

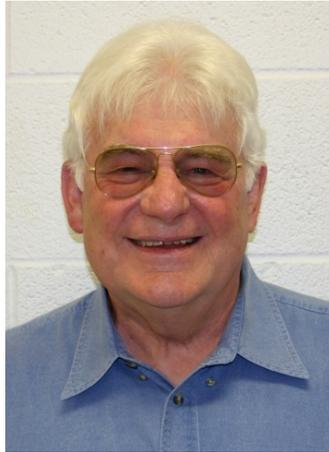


***Williamson County
Master Gardener Newsletter***
May 2014

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President's Message by Wayne Rhoden



After some really cool spring days, it appears that we have arrived to our summer temperatures. Many of my perennial plants are slow to come out this year. Seems that just as they come out, another late cold front breezes in and changes their attitude about putting on new growth. Finally, in the last few weeks, things are looking better. This is one of my favorite times of the year, when the plants put on their bright green foliage and start to bloom. I hope your garden is awakening also.

Our plant sale went well, considering it was cold and damp with no sun. Thankfully the rain held off until after the sale. Although we returned more plants this year than last year our sales were up from last time. Many visitors came to the demonstration gardens to see the spring vegetables and to visit with the volunteers who were there to answer their questions. The garden crew was busy sprucing up the gardens during many of the days leading up to the sale and faced some challenges to keep the gardens from being blown away! We were disappointed with the turnout for the informational education classes but the presenters were very good. Thanks to all of the volunteers who make this a successful fund raiser.

Please remember that we will have another information session to let potential new master gardeners take advantage of our classes this fall. The session will be on Saturday, May 17, from 9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. Potential students must come to the information sessions to get an application to attend the class. If you have someone who you think would be a good volunteer, encourage them to come to the session.

We also have been having garden work days each month to work on the projects in the demonstration gardens. We had good turnouts for the two we have had. We served the volunteers hamburgers! Be on the lookout for the one in May. We need help to get the drought tolerant garden ready to be planted. I hope to see you there.

Time for the Garden: Without the Mosquitoes!

David Maserang, PhD



As I write this, I see the bluebonnets in my yard have returned, and the bluebirds are making their nest in my birdhouse. It is time to get out and enjoy the mild Texas spring, and turn the earth over, replace plants, and begin again to enjoy our gardens.



We want to take precautions, though. For those of us in Central Texas, it's also the time we want to avoid the hazards we sometimes encounter. We all know about rattlesnakes and fire ants and some of the stinging or biting reptiles, insects or plants that we encounter. What we may not appreciate is the increase in the number of West Nile Virus (WNV) cases since its introduction to the east coast of the United States in 1999. Working its way westward in waves, only 2,274 cases were reported for Texas during the 10-year period of 2002-2011, with 143 deaths attributed to WNV (Nolan et al).

Then, in one single year, 2012, WNV became dramatically more important to our state. In 2012, 1,868 Texas cases were reported, resulting in 89 deaths. (<http://www.cdc.gov/westnile/> accessed 3/21/2014). Fifty-five percent of these cases were West Nile Neuroinvasive Disease, meaning the person who was

infected suffered from a brain infection or paralysis.

What is West Nile Virus? West Nile Virus is a virus that is most commonly transmitted by feeding mosquitoes. It most often does not result in disease, but in cases where it does, it can cause fever, muscle aches, joint aches, and headaches. In severe cases, the disease may cause brain inflammation and paralysis. In rare cases it may even be fatal.

Why is this important for Master Gardeners? Master Gardeners typically spend a great deal of time outdoors, and a significant number of those who contract WNV are in our age group. In 2002–2011, half those infected were 54 years or older. People older than 65 are 25 times more likely to be infected than children 5–15 years old, and much more likely to develop neuroinvasive disease. In one study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 82% of the WNV deaths during 1999–2008 were in patients older than 70.

