

Williamson County Master Gardeners November/December 2016



Contents

President's Message	1
By Jane Bowman, WCMG President	
Berry Creek Park and Preserve	2
By Susan Blackledge	
Harvesting Tips for Cool Season Vegetables	3
By Radhika Baliga	
Gardening Tips	7
By Winola VanArtsdalen	
Gardeners Who Cook — Herbed Butternut Squash Tart	8
By Ann Harmon	
Tomatoes In The Demonstration Garden, Part II	9
By Theresa Wilts	
Community Gardens — A Way To Make A Positive Impact	10
By Ebby Green — 2016 Master Gardening Student	
Plants To Enjoy Along With Deer In The Landscape	12
— A Survey Of The Master Gardener Class Of 2016	
By Alice Stulz	
Save The Date — Educational Opportunities In Our Area	14
2016 Board of Directors and Sub-Committee Chairs	16

President's Message

By Jane Bowman



Good Morning Gardeners,

As I look back over the year, it has been a busy one for Master Gardeners. Most of our projects and events are ongoing and will be in place for 2017.

I heard back from Linda Lehmusvirta at KLRU. She said our broadcast premieres on January 7th. This will be the edited version of when KLRU came out to video our Demonstration Gardens for Central Texas Gardener. So be sure to watch for an email from Viki Strauss. She will send out all the details as soon as she receives them.

We have the "money in the bank" from our grant. We have selected a 12' X 20' shed from Graceland buildings in Round Rock. We are in the process of getting approval from Wm. County so we can have it set up in our Demonstration Garden area. It will have a metal roof, so we are planning to install it with a rain water collection system to use as a teaching tool for Williamson County residents. The water we collect will be used in the Demo Gardens.

There were several components of our grant in which we outlined how we would use the money to benefit the residents of Georgetown as well as Williamson County. We plan to offer more learning opportunities for the public. In addition to our monthly meetings, we are offering *Hands-on in the Garden* classes on the last Saturday of each month. We have had a very good response from all who have attended and our numbers have increased at every class. Other opportunities will be available and as soon as I get confirmation on times, dates and speakers, I will let you know. These will also count for continuing education hours.

If you are interested in becoming more involved in a leadership role in Master Gardeners, there are some openings available. I really need a certified Master Gardener to be the chairperson for Programs. If you or a couple of people would like to work together on this, please contact me. There are also openings for a Projects chairperson and Speakers bureau chairperson as well as understudy positions in many areas. New roles will start in January.

Don't forget our awards banquet in December will replace the regular monthly meeting for the month. Our new year for volunteer hours and continuing education hours starts as of Nov. 1st. Please be sure to record all your hours and contacts on VMS promptly for each month. Take some time to get to know our new Master Gardeners. I have met several and they are truly very special people.

I wish all of you a Happy Thanksgiving and a Very, Merry Christmas with your friends and family.

Jane Bowman



Berry Springs Park and Preserve

By Susan Blackledge

Berry Springs Park & Preserve is a beautiful 277 acre parcel of park land owned by Williamson County. Oct. 2016 marked the Berry Springs 11th Birthday. The Park & Preserve is known to many as Georgetown's "Best Kept Secret" and to others as their refuge or little piece of heaven.



Since the beginning of Williamson County's Master Gardener Program, gardeners have built and planted flower beds, seeded prairie restoration and wildflower areas, planted trees and shrubs, built and maintained a nature trail and native plant garden. They have harvested seeds, removed invasive plant species, maintained a spring fed pond and worked with other volunteer organizations to make the park the special place it is today.



To keep this park beautiful and plant life thriving volunteers are needed on a regular basis. In order to volunteer all one needs to do is to contact Susan Blackledge, the Park Manager and fellow Master Gardener @ susieblackledge@gmail.com or call 512-930-0040. There is always something that needs to be done and park staff will work with you schedule to help you get the volunteer hours you need.



Harvesting Tips for Cool Season Vegetables

By: Radhika Baliga

Harvesting is one of the most rewarding parts of vegetable gardening as it brings us one step closer to sharing our bounty with others. It's certainly an important part of our routine at the vegetable demonstration garden. Harvesting from such a vast garden can be a bit overwhelming at first since there are so many different vegetables to juggle. Sometimes when I walk through the row garden, I feel like a child anxiously waiting in front of the oven for a batch of cookies, constantly asking, "Is it ready yet?" It is vegetables like cabbage that always have me second guessing myself. And while I'm still learning, I'd like to share some harvesting tips and techniques that I've compiled over the last few seasons.

