

Williamson County Master Gardeners  
May/June 2016 Newsletter

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# President's Message

By Jane Bowman



Greetings Fellow Gardeners,

I want to give a sincere “Thank You” to everyone who helped prepare the Demonstration Gardens for the May 3<sup>rd</sup> visit by KLRU-TV's Central Texas Gardener. The entire garden looked fantastic! The buffer plants in the Herb Trial Bed were blooming and the study herbs were enjoying the sunshine. The Drought Tolerant Garden was bursting with diverse plants, stacked stone sculptures and a stepping stone path. The Rose Garden was purely gorgeous with rose fragrance floating through the air. (Be careful sniffing, because of the bees!) The Vegetable Garden was in transition to the warmer vegetables. When we took the covers off the tomatoes, there were two ripe ones and several large green tomatoes. The onions, garlic and leeks were ready to harvest. Can't you just taste French onion soup and potato leek soup?

I appreciate all the hours you give as volunteers to our association. Several of us have been busy writing up a grant proposal. As we counted all the volunteer hours and put them on paper for the grant, it brought to light how much we accomplish as Master Gardener volunteers. WCMGs are making a difference in our county!

When reporting your hours on the VMS, be sure to record your contacts before saving your hours. If you are sharing garden ideas and suggestions with a friend, neighbor or someone at the market, you can enter it as a contact. This also holds true if you are telling them about Master Gardeners. If you are the chairperson of a project, please report the contacts under the event when you report your volunteer time.

All WCMG activities provide learning opportunities for personal growth. Garry has commented to me, more than once, how much he is learning about gardening by answering Help Desk questions. If you are interested in learning and answering questions, please contact him. There are several new ways to use your gardening knowledge.

A new Wildflower Garden is currently being designed and will be put into reality this fall. The plan will follow the Monarch Waystation guidelines and will also emphasize pollinators in the garden. Ann Harmon and Joann Beneath will co-chair this project. If you would like to be a part of this new garden, please send them an email. I am really looking forward to enjoying this garden.

A monthly training, Hands On In the Garden, is also being planned. One Saturday a month, for two to three hours, WCMGs will give our community the opportunity to learn about different aspects of gardening. Each of the Demonstration Gardens will choose a Saturday to share their expertise with the participants from the community. We plan to start this in August. More details will be forthcoming. If you would like to help with this new endeavor, please email me.

Other new things have happened since my last letter to you. We welcome Betty Jo Phillips as our new Landscape Chairperson. Please contact her with any ideas or concerns you have about the gardens. A Pinterest account is being set up for our Master Gardener Assoc. Master Gardener business cards and membership cards will be available at our next monthly meeting.

Now is the time to think about next year's conference, April 27<sup>th</sup>- May 1<sup>st</sup> on the Carnival Liberty Cruise to Cozumel. You can hold your spot now. See the Texas Master Gardener Newsletter for more details. These conferences are fantastic opportunities to obtain quality education hours.

In my garden, I have started to pick blackberries. I have a pair of cardinals who like to "pick" them too. I am trying to share, but I plan on getting more of them than they do! I also picked 10 heads of cabbage. Eight of them are already made into sauerkraut. I saw a recipe for sausage kraut balls. If you have ever tried them and have a good recipe, please share it with me. I am also harvesting a lot of beets. Do you have some good beet recipes? I came up with a new recipe for gluten free dark chocolate, peanut butter oatmeal cookies. I will bring them to our next monthly meeting.

Happy Gardening,  
Jane Bowman  
WCMG President

# Gardeners Who Cook

**Theresa Robinson**

**Using Your Herbs**



## LAVENDER MADE LINES

$\frac{3}{4}$  cup sugar  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  cup melted butter  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. vanilla  
1-2 T. dried lavender flowers (to taste)  
2 eggs  
1 cup flour

Mix together, sugar, butter and vanilla, beat in eggs and lavender flowers. Stir in flour and spoon batter into greased Madeline pan. Bake at 400 degrees for 10 minutes. Sprinkle with powdered sugar.

## BUTTER COOKIES WITH MINT

2 sticks butter  
1 cup sugar  
2 T. chopped fresh mint  
1 tsp. vanilla  
2 cups flour  
2 tsp. Baking Powder

Cream together butter and sugar. Stir in vanilla. Sift together flour and baking powder. Stir into butter mixture. Finely chop mint and add to batter. Drop batter by rounded tablespoons on cookie sheet. Bake at 350 for 15-20 minutes.