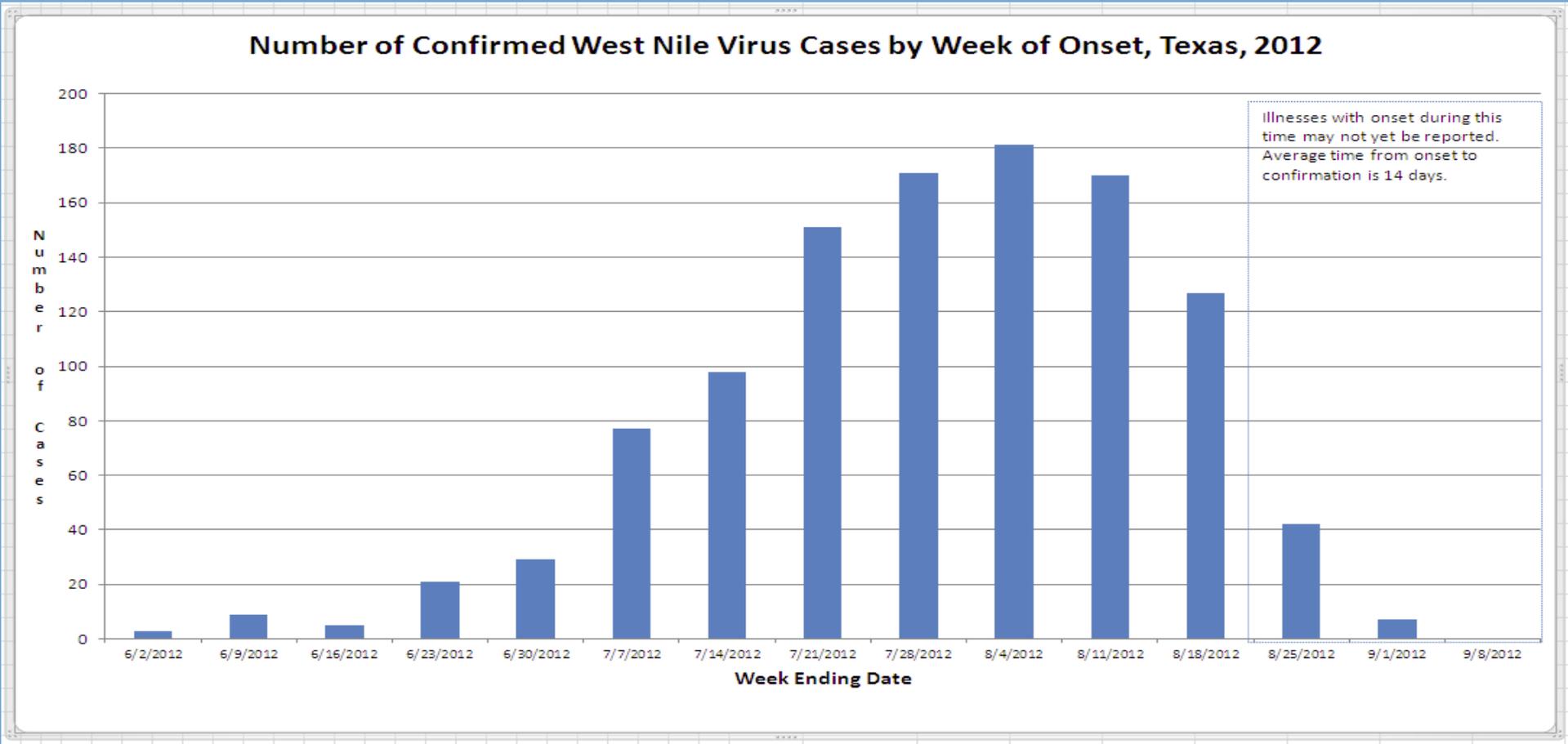
Complicating the above picture, we have been in a drought for at least three years, and many gardeners have wisely been focusing on water containment. This situation brings us more directly into contact with mosquitoes, the vectors of this disease, because they concentrate in areas where stagnant water is available for breeding – in our backyards.



Mosquito Larvae in a Swimming Pool

How do humans acquire the disease? Humans acquire the disease from a mosquito. The virus is carried across the United States primarily by migratory birds. Mosquitoes seeking a blood meal feed on the birds, acquire the virus, and then feed on mammals, such as humans or horses.

When am I most likely to be infected? Since the incubation period is one to two weeks, the time of greatest concern for central Texans is July and August (see graph).