For some hands-on experience with harvesting and the chance to learn about vegetables you've never grown at home, please join us in the Demonstration Gardens outside the Extension Office on Tuesday and Friday mornings.

General Tips

Study your Cultivars:

Read seed packets and plant tags for specific information on the cultivars you've planted. Kohlrabi, for instance, can vary wildly in size from one variety to the next. The common "White Vienna" kohlrabi is generally harvested when it's 2-3" in diameter and can get tough and pithy if it gets much larger. Another cultivar, "Giant White" kohlrabi is harvested once it's 8-10" in diameter and can remain tender even at this size.

Practice Safety with Pesticides:

If you're using any pesticides, organic or not, read the labels carefully and look for the "days to harvest" interval. The days to harvest interval specifies the number of days you'll need to wait between applying the pesticide and harvesting from the plant. Always read and follow the label instructions to ensure your safety.

Bring your Tools:

A folding pocket knife is a great tool for harvesting vegetables with heads like cabbage, cauliflower, and broccoli. Scissors are handy for clipping herbs like dill and cilantro and for harvesting baby lettuces. Before you head out to your garden, grab some harvesting containers too. Use one container for your sturdier root crops and a separate container for your delicate greens, lettuces, and herbs.

Harvest in the Morning:

Harvest vegetables in the morning while they are turgid, crisp and sweet.

Harvest Frequently:

For best quality, taste, and sometimes yield, harvest frequently. You'll get more production from your pea plants by harvesting from them several times a week. You'll get better tasting peas this way too as old peas that have been left on the vine can be tough and stringy. Vegetables like broccoli rabe can bolt in a flash and need to be monitored daily.

Multi-task while Harvesting:

Fly two kites with one string and monitor for pests while you harvest. Check for signs of insect damage or disease. Inspect the undersides of leaves for pesky aphids and caterpillars. Cut away diseased or dead leaves and clean your tools after doing so. Pull weeds as you go.

Protect the Harvest:

If you're going to be outside for a while after harvesting, put your vegetables in the shade to keep them from wilting.

Fertilize the Garden After you Harvest:

I'll take my kale without the smell of fish fertilizer, thank you.

Plan Ahead for Weather:

When possible, avoid harvesting when plants are wet. Handling wet plants can promote the spread of disease. Also, avoid harvesting plants that are wilted from frost. Give those plants some time to recover. Who wants to eat limp, frosty lettuce anyway?

Harvest for Best Taste:

Follow your taste buds and harvest your vegetables when they're at their prime in terms of quality and flavor. Lots of harvesting guidelines are given in terms of size (even here), but realize that getting your vegetables to reach optimal size is dependent on several factors: time of planting, weather, fertilization and water. Sometimes it's better to harvest those beets when they are golf-ball sized, sweet, and tender than to wait until they're baseball sized only to find that they're tough, woody and inedible.

Know when to "Fold 'Em":

Plants that have bolted can often be bitter to the taste and may not be worth harvesting. Send those plants to the compost pile or leave them in the garden to attract beneficial insects and to use for seed-saving. Insect infestations can also make our vegetables less than harvest-worthy. Discard the affected leaves or plants and move on.

Harvesting Tips by Vegetable:

Peas: Harvest peas once they reach the desired size. Pinch peas off the vines using your fingers, being careful not to damage the delicate vines. Or, use scissors to clip the peas off the vines. Pick peas often to increase production. They are sweetest immediately after harvesting (the sugars turn to starch once picked). The vines are also edible.

English shelling peas: Harvest when peas have filled out. Shell the peas and discard the pods.

Snow peas: Pick when pods are relatively flat and are around 3" long. Peas should be under-developed. The entire pod is edible.

Sugar snap peas: Pick when pods are around 3" long. Pods should be slightly plump. The entire pod is edible.

Kohlrabi: When the bulbous globe has reached the desired size, cut at the base of the plant using a knife. The bulb is actually a swollen stem and will grow above the soil. Both bulb and leaves are edible. We grow white and purple Vienna kohlrabi varieties at the demo garden and these should be harvested when 3" in diameter (think baseball-sized kohlrabi).

