



**Williamson County
Master Gardeners
July / August 2017**

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President's Message

By Jane Bowman



Good Afternoon Gardeners:

Can you believe all the people who are moving into Williamson County? Every time I leave my subdivision, I see new construction in every direction. All these new residents are presenting us with opportunities to teach them about gardening here in Texas.

If you would like to teach about some area of gardening, please let Wayne and me know. We frequently have requests for various topics. You are welcome to go with any of the speakers and see how they conduct the meetings. You could take attendance and hand out a survey to the attendees. There may be a part of the topic you would like to cover instead of doing the entire presentation. Then the scheduled speaker would be there to answer any questions. Think about it. Our directive is to teach our community about gardening. It can be one on one, in small groups as well as in public meetings. I have the "Hands on in the Garden" class each month. You can help me with it if you like.

Teresa taught a class for me and really enjoyed it. Just ask her! It is exciting to help people learn who are really eager to know.

With this being well into summer, July is a good month to start planning your fall vegetable garden. It is also a good time to clean up any beds not in production and give them a good layer of mulch to help protect the soil. Another thing to do in July is to solarize any areas of weeds you would like to get rid of in your gardens.

There are also many opportunities to attend specialist trainings. As I look on the website I see:

[Junior Master Gardener](#) – August 1-4, 2017, hosted by Denton County in Corinth, TX

[Entomology](#) – September 18-21, 2017, hosted by Dallas County in Dallas, TX

[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

Don't forget to put your continuing education hours as well as volunteer hours in the VMS each month. These hours go into reports that are put into yearly reports to A & M as well as the Williamson County Commissioners Court. These hours helped us get the grant to purchase the shed and supplies for the Demonstration Gardens.

Also, we are having a couple of tables at the 2018 Spring Garden Fair and Plant Sale for you to donate a craft item to be sold with the proceeds going to the Master Gardeners. I know we as an organization of individuals have many talents.

See you in the Garden, Jane

What's New at the Demonstration Gardens?

By Radhika Baliga

Visit our Demonstration Gardens bright and early one morning to see all the new projects our Master Gardeners have been working on this season. Let me give you a preview of what you're bound to see.

Drought Tolerant Garden

Our Drought Tolerant gardeners had a busy spring installing lots of new plants. On the berm, see the rock rose, native Esperanza, creeping germander, and Texas betony. In the center of the garden, there's a goldenball lead tree with an impressive rock border. If we get some summer rain, come by and see if you can spot any golden, globe-shaped flowers on this fabulous addition to the garden. Spend some time marveling at the new stacked stone sculptures that were built during the



“Hands On in the Garden” class in May. Be sure to greet the butterflies on the Gregg's mistflower and tropical milkweed as you stroll through the gardens. They are absolutely breathtaking. Take note of the new plant identification signs. If you're inclined to mimic the look of the Drought Tolerant Garden in your own space, now you'll know exactly which plants to ask for at the nursery.



Herb Garden

Our Herb gardeners (a.k.a. Herbies) are steadily revamping the garden now that the A&M herb trial has ended. Come and experience the new offerings, which include borage that's buzzing with bees, dill that's setting seed, and Cuban oregano that's boasting fuzzy, variegated leaves. Herbies added plants like scented geraniums, bay laurel, and mints to the mix too. Notice the unique planting technique used on the mint. These mints are planted in sunken nursery pots to keep them from spreading too much (we hope).



Vegetable Garden

Our Vegetable gardeners are testing four new tomatoes this year.

- Carbon: Large, black heirloom tomato with impressive dark red flesh. It's the winner of our informal tomato tasting which was conducted during our June Ice Cream Social.
- Kellogg's Breakfast: Extremely large, orange, heirloom beefsteak tomato. It's a favorite variety amongst some of our MG's.
- Little Napoli: Hybrid Roma-type tomato that is perfect for sauce. Grows on determinate plants.
- Skyreacher: Small, round, red slicing tomatoes with gorgeous orange stripes running from the stem to blossom-ends.



Gardeners are still gathering the yield data, so stay tuned for the results. While the peak tomato season has ended, it's definitely worth a visit to identify the tomato varieties that continue to produce in the summer heat.