How can I protect myself from WNV? There are some very easy steps you can take to protect yourself, called the 4 D's of public health. They are:

- **DEET**
Use recommended insect repellants whenever you are outdoors. Those with DEET are among the least expensive and most common and effective, but newer products with oil of lemon eucalyptus are also effective. Spray yourself often, including your clothing. Apply sunscreen first, then spray repellent over it.
- **DRESS**
Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants during the nighttime hours.
- **DAWN AND DUSK**
Dawn and dusk are when most mosquitoes feed. Avoid being outdoors if possible during this time. Repair screens on windows.
- **DRAIN**
Eliminate or treat mosquito-breeding areas around your home. Those include all stagnant water sources, such as buckets, birdbaths and tires. Water collection barrels should be screened to keep mosquitoes out. Stagnant ponds, such as koi ponds, and abandoned neighborhood swimming pools should be treated with a preparation of *Bacillus thuringiensis subspecies israelensis* (BT) in the form of cakes (Mosquito Dunk® or Mosquito Bits®) at least monthly.

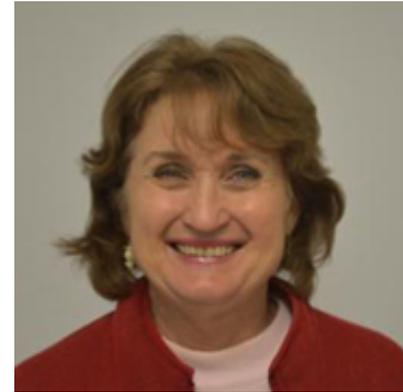
West Nile Virus need not be a major concern if we prepare and take adequate precautions to protect ourselves, our loved ones, and our neighbors. Let's remember the 4 D's and enjoy the growing season and protect ourselves!

For current information about West Nile Virus:

- In Williamson County (other than Round Rock):
http://www.wcchd.org/services/disease_mgmt/west_nile_virus_information.php.
- In Texas: <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/idcu/disease/arboviral/westNile/>

Applied Nutrition Using Vegetables

By Valerie Clark



Visualize Whirled Peas (Visualize World Peace!), or maybe squash, pinto beans and tomatoes!

How can you help? Take a lesson from Arlene David! She demonstrated that recently while teaching a class on nutrition and vegetable gardening to 30 residents at the T. Don Hutto Center. Her opening statement was “One out of three children in Central America is malnourished” definitely got the attention of the residents.

Residents listened intently as she gave the percentages for malnutrition in children of each country. (See chart below.) One person asked if malnutrition could affect growth. Arlene said that not only can it stunt growth but that “Malnutrition during the first 36 months of a child’s life is a sentence to live the rest of his/her life physically and intellectually challenged.”

The problem had been clearly stated. Now came the solution. “As Gardeners, we can use certain vegetables to provide essential nutrients to help stop the problem.” She then described which vegetables can prevent a deficiency of folate, potassium, vitamin A, vitamin C and iron.

Several weeks before, the class had started some vegetable seeds in pots made out of newspaper. After learning this valuable lesson from Arlene, these healthy vegetable seedlings were then taken outside and planted by the residents.

Now more of us can visualize the right vegetables, even peas!

Children with Chronic Undernutrition in Central American Countries

Country	Under 5 years of age	Chronic undernutrition percentage in each country	
Belize	36,763	22.0%	8,088
Costa Rica	369,719	5.6%	20,704
El Salvador	614,648	19.2%	118,012
Guatemala	2,262,514	54.5%	1,233,070
Honduras	1,082,143	30.1%	325,725
Nicaragua	675,000	21.7%	146,475
Panama	323,791	19.7%	63,787
Dominican Republic	1,046,829	25.0%	261,707
Total	6,411,407		2,177,569



Carpenter Ants

by Wizzie Brown

Carpenter ants nest outdoors in dead wood (tree stumps or dead limbs, fences, firewood, etc.). They can also be found in wood siding, beams, joists, fascia boards or trim on structures. Damage is usually limited since carpenter ants tunnel and nest within wood; they do not eat wood. However, wood can become weakened by carpenter ant excavation.