Root crops: Harvest when roots have reached the desired size. The crown of the root, which is raised above the soil, can help you estimate the full size of the root. You can also gently pull the soil away from the root to check on the size of the vegetable. To harvest the roots, firmly grasp the stems where they meet the root and gently tug upwards. Store greens separately from roots.

Turnips: In the demo garden, we grow “purple top White Globe” turnips. They are best when they're no larger than 3-4” in diameter. The roots and greens are edible.

Radishes: Standard varieties like Cherry Belle grow rather quickly. Don't leave them in the ground too long, or else they will become cracked, woody, and extremely pungent.

Beets: Beets have edible roots and leaves. During the growing season, you can harvest up to 1/3 of the beet leaves without interfering with the production of the root itself. Harvest the roots when they have reached the proper size for the variety. You might find that baby beets are sweeter and more delectable than larger beets.

Carrots: Harvest once they reach the desired size, color, and flavor. For your first harvest pick non-adjacent carrots to thin out the bed. This will give the remaining carrots more room to grow. Don't leave carrots in the ground for too long, especially as the weather gets warmer, because they can get bitter.

Cabbage: Harvest when firm heads are formed. Touch the heads and make sure there is no give. If the heads have split or cracked, it's definitely time to harvest. To harvest, use a knife to cut the head at the base. If it's still early in the season, leave the large, sprawling outer leaves in place. You may get 2, 3, or even 4 smaller baby cabbage heads to emerge in the weeks to follow.

Cauliflower: Harvest when the head reaches the desired size and while the curds are still tight. If the curds start to separate, harvest the cauliflower regardless of size. Cut the plant right at the base with a knife.

Broccoli: The first harvest of the season will be a large, main, central head. Harvest it when the flower buds are still tightly closed and green before you see any yellow flowers emerging. Use a knife to cut the head. As the season progresses, harvest smaller side shoots. Again, harvest these side shoots while the buds are still tight and green. Broccoli leaves are edible too.

Brussels Sprouts: Brussels sprouts are generally ready to harvest when they're firm and about 1” in diameter. To harvest, remove the leaf below the sprout and then simply cut or twist the sprout off the stalk. Start harvesting near the bottom of the stalk. Upper sprouts will continue to mature after the lower sprouts are picked. Sprouts taste sweeter after a frost.

Kale, Collards, Swiss chard, Mustard greens: Get a continuous harvest all season by cutting only the lower, outer leaves a few inches above the soil line. Harvest no more than 1/3 of a plant at once. In the demo garden, we have lots and lots of plants, so we'll harvest 3-4 leaves per plant. For salads, harvest the leaves when they're smaller and most tender. Larger leaves are good for braising.

Spinach: There are lots of ways to get a continuous spinach harvest. You can trim the outer leaves as needed. Or, do the reverse, and trim a clump of the inner leaves. Easiest of all, cut back the entire plant at, once leaving 1-2” of stems above the soil line. Water, fertilize and watch for new growth to emerge.

Bok Choy: Harvest just before the central flower stalk emerges. For a “once-over” harvest, with a fully intact head, cut the plant right at the base using a knife. For a continuous harvest, trim the outer leaves as you need them, cutting them a few inches above the soil line. Or cut all the leaves, leaving 1-2” of stems above the soil line and wait for new bok choy leaves to come up as the season progresses.

Lettuce:

Baby Lettuce: Harvest baby mesclun mix lettuces when leaves are 4-5” tall. Use scissors to cut the leaves 1” or so above the soil line. Your bed will look like it's been mowed down by a bunny. Continue to water and fertilize to get several harvests over the course of the season.

Loose-leaf Lettuce: For a one-time harvest, once lettuce reaches the desired size cut plants at the base with a knife. Or for a continuous harvest, cut the outer leaves as needed. My favorite technique, which I learned at the demo garden, is to leave 2 or 3 layers of outer leaves in place and harvest what's left in the center. This way you're always harvesting the sweetest, most tender leaves each time. If you continue to water and fertilize these plants, tender new leaves will emerge from the centers again, filling out the plants. You may get two or three harvests like this in a season.

