

WILLIAMSON COUNTY

GARDENING

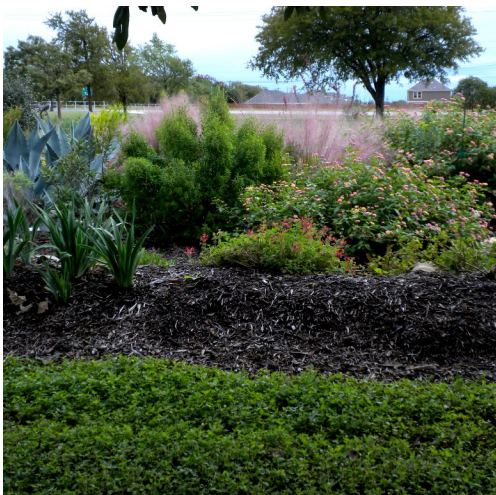
December 2018



TEXAS A&M
AGRILIFE
EXTENSION

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Cover:
 WCMG Drought
 Tolerant Demo Gar-
 den
 Photo by Jim Williams,
 MG 2017

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Williamson County Master Gardeners are on Facebook with information about programs and events.

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

All Rise

Hello everyone! By the time you read this, we will be well into the holiday season and hopefully you will already have had time to clean up your garden after the first big freeze of the year. We were able to cover most of the fall crops at the Serving Center garden and it survived quite well, so that was a great test of our row cover fabric.

I've been enjoying the flowers and magazine that you all gave me at the last meeting so much. I was so surprised and overwhelmed, I hope I remembered to say: "Thank you so very much"! Everyone has been so supportive this year and I can't tell you how grateful I am. I felt like the President's job was a big responsibility and everyone's kindness has certainly made it a pleasure.

I'm writing this on November 20th so I'm looking forward to our next big event, the Awards Dinner, and I hope to see many of you there!

Thank you all for everything you do to make our program such a success.

Teresa Wilts
President, WCMGA

2019 Texas Master Gardeners Conference

Registration for the conference is now open at <http://2019tmgaconference.com/>

This year's conference is "Victoria, Nature's Gateway" located in Victoria April 25—27.

Conference agenda, registration, speakers and lodging information are on the website.

FROM THE CORNER OFFICE

Kate Whitney

Williamson County AgriLife Horticultural Extension Agent

Did You Know?

We are close to wrapping up 2018! I can't believe how quickly the year has gone. For the last newsletter of 2018, I'm going to deviate from talking about the Master Gardener program to talk about other happenings within AgriLife Extension.

Did you know that Texas A&M AgriLife Extension offers programs about health and wellness? These programs are geared toward providing Texans with knowledge to make healthy and safe food choices and to incorporate physical activity into daily life. Our Family and Community Health Agent for Williamson County is Chelsea Stevens. Check out her programs on Facebook or attend an event!

Did you know that Texas A&M AgriLife Extension does youth development? We offer the 4-H program to teach youth about leadership, community service, and life skills through projects like photography, livestock, food and nutrition, robotics, and many more! We also offer curriculum for schools including Hatching in the Classroom, Junior Master Gardeners, Take A Stand Against Bullying, and Keys to the Courthouse.

Cassie Ferguson is the 4-H and Youth Development Extension Agent in Williamson County.

Did you know that Texas A&M AgriLife Extension offers programs about crops and livestock? We provide training to farmers and ranchers about the latest research for growing crops and raising livestock in Williamson County including cattle, new varieties available, pesticides, and many other topics. The Agriculture Extension Agent in Williamson County is Tyler Coufal.

Did you know that Texas A&M AgriLife Extension offers programs about natural resources? You can learn about wildlife management, aquaculture, and conservation. We also co-coordinate the Master Naturalist program with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Service. We do not have a Natural Resource Extension Agent right now but hope to fill the position soon.

We have a wide variety of programs available in Williamson County AgriLife Extension, everything from health to conservation to youth. Be sure to check out our calendar on the website and stop by to meet the other Extension Agents in our office

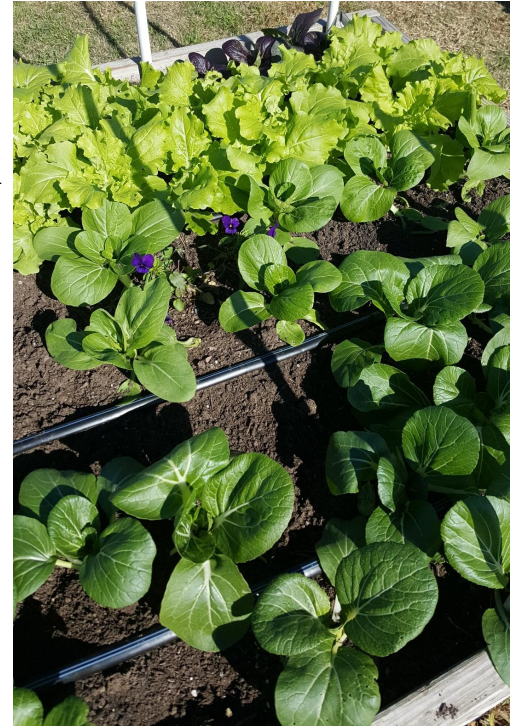
What's Happening in the Vegetable Demonstration Garden?