Carpenter ants are large ants that can vary in color from all black to reddish to yellowish or a combination of colors. These ants have one node, no stinger and a circle of hairs at the tip of their abdomen.



Galleries in the nest are excavated following the grain of the wood and have clean, smooth walls. Nest locations may be discovered by searching for piles of sawdust-looking material under exit holes. Sawdust is coarse and may also contain soil or sand, uneaten insects as well as dead ants from the colony.

Carpenter ants have mating flights, or swarms, to begin new colonies. After mating, males die while females find a suitable nesting site. Females then lay 15-20 eggs which develop into worker ants in about two months. The queen cares for the first batch of brood and feeds them secretions from her body. Once brood has emerged as adult workers, they take over care of the colony and expand the nest as well as providing food for the queen and caring for new brood.

Carpenter ants are able to enter homes from tree branches or utility lines touching the home, through cracks and crevices around windows and doors, cracks in foundation walls, ventilation openings or heating and air conditioning ducts.

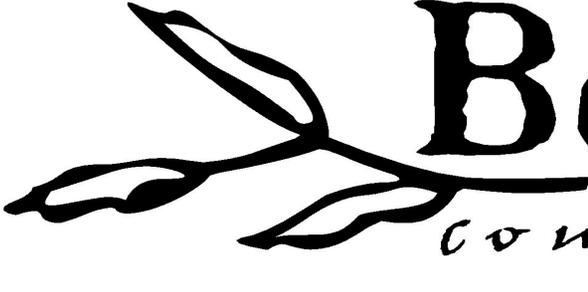
Here are some tips for a carpenter ant infestation:

- Remove dead trees and/ or limbs and remove tree stumps from the landscape. Many times you can remove the (possible) nesting sites and get rid of the ants without using pesticides.
- Prune trees and shrubs that touch the home. Carpenter ants will often use these areas as a bridge to enter the home.
- Replace wood that is water damaged. Carpenter ants are drawn to moisture damaged wood, so make sure to repair any water leaks and replace damaged wood.
- Remove wood debris and firewood that is near the home. Carpenter ants may nest in firewood and when it is stacked right next to the home, it allows the ants to enter more easily.

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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Extension programs serve people of all ages regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, genetic information or veteran status.



Berry Springs

county park and preserve

Berry Springs Gets Cleaned up for the Season

by Susan Blackledge



We have all experienced what seems to be an unending winter. However on Saturday, March 1, the weather cooperated to make for a wonderful day of sprucing up the flower beds and young trees at Berry Springs Park and Preserve. Thirty-six volunteers showed up to show off their pruning skills. The biannual event is always a great day of learning, socializing and getting some serious work done. For all the good deeds that were accomplished, everyone enjoyed a pot luck lunch, which showed off folks' culinary skills as well.

Without the help from volunteers that is received during the spring and the fall clean ups, the park would not be as colorful as it is. We look forward to the wildflowers and the gorgeous beds to brighten everyone's day when they visit this spring.

A sincere thank you to all who participated.

If interested in volunteering for other ongoing projects email Susan Blackledge at susieblackledge@gmail.com or call [512-930-0040](tel:512-930-0040).









WONDERING WHAT TO GIVE MOM FOR MOTHER'S DAY?
HOW ABOUT A LOVELY VEGGIE BOUQUET FROM YOUR
GARDEN? THIS IS WHAT SUZIE BRADY RECEIVED FROM
HER HUSBAND ON VALENTINES DAY!



Monthly Gardening Tips

May 2014 by Winola Van Artsdalen



- ~ Best prescription for health in your landscape is a soil test with needed amendments added, planting the right plant in right place, and avoiding overwatering. Diverse, abundant native habitat will bring more beneficial insects and fewer pest insects.
- ~ It is late to be planting flowers now, so do keep new plants close to the house and/or a water supply to hand water. If you have a rain barrel, that's the ideal spot!
- ~ Check your irrigation system monthly, especially now with summer approaching, to be sure all is working properly. Look to see if there are places you could change to drip irrigation for the health of your plants and saving water.
- ~ For healthy turf, keep blades sharp, never mow more than 1/3 the height, and minimize fertilizer.
- ~ Bermuda was fertilized earlier. Buffalo and zoysia can be fertilized late April to early May. If you spread top dressing, skip this fertilization, or it will be too much nitrogen.