Gardening Tips

By Winola VanArtsdalen



November/December 2016 Tips

Trees, shrubs, perennials:

Plant trees, shrubs and cold hardy perennials, (especially ground covers), mulching well. If there is any question about cold hardiness, be prepared to cover. Watch to keep reasonably moist, but do not overwater! Check for moisture, not on top, but several inches below the surface.

Remember when planting to dig a hole at least twice as wide, but only as deep as the root ball. Build a berm to direct water to outer roots and extend this berm out in future years. Always keep mulch away from the stem.

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

Plants in containers are especially susceptible to freeze, as they are not in soil to keep roots warm. I sometimes wrap pots in burlap and tie securely even though the stems and foliage are fine left in the open. Also, you can look for warmer micro-climates for sensitive plants whether in pots or in the ground. After my bay laurel froze the first winter, even though it was on the south side of house, I moved it to a spot beside a bay window jutting out from house blocked wind, Now my only problem is controlling its growth!

Check to be sure you have good drainage in all areas. Weather has been unusually wet at times in recent years, and many of our Central Texas plants are especially susceptible to root rot.

Turf:

When mowing leaves and leaving on turf to allow nutrients to return to soil, do not leave too many on the ground in shady areas where turf needs more sunlight. Also, consider thinning tree canopies to allow more sunlight, and remember that turf weakened by lack of sunlight needs less, not more, fertilizer!

Unless newly planted, water only if there has been no rain for several weeks.

Natural decorations: Keep an eye out for evergreens to use on the fireplace, your door, or in table arrangements and in small vases around the house. They will bring your house alive! Succulents, too, can be used in colorful, holiday arrangements as Lynn Stude demonstrates on the cover of this month's newsletter with her beautiful wreath!

Gardeners Who Cook

Herbed Butternut Squash Tart

By Ann Harmon



For Squash:

1 3 pound butternut squash with a long neck
2-3 T. olive oil
Salt and pepper

For Topping:

1 c. parsley leaves
1 lg. clove garlic
1 T. dried sage leaves
1 tea. dried thyme
½ tea. nutmeg
⅛ tea. pepper
¼ tea. salt
½ c. Parmesan cheese

For Assembly:

1 package frozen puff pastry, thawed according to package directions
1/3 c. flour
1 8 oz. package mascarpone cheese
2 T. milk
¼ c. maple syrup
Kosher salt to taste

Set oven temperature to 400 degrees. Remove the round end of the squash and reserve for another use. Peel and cut the long piece of squash in two, lengthwise. Place halves cut side down on a foil lined sheet pan and pre-bake until a knife just goes in easily, 25-30 minutes. The squash will not be fully softened at this point. Turn squash over and allow to cool. When cool enough to handle, slice into half-moons approximately ¼" thick. Set aside. (This can be done up to two days before. Cover and store in refrigerator.)

Using a food processor, chop the garlic then add the remaining topping ingredients. Process in short bursts until parsley is roughly chopped and ingredients are blended. (If you do not have a food processor, chop the parsley and garlic, crush the sage and blend in a bowl with the remaining topping ingredients. (This can be done several hours before assembly.)

Sprinkle the surface where you will roll out the puff pastry with flour. Unwrap the first sheet, spread it out and then roll it just enough to fit half of your sheet pan. Move pastry to one side of the sheet pan. Repeat with the second sheet of pastry. Using your fingers press the two halves together in the middle and press the pastry toward the edges of the pan, forming a slightly raised border. Do not be concerned if it does not fit tightly. Lay a second sheet pan over the pastry and bake 12 minutes. (You can also cover the pastry with foil and use beans as weights to hold the pastry down as it bakes.) Remove top pan and allow to cool slightly.

Put the mascarpone cheese in a bowl and stir vigorously to soften. Add the milk and stir until blended. This will help to make the mascarpone spreadable. Spread softened mascarpone cheese over the tart leaving a 1/2" border all the way around. Lay squash slices slightly overlapping down the length of the tart. You should have three rows to cover the cheese. Sprinkle evenly with the topping and drizzle with the ¼ cup maple syrup. Bake 20 minutes, turning half way through baking time, until the edges are lightly browned. Allow to cool 10-15 minutes. Sprinkle lightly with kosher salt just before serving and cut into serving size pieces. Serves 8 as a luncheon entrée or cut into 2" x 3" slices to serve as appetizers.