Check out the new gardening spaces that were added this spring. In the southwest corner of the vegetable garden there is a new container garden area. By the trial beds, you'll find brand new straw bale gardens planted with tomatoes, squash, beans, and peppers. Speaking of straw bale gardens, they were the topic of our July monthly meeting. The speaker was Vegetable Specialist, Patty Leander. The original container garden area, near the picnic benches, got a facelift this season, too. All the pots have been colorfully painted with different themes. By the time you visit, I'm hoping the new shed will be here. Our association earned a sizable grant from the city of Georgetown last fall and the funds were used to acquire this shed. Congratulations on this fine accomplishment, Master Gardeners!

Rose Garden

Our rose gardeners used their grant money to have a stacked stone border professionally installed around the rose garden. The beautiful natural stone border compliments the rose garden perfectly and should help keep some of the weeds out too.

Rose gardeners are busy investigating new roses to add to the garden so look for some fun surprises in the coming seasons.



This is just a sampling of all the new features that await you. I'll see you in the garden soon.



Lace Bugs

By Wizzie Brown

Adult lace bugs are small, about 1/8 inch, and highly sculptured on the upper surface. The thorax and front wings are expanded and have numerous transparent cells that look like lace. Nymphs, or immatures, are wingless, smaller, and often covered in dark spines. Eggs are inserted into leaf tissue and covered with dark excrement. Lace bugs are found on the underside of leaves.



Lace bug adults and nymphs have piercing-sucking mouthparts and suck juices from plant tissue. Feeding damage causes yellowing, stippling, and bleaching of the leaves, but damage usually isn't seen until late summer. The insects' dark excrement can also be unsightly both on the plant as well as surfaces underneath the plant.

While lace bugs are typically not a problem for healthy plants, when populations are especially high or last for a long period of time, it

may cause leaf drop or a reduction in plant growth. Since healthy plants usually do not die from lace bugs, try to keep plants in top health using cultural control methods (right plant/ right place, proper watering & fertilizing, etc.). Damaged foliage will not repair, so will either need to be replaced with new growth or pruned from the plant. Conserve beneficial organisms to help naturally reduce pest populations.

Any pesticide treatment that you choose will need to be targeted to the underside of the leaves. Less toxic options would include things like insecticidal soap, azadirachtin, or pyrethrins.



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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COME SAIL AWAY!

A Take on the 2017 Texas Master Gardener Cruise

By Dorothy Bentzin

Being a newbie to Texas, when I first heard about this year's Texas Master Gardener Conference cruise, I thought, WOW, how clever is that? I signed up and had a fun adventure.



Of the almost 3,000 passengers on the Carnival Valor ship, 520 were Texas Master Gardeners so we were everywhere. Also attending from Williamson County were Jane and Garry Bowman, Sharon Hedrick and her hubby and A. J. Senchack, (who contributed his notes and pictures to this article). The ship departed on April 27 from Galveston bound for Cozumel. In my room I found a packet with a schedule of events, a map of the ship, a name tag and little trinkets. My roommate was Master Gardener Marjorie Jacobs from the Houston area. Soon we were underway. Ole!

MEETINGS: There were 3 or 4 outstanding hour long meetings each day except boarding, and the day spent in Cozumel.



Justin Scheiner, *Wine and Viticulture* - I learned these interesting facts:

- America is the biggest wine consumer in the world, drinking 4.5 billion bottles annually, with France coming in second.
- Wine can be made from anything but beer requires malt, hops, yeast and water.
- Texas Native grape varieties saved the French wine industry. Texas farmer, Thomas Volnay Munson, took our virus resistant varieties to France and the grafts stopped the virus that was destroying French grapes. There is a statue of Mr. Munson in France.
- Texas wineries have grown from 46 in 2001 to 426 in 2017 now producing 3 million gallons annually. Texas is the 5th leading wine producer in the U.S.

Steve Chaney, *Nature's Cycles and Flows* - Steve shared his years of experiences with the ups and downs that nature throws at us such as too much or not enough water, triple digit or sub-zero temperatures. He presented all of this with a wonderful desire to inspire, humor and entertain us. Steve's Philosophy: "The greatest use of life is to spend it for something that will outlast it." With this attitude, he offered advice on creating lakes and tapping springs to be ready for dry spells like the one in 1974. He spoke about the importance of soil testing/soil treatment and emphasized that composting, plant selection and location are vital keys to coping with the cycles of nature.



Tim Hartmann. *A Taste of the Tropics* - Tim offered incredible information and showed amazing visuals of rare fruits that I have never seen. His passion began as a child, and now at Texas A&M he has a 12' by 36' greenhouse for his many fruit varieties. Some unusual plants that grow well in Texas are macadamia, passion fruit, pineapple, star fruit, and bananas. We were dying for samples, but there were too many of us at his presentation.