# Gardeners Who Cook

## Carole Buckner's Carrot Soup



6 carrots, diced  
1 ½ onions, sliced thin  
1 T olive oil  
2 tsp. honey  
1 tsp. dried thyme  
1/8 tsp. allspice  
4 c. broth (chicken or vegetable)  
1/8 c. lemon juice  
1/8 tsp. orange juice  
salt and pepper

Saute carrots and onion in oil for 8 minutes. Add honey, thyme and allspice and cook an additional 2 minutes. Add broth, bring to a boil and then reduce heat to simmer for 20 minutes until carrots and onion are soft. Allow to cool slightly. Puree until smooth. Add lemon juice, orange juice and salt and pepper to taste. Serve warm or cold.

# Master Gardeners

## In The News

### Lights Camera Action

By Ann Harmon

On a sunny Tuesday, May third, Williamson County Master Gardeners welcomed a film crew from KLRU's Central Texas Gardener. The crew came to film a showcase segment about the gardens for an upcoming episode.

Many Master Gardeners have worked long hours in the gardens to bring them to this point, and representatives from each garden were on hand working and providing information to the film crew. When asked to give her take on the day, Jane Bowman, President of WCMG, stated that she was so excited and proud of the work the organization has accomplished. The gardens looked beautiful and she was very happy that Williamson County Master Gardeners were getting recognition for their hard work.

All the vegetable gardens were looking great with figs and huge artichokes ripening and new tomatoes on the vines. Onions and leeks were laying in rows, showing off their colors. The harvest was an impressive sight for any gardener.



The rose garden looked beautiful, giving forth just the right amount of fragrance. Blooms of pinks and whites were everywhere and full bushes softened the knoll. As the first garden seen from the driveway, the roses put on a great show.

The drought tolerant and herb gardens also provided color and scents, with many places for the camera to capture the beauty of these gardens in spring.

The drought tolerant gardeners have worked hard to bring this garden back from flood damage over the winter by adding a berm and elevating plants. That work has certainly paid off as established plants are thriving and new additions are taking hold. Steve Echols provided his artistic stamp with stone sculptures that line the pathways.



The herb trial garden was in bloom and a walk through the rows this time of year was a sensual experience. The herbs became established in the last year and added color and formality to the garden. Test plants nestled in border rows of blooming herbs which added to the character of this relatively new garden addition.

If you have not seen the Williamson County Gardens in a while, make a point to walk through all the beds during your next visit. Better yet, join us in the gardens. WCMGs are there every Tuesday and Friday morning from 8:30 to 11:00 working and answering questions.

For more information contact the garden chairpersons: landscape, Betty Jo Phillips; vegetables, Theresa Wilts and Nancy Ranc; herbs, Joanne Hoover and Sandra Roberson; Roses, Lynn Stude; drought tolerant, Jodie Beach and keyhole garden, John Clifford.



KLRU's Central Texas Gardener will feature our gardens sometime in the next two to three months. Watch the website for news about the airing date.



# JMG Corner

## Junior Master Gardener News

By Arlene Boyer



Our youngest gardeners in the Pre-K classroom at Round Rock Head Start recently finished an amazing school year of JMG activities. They gardened in raised beds, raising radishes, onions, herbs, and flowers.

Their spring planter box was filled with the best blooming plants for attracting butterflies.

The children tended to begonias, checking on light and watering, before taking them home as special Mother's Day gifts. What a proud band of gardeners!

Two favorite topics for the children were learning about plant parts and plant needs. They showed what they know in their art projects.

They added good rich soil for the roots in their drawings. Sunshine, rain, and hearts signifying 'love' were essential in their drawings.

Eighteen new gardeners are ready to go and grow!





## ***Aphids***

***by Wizzie Brown***

Aphids feed on a wide variety of plants in Texas. They have high reproductive capabilities so their populations can grow to large numbers quickly.

Aphids are small, soft-bodied insects that come in a variety of colors. Some have wings while others may not, but all have cornicles, or “tailpipes” that come off the tip of the abdomen.

Aphids have piercing-sucking mouthparts which they use to pierce plant tissue and suck out the juices. Damage often appears as yellowing or curling of foliage. Aphids also secrete a sweet, sticky substance called honeydew.