Tomatoes in the Demonstration Garden Part II

By Teresa Wilts

This article is a continuation of “Tomatoes in the Demonstration Garden” from the last newsletter. I will be discussing the tomato varieties that we have been growing in the demonstration row garden and trial beds.

Row Garden: Each year we try to plant some favorites from previous years to make sure we are successful in providing tomatoes to The Caring Place and the Annunciation Maternity Home. Some of our favorite slicing tomatoes include BHN602, Celebrity, Carmello and Tycoon. Top performers in the cherry tomato category include Juliet and Sungold. For fun, and to discover new varieties that grow well here, we also try some new varieties every year. This year’s new tomato was “Glacier”, which was originally grown for northern climates. It doesn’t sound like the perfect plant for Texas, but remembering that we plant in February when it can still be cold, its 55 days to maturity means it can produce 2-3 inch red tomatoes in April, in the sheltered garden at Round Rock. It took a little longer in the demonstration garden.

Last year’s big losers were Purple Prince, with only 4 tomatoes weighing a total of .29 lbs; and JDCTex with only 2 tomatoes, weighing a total of 2 pounds. Another variety that we really didn’t like was Ecuador Cherry – it produced like crazy, but no one wanted to pick the currant sized berries.

Before you use the above information to decide on your varieties for next year, please remember that this was not a formal test at all, especially since we grew very few plants of each variety, in some cases only one. I grew JDCTex in my own garden last year and it performed very well. This year, I decided to try Purple Prince in my own garden and it did great. It is very susceptible to disease here, much more so than in more northern climates.

2. Trial Beds: We have been running a multi-year scientific trial on tomatoes, okra and cucumbers in the trial beds. The preliminary results show that all the tomato varieties planted in the trial beds do very well: in 2015, Black Krim produced 332 tomatoes weighing 111.69 lbs; BHN602 produced 426 tomatoes weighing 154.07 lbs and Jubilee produced 215 tomatoes weighing 72.43 lbs. There are 4 plants of each variety in the trial. Worthwhile noting is that Black Krim, an heirloom type, has a tendency to crack.



3. Taste: Of course taste is subjective, but everyone seems to agree that Sungold is the best tasting tomato in the garden! Other favorites include Black Krim, Jubilee and Snow White.

Once again, I encourage you to spend a few hours with us in the demonstration vegetable garden so you get a chance to see for yourself what works and what doesn’t.

Community Gardens – A Way to Make a Positive Impact

By Ebby Green

2016 Master Gardening Student

One day while reading the Taylor Press, I ran across an article about the Williamson County Master Gardeners accepting applications for their program. I was becoming more aware of the benefits of gardening and had an interest in creating a community garden where I worked. As the Chief Executive Officer of the Taylor Housing Authority, the staff and I had been searching for a way to encourage healthier lifestyles for our residents. Therefore, I signed up for the Master Gardener program.

Master Gardeners is an educational volunteer program conducted by the Texas Agriculture Extension Service of the Texas A&M University System. Master Gardener students attend more than 50 hours of specialized training courses and are required to complete 50 hours of volunteer service and 15 hours of additional education in order to become certified as Master Gardeners. I will soon graduate from the program and cannot express what an excellent experience it has been. Each week we had speakers who spoke on a variety of topics and we went on a field trip to an aquaponics garden.

Community gardening has gained popularity across the country. Food gardening in the U.S. is at its highest levels in more than a decade, according to the National Gardening Association's new report (<http://garden.org/special/pdf/2014-NGA-GardentoTable.pdf>).

The report states:

- Two million more households reported participating in community gardens in 2013 than in 2008, a 300% increase.
- 1 in 3 households are now growing food - the highest overall participation seen in a decade.
- From 2008-2013 community gardens tripled from 1M to 3M, a 200% increase.

The National Gardening Association attributes the rise in food gardening to several things. They include action by federal agencies such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to increase awareness and educational efforts toward food gardening.

'Community gardens provide access to fresh traditional produce and nutritionally rich foods in low-income neighborhoods, where nutritious food may be less available. "A study of all food stores in three low income zip codes in Detroit found that only 19%, or fewer than one in five stores, carried a minimal 'healthy food basket' of products based on the food pyramid" (Pothukuchi 2003). This is common in small neighborhood stores, which only offer limited food choices.