*Congratulations to our newly certified Master Gardeners:
Dana Blair, Gail Kelley and David Maserang!*

2014 Board Positions

President – Wayne Rhoden

Vice President – Cat McGrath-Farmer

Secretary – Annie Bowersox

Treasurer – Sandra Lawrence

Past President – Jeanne Barker

Programs – Alicia Johnson

JMG – Jane Bowman

Landscape – Chuck McKelley, Janet White

Rose Garden – JoAnne Dieterich

Drought Tolerant Garden – Janet White,
Sandra Lawrence

Water Conservation – Carol Parsonage

Vegetable Gardens – George Prall

Projects – Steve Echols

Awards – Claire Hall

Training – John Papich

Communications – Catherine Nickle

Publicity – Betty Jo Phillips

Help desk – Martha Baddour

Speaker's bureau – Open

Online Presence – Diana Kowalska-Somerville

Newsletter – Jinna MacLaurin

TMGA Directors

1. Wayne Rhoden
2. Cat McGrath-Farmer

Alternates

1. Jeanne Barker
2. Claire Hall

SAVE THE DATE

Williamson County Master Gardener Meetings

Monthly meetings are held at the Williamson County Extension Office, 3151 SE Innerloop Road, Suite A, Georgetown, Texas.

May 12th, 2014, 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm:

6:30 p.m.: Social Time

7:00 p.m.: *Koi or Goldfish for the Small Garden* Michael "Mo" Todd of Pure Aquaponics. Mo is a gardener who does not harvest the fish but just uses the fish fertilizer for his plants. He will have a small system to demonstrate for use on patios or backyards. One hour educational credit.

June 9th, 2014, 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm:

6:30 p.m.: Social Time

7:00 p.m.: *Heirloom Plants* with Judy Barrett of Homegrown magazine. Judy will talk to us about heirloom plants that our grandmothers might have grown. One hour educational credit.

Educational Opportunities for Master Gardeners

Travis County Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and Master Gardener Classes

Seminars held at Zilker Botanical Garden are free; Zilker park entrance fee is \$2 per adult, \$1 per child or senior. For more information, call (512) 477-8672.

You must register for seminars held at Travis County Extension Office <https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/TravisCounty> or by phone 979-845-2604. \$10 fee, \$15 at site. Class size is limited.

Alternate Methods of Gardening

Thursday, June 5, 2014, 10:00 a.m. - noon, Travis County East Service Center Classroom at 6011 Blue Bluff Road, Austin, Texas.

Master Gardener Pat Mokry will teach you how to raise carefree veggies, herbs and flowers using self-sufficient grow boxes. Then, for some more 'new' ideas, Master Gardener Marian Stassney will describe the ancient practices of both keyhole gardening and hugelkultur, to expand your repertoire of gardening techniques. Register at <https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/TravisCounty> or by phone 979-845-2604. \$10 fee, \$15 at site.

Grafting Vegetable Crops - Principles and Practices

Thursday, June 19, 2014, 9:00 a.m. - noon, Travis County East Service Center Classroom at 6011 Blue Bluff Road, Austin, Texas.

Daphne Richards and AgriLife Extension specialists in College Station will be joining class via web video to present this program. Register at <https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/TravisCounty> or by phone 979-845-2604. \$10 fee, \$15 at site.

Composting for the Home Garden

Saturday, June 21, 2014, 10:00 a.m. - noon, Zilker Botanical Garden, 2220 Barton Springs Road, Austin, Texas
Pat Mokry, Master Gardener and compost specialist, will teach the methods of constructing different composting systems to turn kitchen 'trash' into garden treasure. You'll be both informed and entertained by Pat's presentation on how to use this valuable soil amendment to increase your garden's fertility and productivity.

Raising and Managing Bees

Saturday, July 19, 2014, 10:00 a.m. - noon, Zilker Botanical Garden, 2220 Barton Springs Road, Austin, Texas
Chris Doggett, of Williamson County Beekeepers Association, will share his knowledge and expertise in raising and managing bees. Learn how to provide a healthy and attractive environment for bees, whether you have a backyard hive, or acres of crops needing pollination.