Honeydew often appears on the plant as a shiny spots or sometimes the honeydew may have sooty mold growing on it. Sooty mold is a black fungus that can block sunlight from reaching the plant leading to a decrease of photosynthesis.



A hint that you may have aphids is that you see ants trailing on the plant. Many species of ants will tend aphids for the honeydew.



Some ideas for managing aphids are as follows:

- Encourage natural enemies such as parasitoids (that create aphid mummies), ladybugs, lacewing larvae & syrphid fly larvae; know what these creatures look like so you don't kill them
- Use high pressure water sprays to dislodge aphids from the plant
- Less toxic pesticides include active ingredients such as insecticidal soap, azadirachtin (neem), horticultural oils or d-limonene
- Other pesticides to manage aphids may include active ingredients such as permethrin, acephate (non-food items only), carbaryl or imidacloprid

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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# Gardening Tips

## By Winola Van Artsdalen



May/June 2016

### Master Gardener Tips

Take an early morning walk to check your plants. Look for plants needing a bit of light pruning for shaping, weeds to be pulled and any pest problems requiring hand picking or a hard water spray. Early prevention can avoid more serious problems. Deadhead spent blooms making a clean snip back to a leaf or leaves. Watch container plants that dry out quickly. Be sure to cover surfaces with mulch.

**Soil:** Compost 3-4 inches should be mixed in new beds, with 1 inch added each season and/or between plantings. Three inches mulch on top of soil holds moisture, keeps more even temperature and encourages deeper root growth.

**Turf:** Keep mower blades sharp. Do not aerate your lawn during a drought, as it will cause undue stress to the root zone. Never spread compost in hot weather as it is high nitrogen and could burn turf.

Bermuda was fertilized earlier. Buffalo and zoysia can be fertilized late April to early May. Use 1-0-0 ratio fertilizer at a rate of 1.0 pound of actual nitrogen per 1,000 sq. ft. (using a slow release source of nitrogen). Water the lawn thoroughly after applying the fertilizer. If you spread top dressing, skip this fertilization, as it would be too much nitrogen.

**Trees:** Do not trim trees susceptible to oak wilt February through June,

**Water Conservation:** Check your watering system, hand-held, drip, or automatic sprinkler system to maximize efficiency. For water irrigation audit instructions, go to <http://aggiehorticulture.tamu.edu/Earthkind/files/2010/10/audit.pdf>

#### **When and How Much?**

Be sure to follow rules of your water department. If possible, water a total of one inch or less in a week, meaning one-half inch the first day and one-half inch again the second day, divided into cycles. If you have enough compost-amended soil to hold the moisture, watering once a week the full one inch will give deeper roots. Avoid wasting water outside vegetation areas: sidewalks, street, etc.

#### **Depth of moisture:**

A few hours after watering, or the next morning, use a moisture sensor (available online or at local stores), or a screwdriver to be sure water reached the roots. Roots will not grow without moisture. Shallow watering will result in roots near surface where it is dry and hot.

Plants with deeper roots need deeper watering. Hand water or run a soaker hose to deep-rooted plants, bushes and trees, to get them established.

**Keep close watch!**

Watch plants for signs of stress to tell you when they need water: Leaves that lose luster, have gray or blue cast, leaf edges curl, growth slows, and/or plants are wilted in the morning, turf leaves imprint when walked on. Some plants, like American beauty berry, may wilt during period of heat, but revive and be healthy when fall rain comes, so check instructions for individual plants at time of purchase or online. If only a few plants need more water, hand water or run a soaker hose to them.

**Psychological adjustment needed!**

Grass simply does not need to be deep green in hot summer. Accept it!

Source: Texas A&M AgriLIFE Extension Service

# From My Garden Gate

By Sandy Watson



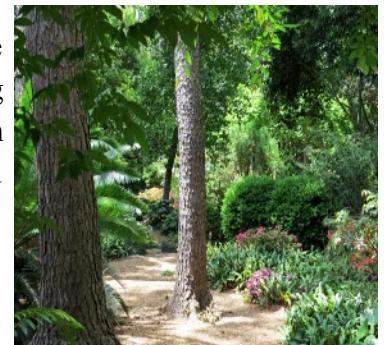
An hour and 56 minutes away from Williamson County, on FM 359 a few miles south of Hempstead, lies one of the most amazing gardens in Texas if not the United States. *Texas Gardener* had this to say:

“It’s fair to assume that as people speed along Highway 290 just east of the Waller County seat, they have no idea they are passing an exquisitely beautiful garden that is not only a world-renown repository of more than 3,000 rare and unusual plants from the United States, Mexico and Asia, but that is also home to a first-rank horticultural and botanical research site with an international reputation for scientific discovery.” \*1



Its creator, John Gaston Fairey, has won awards despite the fact that his professional training was not as a botanist, but as a painter and architect. “Gardening is about discovery. It’s the act of doing and making, not the end product, that’s important.” says the South Carolina native, who moved to Texas in the 1960’s and in 1971 began creating the now-legendary world of Peckercreek Garden (named for the Georgia plantation from the 1955 novel *Auntie Mame*). 2

Fairey, looking for a property between his architecture position at Texas A&M teaching design and his painting studio in Houston, found a 7-acre property in Hempstead. A little creek sprinkled with oaks and knobby cypress trees reminded him of his South Carolina childhood and he fell in love.



Fairey began trying to recreate the familiar landscapes of camellias, azaleas, viburnums and magnolias but it wasn’t long before he realized that the Texas weather of droughts and heat combined with occasional monsoon rains, wasn’t cooperating. Some of those plantings still survive today, however. After a tornado rudely tore the mature tops off the shade garden in 1983 (and it took him 5 years to clean up the debris!), he began the search for plants that truly form the garden as it exists today. He began a lifelong friendship with the late Lynn Lowery, a Houston “plant explorer”, seed collector and nurseryman. Lynn connected Fairey with native plants more suited to the extreme Texas heat and periodic floods.

Lowery invited Fairey on a hunting expedition to Mexico in 1988. Carl Schoenfeld, a college student who had begun working at Peckerwood garden, also joined them. (Mr. Schoenfeld is now the owner of Yucca Do Nursery, in Giddings, Texas., which he founded with Mr. Fairey. Originally the garden sold their overflow rare plants.) “We drove from here to Laredo, which is in the desert, to Monterrey and up into the mountains . . . and it opened up a new path.” Mr. Fairey said.

As the group drove up the one-lane rutted switchbacks, with a sheer drop of 2,000 feet on one side and a 1,500-foot cliff rising on the other, they watched plants appear with each new elevation. Giant yuccas gave way to agaves and oaks. When the road ended, they pitched their tents next to the truck and hiked into the forest. Mr. Lowery taught them the basics of collecting seeds and how to germinate them back home. “. . . how to clean seeds, where some of the things were, how to package things, how to get them back into the country, how to identify them . . . ,” said Mr. Fairey, who had no formal training as a botanist or gardener.”

Evidently these Mexican trips were so adventurous that Fairey suffered a heart attack on one expedition and insisted that the team continue on without him while he stayed behind in a Mexican hospital! \*4 By the way, Mexican drug wars, not his health, put a stop to his Mexican seed-collecting trips.

On his more than 90 trips to Mexico the destruction of flora by man and animals gave further impetus to Fairey’s desire to preserve the seeds and plants he came across, not only in Mexico but also in Texas and other parts of the world. He was an early pioneer in this recognition, but he went further; Peckerwood Garden is his lifelong contribution to that end. The original 7 acres has grown in time to 39 but not all is open to the public.



Visitors to Peckerwood can stroll through woodland and dry gardens over the original 7 acres filled with native, Mexican and Asian plants. Trunkless *Brahea mooreii* palms, blue agaves, and Satsuki azaleas surround a shady path. A recent addition, a 12-acre arboretum, is filled with oaks, magnolias, Mexican sycamores and others. “If I had to have one oak, it would be *rysophylla*,” said Mr. Fairey, who collected these from the San Carlos Mountains, at 4,000 feet. “When it puts out new leaves, they are bronzy purple.” 5

The garden provides its plants to a number of institutions and plant conservancies, including almost the entire collection of Meso-American rare and endangered species at the University of California-Berkeley. Conservationists, ecologists, botanists, horticulturists and naturalists come to the garden to view and study plant life. Germ plasm (genetic material) from the garden’s rare plant collection has been shared throughout the world. Peckerwood’s seed bank has provided seeds for the University of California at Berkeley, Harvard University, North Carolina State University, University of California at Santa Cruz, the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew and Cholipo Arboretum Foundation in Chungchong Namdo, Korea. According to Peckerwood staff, “Research and educational partners have included joint research projects, seminars, classes, and internships at the garden with students and faculty from the University of Texas-Austin; TAMU-College Station; TAMU-Prairie View; and Rice University, Houston.” 6