Increasing the consumption of organic local produce reduces exposure to chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Local food can be eaten fresh, without the preservatives that are typically added to produce that is shipped long distances" (Bremer et al, 2003, p.54) and they are more nutritious. Gardening is considered a moderate to heavy intensity physical activity, and has been linked to significant beneficial changes in cholesterol, HDL cholesterol, and systolic blood pressure (Armstrong 2000). Besides being a great way to exercise, gardening motivates people to stay active longer than

other activities. In one study, participants spent significantly more time gardening (225 minutes/week) than doing other leading forms of exercise, such as walking (160 minutes/week) and biking (170 minutes/week) (Casperan et al, 1991). With obesity and diabetes growing across the nation, this opportunity to exercise is very important.

There are other ways gardens contribute to our communities. They add beauty and heighten people's awareness and appreciation for living things. Community gardens give youth a safe place to interact with their peers and can involve them in beneficial activities (Sherer, 2006). They also increase neighborhood surveillance or "eyes on the neighborhood", often deterring crime.

Community gardens offer unique opportunities to establish relationships within and across physical and social barriers (Breemer et al, 2003). Additionally, those living closer to green spaces are more likely to use them and more likely to interact with their neighbors.

Local schools are beginning to start their own gardens. There are currently programs in Austin, Round Rock, Leander and Taylor. What an excellent way to teach our young people the importance of gardening and how it contributes to healthier lifestyles.

With all these great benefits, community gardens are a great way to bring people together to produce a healthier lifestyle. Maybe you should consider starting one within your neighborhood. The Williamson County Master Gardener program is a great way to learn more about gardening. The website is www.txmg.org/williamson

Plants to Enjoy Along with Deer in the Landscape

A Survey of the Master Gardener Class of 2016

By Alice Stultz

Articles have been written about keeping landscapes intact with herds of deer in range. Some signage on nursery plants boast 'deer resistant', 'somewhat deer resistant' or 'usually deer resistant'. John Papich introduced the 2016 Master Gardener Class to the latest booklet put out by the Texas Cooperative Extension and the City of Austin Watershed Protection Development Review entitled Native and Adapted Landscape Plants, An Earthwise Guide for Central Texas. This source suggested many things to consider when choosing plants for central Texas such as soil type, temperature variances, rainfall, and of course deer. A survey was conducted of the Master Gardener class of 2016 to see which plants had successfully survived foraging by deer in their yards.

Lantana is on top of the list. Two varieties recommended for our area are *Lantana x hybrid* and *Lantana montevidensis*. Both can be used as ground cover with high tolerance for poor soil and low water and they attract butterflies.

The next most mentioned plants are the sages/salvias. Texas Sage or Cenizo (*Leucophyllum frutescens*), a medium size shrub needing good drainage, has been successfully planted near deer. Varieties have flowers of purple, lavender, pink or white. It has a woody nature as it ages thus older limbs can be easily snapped off by foraging animals but not eaten. Cedar Sage (*Salvia roemeriana*) is a shade to partial shade plant that grows along the juniper trails in Central Texas. It has red flowers from spring through summer, reseeds well and is attractive to hummingbirds. Autumn Sage (*Salvia greggii*) has a long blooming season in full sun, and butterflies are attracted to the various varieties. This plant can get woody as well and deer can snap the woody limbs. The purplish blue flowered Magestic Sage (*Salvia guaranitica*) and Mexican Bush Sage (*Salvia leucantha*) are taller plants with lovely blooms until freeze. The perennial Tropical Sage (*Salvia coccinea*) has red or pink and white blooms and reseeds from summer to frost. Russian Sage (*Perovskia atriplicifolia*) is not a true sage but a hardy, herbaceous plant that deer avoid.

When driving through neighborhoods thick with deer lounging on the turf grass Turk's Cap (*Malvavixcus arboreus*) stuck out from a distance. It is a sun/shade plant that attracts hummingbirds and bees. The red fruit attracts wildlife but the plants are not destroyed by wildlife. The plant is best trimmed to the ground in spring as it freezes during a hard winter and it gets leggy if our winters are mild. Yuccas are also successful in a landscape with deer but can be easily uprooted by deer until firmly root bound. Deer do like to eat the flowers of the Red Yucca (*Hesperaloe parviflora*), the Softleaf Yucca (*Yucca recurvifolia*), and the Twistleaf Yucca (*Yucca rupicola*).