Daphne Richards, "*Central Texas Gardener*" - Daphne replaced the scheduled speaker and she shared some adventures from the TV show, *Central Texas Gardener*. She was entertaining with her stories of filming experiences, adventures on the show with her dog, and interviews with some gardeners in their own gardens. I did not know that this show is popular outside Texas and is viewed in 32 other locales.



The next day we docked in Cozumel. Master Gardeners spent the day in duty free shops, on tours and enjoying water activities, site seeing or just relaxing on the ship.

The final day of presentations:

Janet Carson, *Garden Inspirations from Travel* -- This gracious lady shared her lifetime collection of beautiful gardening memories from her travels in the U.S and around the world. Again there were many new plants that I had never seen.

Dr. William M Johnson--*Beneficials in Texas Gardens and Landscapes* - Dr. Johnson lives in the Galveston area and is widely known for his remarkable knowledge of nature's pest control agents. His talk was wildly entertaining and his pictures were close-ups of some of the ten quadrillion insects in the world - the best I have ever seen. Have you ever seen a lady bug beetle up close as she devours an aphid? It is not for the faint of heart. He stressed getting to know our insect friends and plants that discourage the 'baddies'. Our educational talks ended on this high note.

The food was great and no one went hungry. Being a friendly bunch, Master Gardeners joined each other for meals and I got to know many nice folks. There was a wealth of things to do after the educational presentations including theater shows, casino activities, and musical reviews. I especially enjoyed a very talented young guitarist in the evenings. There were also shopping, exercise, swimming and movies by the pool.

Once back in Galveston many MGs went to the Moody Garden Hotel for the awards banquet and closing ceremonies. Many awards were presented and there was one last chance to purchase plants and crafts. The Texas Master Gardener conference committee did an outstanding job organizing the events. A huge thank you goes to the Galveston Master Gardeners for graciously hosting.

Ahoy, mates! Y'all come to the Texas State Master Gardener conference next year!



When the Good Cook Gardens

Fresh Tomato Pie

By Teresa Wilts



4 whole large tomatoes -- peeled and sliced
10 whole basil leaves -- chopped
½ cup green onion -- chopped
1 9 inch pie crust
1 cup mozzarella cheese, part skim milk -- grated
1 cup cheddar cheese -- grated
1 cup mayonnaise, preferably Hellmann's
Salt and pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 350F.

Place the tomato slices in a colander in the sink in one layer. Sprinkle with salt and allow to drain for 10 minutes. Press lightly to drain well.

Layer the tomato slices, basil and onion in pie shell. Season with salt and pepper. Combine the grated cheeses and mayonnaise together. Spread mixture on top of the tomatoes and bake for 30 minutes or until lightly browned.

To serve: Cut into slices and serve warm or cold.

Why Junior Master Gardeners?

By Wendy Odlum

First let me say I am related to Teresa Wilts, whose life proves “anything worth doing is worth doing to excess” (Sorry, Teresa). My chosen outlet is the third grade at Patsy Sommer Elementary School in Round Rock ISD. It consists of ten classes of about twenty-three kids per class. Yep, the math is pretty scary. I can’t begin to tell you how rewarding it is, however.

Patsy Sommer JMG Program

This program doesn’t fit the classic definition of a JMG program. I became involved a couple of years ago when I gave the third grade class tours of the Round Rock Area Serving Center garden. It was clear that these kids were fascinated by veggies, bugs, weeds, compost. My revelation was that I like third graders, and they actually seem to like me. My concept of kids comes from owning multiple cats which turns out to be wrong. (My new concept of “borrowing” kids and then returning them to the teachers has its appeal, however.)

I worked with Vicki Caldwell, the lead teacher of the third grade, on Sommer Elementary becoming a JMG project. I have to say that the fall semester was a huge learning experience for me. Interweaving JMG and the school curriculum proved challenging but we got there. I also learned to relax around the kids, and this spring we started to have a blast together.

I learned that being there one or two times a week just wasn’t going to cut it. It just took too long to cycle all the kids through the garden, so they couldn’t build the level of enthusiasm that we needed. I think the same was true for the teachers. So for spring we scheduled three times a week, and prayed for help. That’s forty-four kids every session, and it still takes a week and a half to get them all through.