In 1998 Peckerwood Garden Conservation Foundation was established and Peckerwood became affiliated with a national organization, the Garden Conservancy. Peckerwood is one of the Conservancy's Preservation Project Gardens, the only Texas garden to be so recognized. Acting foundation director Antonia Adezio says that as a public educational resource Peckerwood will give gardeners, designers, artists and families a place to enjoy learning about nature, agriculture, ecology and the arts. "The beauty of the garden is a reflection of the eye of an artist; but it is also the result of constant experiments with texture, form and color within the tough requirements of the local geology and climate," says Adezio, a former Garden Conservancy director. "This is a durable garden, one that will withstand challenges of weather and time and continue to teach lessons for years to come about how to garden in Texas." \*8

The now 85 year-old Fairey long ago put away his paint brush and used nature to create a masterful blend of plants that educates, preserves, astonishes, delights and is just plain spectacular. Peckerwood is practically in our backyard. Go see it!



Resources:

[peckerwoodgarden.org](http://peckerwoodgarden.org)

1 <http://www.texasgardener.com/pastissues/mayjun10/Peckerwood.html>

2 <http://www.marthastewart.com/865303/garden-tour-peckerwood-garden-texas#857359>

3 [texasfarmandhome.com/october2013](http://texasfarmandhome.com/october2013) - Peckerwood Garden is ...

4 [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/19/garden/a-texas-gardener-looks-to-mexico-for-inspiration.html?emc=eta1&\\_r=](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/19/garden/a-texas-gardener-looks-to-mexico-for-inspiration.html?emc=eta1&_r=)

5 Plant Explorer: John Fairey, Horticulture Magazine, Barbara Robinson, May 1, 2007

6 <http://www.texasgardener.com/pastissues/mayjun10/Peckerwood.html>

7 <https://one.arch.tamu.edu/news/2013/2/8/fairey-wins-award/>

8 <http://www.houstonchronicle.com/life/gardening/article/Peckerwood-Garden-created-with-the-eye-of-an-6096859.php?t=b0cd658878202b0d22&cmpid=email-premium#photo-7564955> Antonia Andazio





## Those Red-Bellied Woodpeckers in your Backyard Don't Got No Red Bellies!

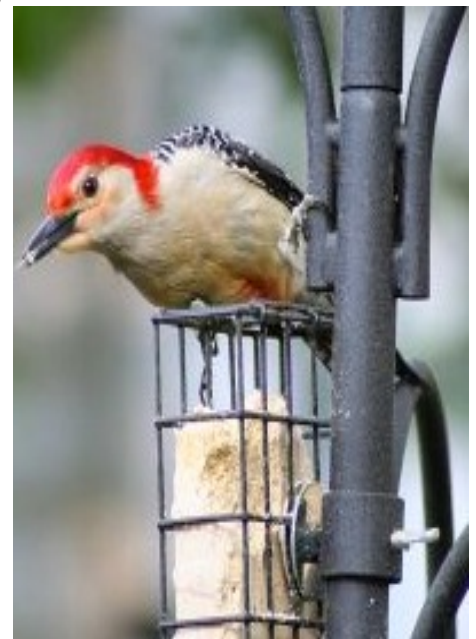
By AJ Senchack, Ph.D.  
WCMG

Backyard birds we see in Williamson County year-round seem to have names that are often funny and sometimes silly looking. Prior efforts to bring some consistency or logic to the common names we call birds have been frustrated, however. For example, just scan any birding field guide, and you might be left scratching your head and wondering how such misleading names ever came about. For instance, ever wonder how our familiar resident bird, the **Red-bellied woodpecker** (*Centurus carolinus*), got its name? Normally, it doesn't appear to have red feathers on its belly. In fact, my neighbor continues to incorrectly, but perhaps more accurately, call it a "red-headed woodpecker." (And, indeed, there *is* a *Red-headed* woodpecker, but it only infrequently visits Williamson County from east of here.)

So, where did the Red-bellied woodpecker's name come from? First, the Red-bellied woodpecker *does* have red feathers protruding from its belly, but it takes a careful birder or photographer, using his/her good eye, to see them. Most folks have never seen them, because you either have to get a woodpecker to stop hoppin' and a bobbin' around a tree trunk and show you its belly (considered most indiscreet in the bird world!) or study a museum specimen up close. That is, what you will discover is that its red belly feathers aren't usually the first thing you see and, therefore, is not a particularly good diagnostic for identifying this bird.