The sumacs also work well in a deer hardy landscape. The Fragrant Sumac (*Rhus aronmatica*) is a deciduous small tree with a spread of up to 9 feet tall by 6 feet wide. The leaves turn red in autumn bringing color to our fall landscape. The Evergreen Sumac (*Rhus virens Lindheimer*) grows a bit taller than Fragrant Sumac and has white blooms and red berries. The leaves drop off just prior to new growth in spring so it is not truly evergreen as its name implies.

have composite yellow blooms and low water needs. These three make a nice back drop for the short purple blooming dwarf Ruellia (*Ruellia brittoniana*) which are pruned by deer occasionally but seem to bounce back rapidly.

Society Garlic (*Tulbaghis violacea*) and Yarrow (*Achillea sp.*) are herbs that are adapted to our deer landscape. The flowers of the garlic are nibbled by deer on occasion but not to the detriment of the plant. Adult butterflies enjoy the nectar of the Yarrow flowers. Deer are not attracted to most strong smelling plants such as rosemary, lamb's ear, onions and other garlics.

Native and adaptive grasses are not attractive to deer in ordinary conditions. The state grass of Texas, Sideoats Grama (*Bouteloua curtipendula*), and Gulf Muhly (*Muhlenbergia capillaris*) are favorites in the grass family. Other ornamentals such as Basket Grass or Sacahuista (*Nolina texana*), Bamboo Muhly (*Muhlenbergia dumosa*), Woodland Oats, previously called Inland Sea Oats (*Chasmanthium latifolium*), Mexican Feathergrass or Wiregrass (*Stipa tenuissima*), Deer Muhly (*Muhlenbergia rigens*) and Big Muhly (*Muhlenbergia lindheimeri*), which grows 3 to 4 feet tall, grow successfully with deer. Connie Mayes recommends Bush Germander (*Teucrium fruticans*), Pink Skullcap (*Scutellaria suffrutescens*), Creeping Germander (*Teucrium aroanium* or *Teucrium cossonii*), Dwarf Fountain Grass (*Pennisetum alopecuroides*), Jerusalem Sage (*Phlomis fruticose*) and Parry's Agave (*Agave Parryi*).

Jeanne Holmes recommends Esperanza /Yellow Bells (*Tecoma stans*), a shrub called Forsythia Sage (*Salvia marensis*), Flame Acanthus (*Anisacanyhus quadrifidus var. wrightii*), Cherry Laurel (*Prunus caroliniana*), Texas Mountain Laurel (*Sophora secundiflora*), Desert Willow (*Chilopsis linearis*) Vitex (*Vitex agnus-castus* and Fragrant Pink Mimosa (*Mimosa borealis*). Sago Palm (*Cycas revoluta*), Agave or Century Plant (*Agave sp.*), and Sotol (*Dasyilirion texanum*) are not eaten in her experience. It does appear that the Agave can be damaged by antlers however.

Other recommendations include Four Nerve Daisy (*Tetraneris scaposa*), *Artimesia* and Datura or Angel's Trumpet (in the genus of poisonous vespertine plants in the family *Solanaceae*). Some tried and true choices she has made are Coral Honeysuckle (*Lonicera sempervirens*), Cross Vine (*Bignonia capreolata*), Elephant Ears (*Colocasia esculenta*), Cast Iron Plant (*Aspidistra elatior*), Ornamental Ginger (*Alpinia vittata*), Holly Fern (*Cyrotomium falcatum*), Lamb's Ear (*Stachys bysantina*), Blackfoot Daisy (*Melampodium leucanthum*), Jerusalem sage (*Phlomis fruticose*), and Forsythia sage (*Salvia madrensis*).

In Patty's experience, deer will taste gardenias and spit them out. It appears that some of us on the fringes of the deer/city habitats will just have to contend with more than traditional curb appeal when choosing plants for our landscapes. With a shared list of plants undesirable to deer, we can enjoy color and variety in our unfenced landscapes. Patty Brady and Jeanne both noted that roses, despite wicked thorns, get eaten by deer.

Thanks to the Master Gardeners who responded to this enquiry. There was a lot of amazement about deer behavior.

Educational Opportunities In Our Area

Williamson County Master Gardeners 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. Can be used for education or volunteer hours. See VMS for sign-up sheet and details. Note later 9am start time in Nov.

