar -- packed
- 1/4 cup butter -- softened
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/2 cup almonds -- sliced

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Stir together first five ingredients. Measure 1 1/2 cups into a medium bowl, reserving the rest for later. Mix in baking powder, baking soda, and salt.

In large mixing bowl, cream almond paste and cream cheese until well combined. Add the next five ingredients and mix well.

With mixer on slow speed, blend in flour mixture until batter is just combined. Fold in blueberries gently with spatula until well incorporated.

Divide batter among 16 paper-lined muffin cups.

To make streusel topping, combine remaining 1/2 cup flour with brown sugar, butter and cinnamon until the mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Gently fold in the almond slices with your fingers. Sprinkle an even amount of the topping on each muffin.

Bake for 30 minutes on center rack or until a toothpick inserted into center of muffin comes out clean.

NOTES : Note 1. This is exactly how I made it for the garden break time in November. You could just use 2 cups of all-purpose gluten free flour or just use all-purpose flour if you don't need to eat gluten free. Omit xanthan gum.

Note 2. I haven't been able to find gluten free almond paste in Texas, so be sure to read the labels carefully. If you find a gluten free source, please let me know! Otherwise here's an easy recipe for Almond Paste:

Ingredients:

1.5 cups whole blanched almonds (I didn't bother blanching them, but if you are using this to make marzipan, you should.)

1.5 cups powdered sugar, sifted

1 large egg white, lightly beaten, at room temperature

1/2 teaspoon almond extract

Place the whole almonds and 1/2 cup of powdered sugar in a large food processor (at least 7 cups in volume) fitted with a steel blade. Process the nuts and sugar until the nuts are very finely ground, stopping periodically to scrape the sides of the bowl. Add the rest of the powdered sugar and pulse until it is completely mixed into the ground almonds. Stop the processor and add the egg white and the almond extract. Process until the paste comes together in a clump. If it seems too sticky, add a little more sugar, one spoonful at a time. Use at once or wrap tightly in plastic and store in a zip-lock bag for 3 months in refrigerator or 6 months in freezer. Bring to room temperature before using.

Makes 1 lb.

Educational Opportunities in Our Area

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

Hands on in the Garden

3151 SE Inner Loop A, Georgetown, TX 78626

Meets from 9:00-11:00 a.m. on the last Saturday of the month at Williamson County Extension Office

Williamson County Master Gardener Association Monthly Meeting

3151 SE Inner Loop A, Georgetown, TX 78626

Meets on the second Monday of every month (except December) 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.

Travis County Extension Service

<http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/travis/local-extension-resources/calendar-2/>

The Natural Gardener

8648 Old Bee Caves Road, Austin, TX 78735 512-288-6113

<https://www.naturalgardeneraustin.com/event=calendar.html> Classes are free and meet under the Revival Tent.

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 Strings Road, Austin, TX 78729 512-249-0100

<http://www.countrysideaustin.com/garden-classes-and-events/>

Round Rock Gardens

901 Sam Bass Road, 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>

“Planting Deep in the Heart of Texas” Thursday, February 1st, 1:30 p.m.

Barbara Wright of Wright’s Nursery, which specializes in Texas native and adapted plants for Central Texas, will help us learn about the right plants for the right locations. Barbara will bring plant specimens and a PowerPoint presentation to help everyone implement our GGC theme “Planting Deep in the Heart of Texas”. Learn about blooms though out the seasons for birds, butterflies, bees, and beauty. Include will be suggestions for new replacement plants for existing landscapes.

Native Plant Society of Texas, Williamson County Chapter

<https://npsot.org/we/wilco/meetings/>

Meets the second Thursday of each month. 7 to 8:30 PM at the Georgetown Public Library, 402 West 8th St, Georgetown, TX, 78626. Meetings are free and open to the public. Arrive early (6:30 p.m.) for Plant Identification “Clinic” and Seed Swap. Business meeting starts at 7 p.m. Presentations begin promptly at 7:30 p.m.

Monument Market

500 S. Austin Ave., Georgetown, TX 78626 512-240-4715

<http://www.themonumentmarket.com/>

Class Fees apply.

Red Barn Garden Center

12881 Pond Springs Road, Austin, TX 78729 512-3358093

<http://redbarngardencenter.net/special-events.html>

“Organic Vegetable and Herb Gardening”. February 3rd at 10:30 a.m.

Learn how to grow a healthy and productive vegetable garden all year long. Speaker: Chuck Sodek, TCNP

“Getting Ready for Spring! February 10th at 10:30 a.m.

Find out what you can do to get your lawn, trees, shrubs, and gardens ready for Spring. Speaker: Chuck Sodek, TCNP

The Complete Organic Program! February 24th at 10:30 a.m.

Only Organics follows Natural Law and by following you will have an outstanding healthy landscape. Speaker: Chuck Sodek, TCNP

Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

4801 La Crosse Avenue, Austin, TX 78739 512-232-0100

<https://www.wildflowers.org/> See website for listing

Class fees may apply.

Austin Community College Education Program

Locations vary.

<http://continue.astincc.edu/>

See online course catalog for details. Tuition and campus parking permit fees apply.

Garden Club Meetings at Zilker Botanical Gardens

2220 Barton Springs Road, Austin, TX 78746 512-477-8672

<http://www.zilker garden.org/aagc/clubs.html>

See website for listings. Fees for parking and meetings may apply.

Williamson County Master Gardener Association 2018 Board of Directors and Sub-Committee Chairs

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Alternates – Teresa Wilts and Jeanne Barker

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If you would like to contribute to the March/April *Williamson County Master Gardener Newsletter*, please send your submission to Ann Harmon at aharmon@sonic.net by February 25, 2017.

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



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