I started all the peppers and tomatoes in January to make sure the kids would have a harvest before the end of the semester. Oops, as of this date: time to start fall tomatoes. Oops update: it is now two weeks later, and the seedlings are up! Meanwhile the garden continues to produce.

This project is the community service project for the third grade, and thus must take place during school hours. Plus there was the nifty feat of making sure the lectures in the garden actually aligned with both TAKS (Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skill) and the curriculum of JMG itself. In working through the JMG stuff we got all the concepts done, albeit not necessarily in the correct order or exact content. All the food is donated to the Round Rock Area Serving Center Food Bank. Say that “three times fast”. Better yet try to type it. Total yield is going to be over eighty pounds. (and still counting).



So, briefly, we managed to cover nutrition, bugs, safety, natural selection, safety, heirloom vs. hybrid, safety, back to bugs, safety...did I say safety? Wow, the potential for forty-four kids to whack themselves in the head with a rake, or whack a neighbor in the head with the handle of a shovel is spectacular making safety so important.

Our project consisted of building four new beds. One is for bees and butterflies (ooh, can't wait for the kids next year who are afraid of bees) and another for general veggie growing. There is one bed per class and one is for the handicapped students so they can participate.

The soil we had to work with was ugly, horrible fill dirt from the school builder with imbedded rocks the size of say, Massachusetts. My four day project turned into about nine days. The last day was rainy, filled with lightning, and that cement turned into a clay slip and slide. Still we worked. As of this writing, the school year is over, and there is still some work to do. Not much, but it is there.

The kids were AMAZING. They ferried cinder blocks to the bed sites; they tried to help with the trenches and they moved mulch from way down the hill up and around the fence to the garden.



Superdad #1 (Mike Benet, you know who you are) was awesome. He pick axed the rock and trenches, he leveled bricks, hauled cinder blocks and quikcrete from Home Depot at a moment's notice. He helped pick up 3 rain barrels and at least 3 yards of mulch.

Superdad #2 (the husband of our very own Quenby Gartner) is as much of a perfectionist as #1. These beds are level folks. Between the rebar and quikcrete a bomb could go off and these beds would survive. There were any number of other parents who participated.... gotta love those muscles. Quenby even recruited a new intern for the MGs!

The bee and butterfly bed has been seeded. The seeds are already sprouting. Quenby, Vicki and I will be watering all summer.

Volunteers –*None of this would have been possible without the volunteers.* There is not adequate space here to thank everyone. Let's just say that Quenby was a volunteer *extraordinaire*. She helped me out at LEAST two days a week, mostly three, in spite of teaching pre-school in the morning. There were many others from the MGs who helped out mightily and, of course, Teresa Wilts, as if she didn't already have too much to do, parents, Pilar from the next MG training class, and many other helpers whose names I don't know.

Donors

Hill Country Water Gardens (Thanks, Nathan) for seeds, water meter and more.

Whittlesey Landscape Supplies – Donation of compost and garden soil.

Home Depot – 1431 and Parmer(ish) last minute 'bailer outer' of general stuff. Thanks, Terry.

The City of Round Rock – Thanks, Emsud, for letting us pick up more mulch than normally allowed. Thanks, Tracy, for the rain barrels and the compost/potato bins.

Williamson County Master Gardeners – for both seed and labor!

Out of state: I reached out to many seed companies for donated seeds, and most of them sent some.

Territorial Seeds – Territorial not only sent some right away, but months later I received a "surprise" box from them full of seeds. From this donation I was able to create a small package of seeds for each student to take home and try in their back yard. They were pretty excited about that. I will try to see if I can do this again next year.

Jung Seeds

Southern Exposure Seed Exchange

Botanical Interests – by way of Nathan at Hill Country

Park Seed

Willhite Seed (ok, they are in state)

Tomato Growers

Each one of these business/entities added incredible value to the project, both planned and unplanned.

And now for the rest of the story (attribution, Paul Harvey). I got to work with these fabulous kids. They yelled "Hi" every time they returned from recess. The refugees from recess, they would rather be in the garden than on the playground. The kindergarteners stood longingly at the fence, waiting for their turn in the garden, 3 years from now! A precious memento is a vase that all 230 kids signed to give to me.

Folks, that's *why* JMG. We start up again in September. We have a new project, or two. Yep...Come join in the fun.