A more interesting, likely contributing factor to its unique name may be that in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the standard practice scientists and others used to name a bird was from studying and naming a particular specimen *lying it on its back*. Surely someone thought of turning it over and sideways to get a better handle on a better common name.

Now for fun, why don't you try to guess and then research on line why birds have monikers like "Yellow-bellied sapsucker" (*Sphyrapicus varius*)--maybe from a cartoon character? Or does it really have a yellow belly?? Better yet: Does it *really* suck sap?). How about a Northern mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottus*), Northern bobwhite (*Collinus virginianus*), or North-ern cardinal (*Cardinalis cardinalis*)—a wee bit of overkill on the cardinal's genus-species name, don't you think? Do mockingbirds, bobwhites, and cardinals have distant cousins or counterparts in the southern hemisphere??). Birds are fun and entertaining; get outdoors more!



# Save the Date

## WCMG Monthly Meetings

### June 13

**Master Gardener Monthly Meeting: Topic: Square Foot Gardening Speaker: TBD - Social time with refreshments is held from 6:30 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. The educational meeting starts at 7:00 p.m. and ends at 8:00 p.m.**

### July 11

**Master Gardener Monthly Meeting : Speaker not announced. Social time with refreshments is held from 6:30 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. The educational meeting starts at 7:00 p.m. and ends at 8:00 p.m.**

## Educational Opportunities In Our Area

**Round Rock Gardens, 901 Sam Bass Road, Round Rock**

**“Garden Insect ID – Friend or Foe?” Sunday, June 11th at 10am**

“Learn which insects are beneficial, which are pests, and how to get rid of the pests without harming the good guys.” Wizzie Brown from the Texas A&M Agrilife Extension presents this garden insect identification class.

**“Creating Pollinator Gardens with Texas Tough Plants.” Saturday, June 25th at 10 am**

Marilyn Perz from the Native Plant Society will discuss how to create habitats and pollinator gardens using these beautiful, hardy Texas native plants.

## **Educational Opportunities In Our Area - Continued**

**The Natural Gardener**, 8648 Old Bee Caves Road, Austin

**“Organic Veggie Gardening 101” Saturday, May 28th 10am**

Presented by Linda Wall of The Natural Gardener

June classes not posted at publication. See website for details.

**Monument Market**, 500 South Austin Ave., Georgetown

Schedule unavailable at publication. See website for detail on classes.

**Georgetown Garden Club**, 1101 N. College, Georgetown (Recreation Department Community Room)

Meets the first Thursday of each month at 1:30 (no meeting June - August). See website for future Speakers/Events.

**Round Rock Garden Club**, 301 W. Bagdad Ave., Round Rock

Meets the first Monday of each month. 9:30 - 10:30

Monthly speakers - See the Baca Center website for information. Cost for non-members \$1.

## **Educational Opportunities In Our Area - Continued**

Hill Country Water Gardens June 25 10:00 am – Miniature Gardening Workshop: \$40 for materials

**Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center** 4801 La Crosse Ave, Austin

At publication no gardening classes were available. See the website for updated information

**Williamson County Master Gardener Association  
2016 Board of Directors and Sub-Committee Chairs**

**President** –Jane Bowman

**Vice President** - Mary Sexton

**Secretary** –Catherine Nickle

**Treasurer** – Marcy Echols

**Past President** – Wayne Rhoden

**Programs** – Alicia Johnson and Joann Dietrich

**JMG** - Arlene Boyer

**Landscape** – Betty Jo Phillips

**Rose Garden** – Lynn Stude

**Drought Tolerant Garden** – Jodi Beach

**Earthkind Herb Study** – Joanne Hoover

**Water Conservation** – Jennifer Harbour

**Vegetable Gardens** –Teresa Wilts

**Keyhole Garden** – John Clifford

**Projects** – Tom Kisinger

**Awards** – Dana Blair

**Training** – John Papich and Brenda McIndoo

**Membership** – Jeanne Barker and Grace Bryce

**Plant Sale** – Brenda McIndoo

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**Publicity** – Viki Strauss

**Help desk** – Garry Bowman

**Speakers' bureau** – Open

**Online Presence** – Garry Bowman

**Newsletter** – Ann Harmon

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Wayne Rhoden

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**Alternates**

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Mary Sexton