Insect Visitors in Your Garden

Saturday, August 16, 2014, 10:00 a.m. - noon, Zilker Botanical Garden, 2220 Barton Springs Road, Austin, Texas
Update your understanding of good bugs and bad, with Master Gardeners Pat Mokry and Sheryl Williams. Pat, an entomology specialist, will describe the common insect visitors to your garden, and help you determine if and how you should treat for them. Following identification of beneficial insects, Sheryl will then share a fascinating project she has constructed to attract insects into her garden for observation, pollination and just plain fun. Don't miss these two lively, informative ladies!

Monument Cafe Market Gardening Classes

500 S Austin Ave, Georgetown, Texas 78626, 512-240-4715

May in the Garden

Saturday May 3, 2014, 10:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

Michelle Akindiya. Michelle will go over the garden "to-do list" for the month.

Square Foot Gardening

Saturday May 10, 2014, 10:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

Hank Belopavlovich speaks about square foot gardening.

Basic Garden Irrigation

Saturday May 15, 2014, 10:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.,

Michelle Akindiya describes how to install basic drip irrigation systems.

All about Weeds

Saturday May 24, 2014, 10:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.,

Michelle Akindiya teaches identifications of common weeds and organic techniques for keeping them under control.

Backyard Composting

Saturday May 31, 2014, 10:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.,

Michelle Akindiya shows how to turn your food and yard waste into black gold for your garden!

Natural Gardener Gardening Classes

8648 Old Bee Caves Rd, Austin, Texas 78735, 512-288-6113. Classes are subject to change so please call first to confirm. Classes are held outdoors under an open air canopy – be sure to dress for the weather. Arrive early for best seating. You are welcome to bring your own chair. Classes last about an hour.

Native Wildflowers, Lawns & Grasses

Saturday, May 17, 2014, 9:00 a.m.

George Cates of Native American Seed Company (seedsources.com) will tell us just how to prepare, plant, and maintain wildflowers & grasses in order to have the most success.

Dee Nash, author of The 20/30 Something Garden Guide, talk and booksigning

Saturday, May 24, 2014, 9:00 a.m.

The Benefits of Getting Life into Your Soil

Saturday, May 31, 2014, 9:00 a.m.

Betsy Ross and JR Builta of Sustainable Growth Texas (sustainablegrowthtexas.com) will discuss the benefits of microbes and other life in our soil.

Want Hummingbirds? Think Lasagna!

Saturday, June 7, 2014, 9:00 a.m.

Mark Klym, coordinator of Texas Wildscapes & Texas Hummingbird Roundup programs of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, will talk about attracting hummingbirds to your yard.

Composting

Saturday, June 14, 2014, 9:00 a.m.

Forrest Arnold, will will teach us how composting happens, how to get started, various bin styles, and how to compost correctly to produce your own rich, fertile, garden soil amendment.

Native Landscape Mainenance 101

Saturday, June 21, 2014, 9:00 a.m.

Colleen Dieter of Red Wheelbarrow (redwheelbarrowplants.com) will show us what we need to do to keep our great Texas native landscapes looking their best.

Online classes

The state Texas Master Gardener Association allows only three online educational hours per year. They offer 12 different free online EarthKind Modules from which to choose. The link for these classes is here: <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/earthkind/training/>

WCMGA also has approved the webinars from the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center to the approved list. There is a small fee associated with their webinars.

A total of three online educational hours per year is allowed whether they are all through A&M or a combination of EarthKind and Wildflower.

Events of Interest to Master Gardeners

Inside Austin Tour, Gardens Eclectic ATX

Saturday, May 3, 2014, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., Austin TX

See <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/travis/master-gardeners/inside-austin-gardens-tour/> for more information.

Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center Gardens on Tour

Saturday, May 10, 2014, 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Austin TX

See <http://www.wildflower.org/gardentour/>.

Austin Daylily Society Show

Saturday, May 24, 2014, 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m., Zilker Botanical Garden, Austin, TX

See <http://www.austindaylily.org/>.