Gardening Tips

By Winola VanArtsdalen



JULY/AUGUST 2017 Tips

Irrigation:

Check that all irrigation equipment is in good repair. Repair leaky faucets, hose connections and broken heads.

Turn off automatic sprinkler settings and irrigate based on plant stress or online tools. Use rainwater harvesting systems for supplemental water.

Low volume drip irrigation is best for garden and bedding plants.

Garden and Planting Beds:

Mulch reduces weed problems and evaporation. Mulching prevents compaction by reducing soil crusting during natural rainfall or irrigation. Mulching also reduces disease problems. Certain types of diseases live in the soil and spread when water splashes bits of infested soil on a plant's lower leaves. Mulching and careful watering reduces the spread of these diseases. Mulching also keeps fruit clean while reducing rot disease by preventing soil-fruit contact.

If you will plant new flower beds this fall, prepare the soil early with 3-4 inches compost and, if needed for additional drainage, decomposed granite and/or expanded shale. Cover with mulch now; then, at planting time, rake back mulch to plant.

Shrubs and Trees

Large trees require deep watering. Remember that watering, which is adequate for turf growing under trees, is not adequate for actively growing trees. In time of drought, save your trees, your biggest investment!

To water large trees, let water flow slowly onto an area under the dripline of the tree for several hours.

The feeding root system of a tree or shrub is located within the top 12 inches of the soil at the "dripline" of the plant. Apply water just inside and a little beyond the dripline, not at the trunk. Simply lay a slowly running hose on the ground and move it around the dripline as each area becomes saturated to a depth of 8 to 10 inches.

Use this time to look in display gardens and around the community to see what is surviving and bringing color during this scorching period. Some local favorites are lantana, zinnias, pony foot dichondra, Esperanza, Pride of Barbados, and desert willow. Admire plants with a proven stress strategy, such as American beauty berry that has wilted leaves now, but with no additional help from you needed, will open up and be beautiful as soon as fall rains come!

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 on the last Saturday of the month at the Williamson County Extension Office.

Sat July 29, 8:30a.m.-10:30a.m. Insects in the Garden with Master Naturalist Wayne Rhoden.

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; presentations start at 7p.m.

Mon, Aug 14, 7p.m.-8p.m. Ecology with Dr. Barron Rector

Mon, Sep 11 7p.m.-8p.m. Wildflowers with Barrie Cogburn

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

Sat, Aug 5 10a.m.-12p.m. Wise Rainwater Control for Central Texas at Zilker Botanical Garden

Round Rock Gardens 901 Sam Bass Rd., Round Rock, TX 78681 (512) 255-3353

<http://roundrockgardens.com/workshops-events/>

Countryside Nursery and Landscape 13292 Pond Springs Rd, Austin, Texas 78729 512-249-0100

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

Sat, July 22 10:30a.m.-11:30a.m. Bonsai Basics with Daniel

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

Classes are free and meet under the Revival Tent.

Tues, Jul 25 10a.m.-11a.m. Starting Seeds Indoors with Linda Wall

Sat, Jul 29 10a.m.-11a.m. Caring for Houseplants with Heather Kendall

Tuesday, Aug 1 10a.m.-11a.m. Organic Vegetable Gardening with Linda Wall

Tuesday, Aug 8 10a.m.-11a.m. Watering Equipment with Linda and Neil

Saturday, Aug 12 10a.m.-11a.m. Native Woodland Design with Colleen Dieter

Tuesday, Aug 15 10a.m. - 11a.m. Organic Vegetable Gardening with Linda Wall

Saturday, Aug 19 10a.m. - 11a.m.: Make your Veggie Dreams Come True with Randy Jewester

Tuesday, Aug 22 10a.m - 11a.m. Double Digging with Tom Grzinich

Tuesday, Aug 29 10a.m. - 11a.m. Organic Weed Control with Linda Wall

Hill Country Water Gardens 1407 N. Bell Blvd., Cedar Park, TX 78613 512-260-5050

<http://www.hillcountrywatergardens.com/calendar/>

Georgetown Garden Club, Georgetown Parks and Recreation Community Room, 1101 N. College, Georgetown, Texas 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/>

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

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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: Radhika Baliga, Dorothy Bentzin, Wizzie Brown, Wendy Odlum, Winola VanArtsdahlen, and Teresa Wilts.

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If you would like to contribute to the September/October 2017 *Williamson County Master Gardener Newsletter*, please send your submission to Ann Harmon at aharmon@sonic.net by August 20, 2017.

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



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