Saturday, November 26 from 9am-11am: Vegetable gardening class led by Jane Bowman.

Saturday, December 31 from 9am-11am: Seed saving and garden maintenance.

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

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

Saturday, November 19 at 10am Composting 101: Please visit website for RSVP instructions.

Please check website for additional classes and updates.

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

Unless otherwise stated, classes are free and are held on Saturdays at 10am under the Revival Tent.

Saturday, November 19 at 10am English Style Cottage Gardening for Texas

Saturday, December 3 at 10am North to South Adapting to Texas Gardening

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

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

Schedule unavailable at publication. Please check website for updates.

Red Barn Garden Center 12881 Pond Springs Road Austin, TX 78729 512-335-8093

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

Classes will resume in 2017.

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

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

Classes will resume in 2017.

Monument Market 500 S. Austin Avenue, Georgetown, Texas, 78626 512-240-4715

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

Classes will resume in 2017. Call for details. Class fees may apply.

Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center 4801 La Crosse Avenue Austin, Texas 78739 512-232-0100

<https://www.wildflower.org/classes/>

Classes will resume in 2017.

Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center 4801 La Crosse Avenue Austin, Texas 78739 512-232-0100

<https://www.wildflower.org/classes/>

Classes will resume in 2017.

Travis County Extension Service 1600-B Smith Rd, Austin 78721

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

Check website for classes. Class fees may apply.

Austin Community College Continuing Education Program

<http://continue.austincc.edu/agriculture>

<http://continue.austincc.edu/landscape>

**[http://continue.austincc.edu/schedule/program?program=Home%20and%20Garden&term=
&location=](http://continue.austincc.edu/schedule/program?program=Home%20and%20Garden&term=&location=)**

Single-session workshops and multi-week classes on topics like soils, pest management, landscape design, turf management and propagation. See online course catalog for details. Locations vary. Tuition and campus parking permit fees apply. Check with WCMGA membership for pre-approval on hours.

Georgetown Garden Club Georgetown Parks and Recreation Community Room, 1101 N. College, Georgetown, Texas 78626

<http://www.georgetowngardenclub.org/Pages/CalendarofEvents.aspx>

Thursday, December 1 at 1:30pm Design with Fruits and Vegetables: Dolores Rumpf, Master Flower Show Judge, will make beautiful arrangements using fruits and vegetables.

Thursday, January 5 at 1:30pm Pressed Garden: Annie Smith, Owner of Pressed Garden, member of Texas Floral Association and Worldwide Pressed Flower Guild, will use pressed flowers to make beautiful pieces of art.

Content may not be eligible for continuing education hours. Check with WCMGA membership for pre-approval on hours.

Native Plant Society of Texas Williamson County Chapter

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

Meets the second Thursday of each month, 7pm-8:30pm at the Georgetown Public Library, 402 West 8th St, Georgetown, TX, 78626. Meetings are free and open to the public. Arrive early (6:30pm) for Plant Identification "Clinic" and Seed Swap. Business meeting at 7 pm. Presentations begin promptly at 7:30 pm. The December 8th meeting is the annual potluck and silent auction. It does not count towards education hours.

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

President – Jane Bowman

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Keyhole Garden – John Clifford

Projects – Tom Kisinger

Awards – Dana Blair

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Membership – Jeanne Barker and Grace Bryce

Plant Sale – Brenda McIndoo

Joss Growers – Paul Howe

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Help Desk – Garry Bowman

Speakers' Bureau – Open

Online Presence – Garry Bowman

Newsletter – Ann Harmon

TMGA Directors

Wayne Rhoden

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Alternates

Jeanne Barker

Mary Sexton

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, Winola VanArtsdalen, Teresa Wilts, Susan Blackledge, Ebby Green and Alice Stulz. Recipe by Ann Harmon.

Editor: Ann Harmon. Proof readers: Catherine Nickle, Sandra Roberson, A.J. Senchack and Radhika Baliga. Cover photo by Lynn Stude.

If you would like to contribute to the January 2017 *Williamson County Master Gardener Newsletter*, please send your submission to Ann Harmon at aharmon@sonic.net by December 25, 2016. As you garden, volunteer and learn, please take a moment to share your stories. experiences with other gardeners. Thank you!

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