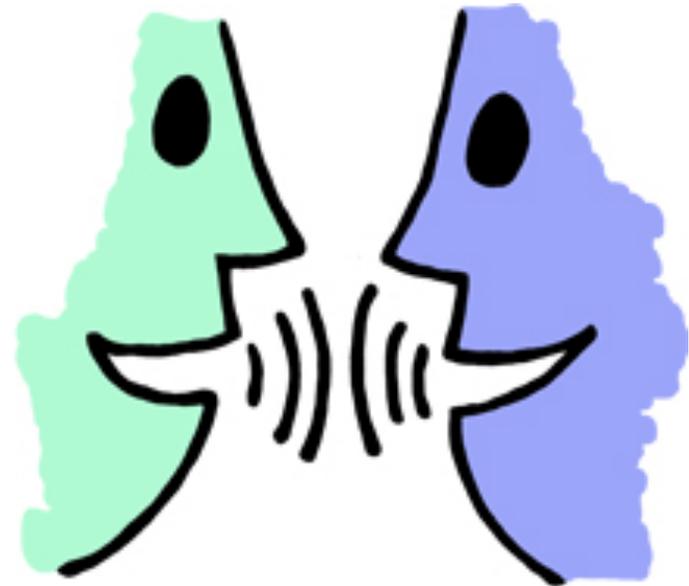
The Garden Club of Austin Show and Sale

Saturday, June 7, 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. and Sunday, June 8, 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., Zilker Botanical Garden, Austin, TX

See www.thegardenclubofaustin.org.

Tell Your Gardener Friends about the 2014 Master Gardener Class

- Master Gardener Class 2014 Information Session 2, May 17 from 8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. presence is required to participate in 2014 class.
- Students must be residents of Williamson County to be in the class.
- Classes begin on Tuesday, August 6th and continue through Tuesday, November 12th at the Williamson County Extension Office.
- Class meets every Tuesday from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m.
- Class size is limited to 35 students.
- All instructors are experts in their field.
- Cost is \$220.00.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, February 14, 2014

Contact: Fred M. Hall, Williamson County CEA, Ph: 512.943.3300;

email: fmhall@ag.tamu.edu

Interested In Becoming A Master Gardener?

The Texas Master Gardeners are part of the national volunteer program designed to help AgriLife Extension volunteers bring research based horticulture information to citizens in Williamson County. If you have an interest in helping your friends and neighbors with lawn, tree and flower questions– or garden and landscape questions in general, the Master Gardener volunteer program may be for you.

If accepted into the class, industry professionals, AgriLife Extension specialists and Texas A&M researchers will teach you about the culture and maintenance of many types of plants and you will participate in practical and intense training to improve your gardening knowledge. The 50 plus hours of classroom instruction is just the first step; you will also be required to have 15 hours of advanced training and share your knowledge with 50 hours of volunteer service in your intern year before earning your Master Gardener certification.

Detailed information and applications will be available at two informational meetings at the Williamson County Extension campus training room located at 3151 SE Inner Loop in Georgetown. Attendance at one of these meetings is mandatory prior to applying for the training. The meeting dates are: Saturday, March 8th from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. and Saturday, May 17th from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.

This year's class will begin on Tuesday, August 5th and conclude on Tuesday, November 11th. The class meets every Tuesday from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. and is limited to 35 students.

Students must be residents of Williamson County to be accepted into the class. The registration fee is \$220.

For more information visit the Williamson County Master Gardener website at <http://txmg.org/williamson/how-can-i-become-a-master-gardener/>, email your inquiry to wcmgtraining@gmail.com or contact the Texas AgriLife Extension Service office in Williamson County at 512-943-3300.

This issue of the *Williamson County Master Gardener Newsletter* was made possible because of the contributions of the following Williamson County Master Gardeners: Wayne Rhoden (president), Jinna MacLaurin (editor), Catherine Nickle (proofreader), David Maserang, Valerie Clark, Wizzie Brown, Susan Blackledge, and Winola VanArtsdalen. Cover photo of Red Poppies by Janet White.

If you would like to contribute to the June 2014 *Williamson County Master Gardener Newsletter*, please send your submissions to Jinna MacLaurin at austindadamama@gmail.com by May 16th, 2014. As you garden, volunteer and learn, please take a moment to share your experiences with other gardeners. Thank you!



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