Judy Ebaugh, MG 2017

In December we will be busy preparing for the coming season, and watching our fall crops grow. Of special interest this month are the winter greens that were provided to our Extension Agent Kate Whitney, from Joe Masabni, Agrilife Vegetable Specialist at the District Research Center in Overton, Texas. They include Specialty Bok Choy, White Stem Pak Choy, Baby Pak Choy, Loose Head Chinese Cabbage and Baby Leaf Mustard Greens.

After being in a mailing box for many days without sun, the transplants looked more ready for the grave than the garden. However, with lots of TLC from our gardeners, they have become beautiful, robust plants. They were put in the garden on October 23rd, and will be maturing throughout the month of December. All of the greens can be eaten when the leaves are large enough to pick, so come sooner than later if you want to see them! You can find them in the raised beds along the drive. The Baby Leaf Mustard will be the first to mature, followed by the Pak and Bok Choy. We expect the Chinese Cabbage to have fully developed heads closer to the New Year.

If you are interested in trying some of these varieties at home, feel free to plant them throughout the winter. They will thrive in rich, well-drained soil with plenty of sun. Allow 6 - 10" spacing between plants, depending upon the variety you choose. Temperatures between 45 and 75 degrees are ideal, but they will survive light frost if covered. The greens can be easily grown in pots and brought inside during a chill. Or they can nicely fill out that brown space in your garden until spring!



Broccoli can handle swings in the weather!

Rick Halle, MG 2017

Fall planted crops have to handle all kinds of weather conditions. We planted carrots and set out broccoli, cabbage, brussels sprout, and kohlrabi transplants on September 18th and 21st. The recommended transplant date for our area is early September but we delayed because daily high temperatures were consistently in the 90's this September. When it wasn't hot it was pouring rain. The Co-CoRaHS rain stations closest to the garden registered 11+ inches of rain in September. We are trialing three broccoli varieties in Trial bed A: Gypsy, Arcadia, and Packman. When we can harvest these broccoli we will share the results in another article. The little transplants took off with those warm temperatures (80's-90's) and lots of moisture through the first half of October. We enjoyed another round of wet (an additional 7 inches of rain), cool weather and high winds that beat up the leaves of the broccoli some around the middle of October but by then the plants were big and sturdy. By early November the Packman Broccoli had formed small heads and the other varieties followed suite quickly. Then Mother nature threw at us the dreaded first frost on November 12th. Elsewhere in the garden we covered young and tender plantings but the broccoli had to face the wind (30 mph) and then cold (25 degrees) with nothing more than a dose of Sea-Tea. Some outer leaves suffered some freeze or wind damage, especially those on the north side of the bed, but the plants are still going strong.



Sept 18



Oct 12



Nov 9 pre freeze

Camera Loose in the Demo Gardens!

Photography by Sonia Schuetze, MG 2016



“Rosemary ... for Remembrance” in the Herb Garden

(quoting Ophelia in Shakespeare’s Hamlet)

Alice Stultz, MG 1996

The Herb Garden has several varieties of rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*) including Salem, Gorizia, Prostrate, ARP and Upright. Rosemary has fragrant evergreen branches of needle like leaves that feel sticky or like resin when rubbed between one’s fingers. The fragrances, leaf shape and color, and the color of the flowers are subtly different. Varieties suggested for Texas by the Texas A&M Agrilife Extension are ARP, Blue Boy, Creeping, Dancing Waters, Golden Rain, Pine Scented, Pink, Spice Islands, Upright and White. They recommend Pine Scented, Blue Boy, Spice Islands and White for cooking. Landscape recommended varieties are ARP, Dancing Waters, Golden Rain, Pink and White.¹

The rosemary plant is originally from the Mediterranean region of the world where it is traditionally paired with lamb. It has a very strong flavor and is often used sparingly in cooking. Some other uses are as a stick for shish kabobs, with fresh stems tied together as a barbeque brush and chopped fine in recipes including bread dough or in butter.²

Rosemary can be propagated by stem cuttings in water or soil and by layering a limb still attached to the plant in soil. Prostrate varieties will send roots naturally at a juncture with the soil. Rosemary prefers regular watering and sunny or half sunny locations.

Rosemary makes an excellent evergreen addition to a flower arrangement. In December, one sees potted rosemary trimmed like a Christmas tree or twisted into the shape of a living wreath. The branches can be pinned onto a straw wreath base and given to a friend or tied together with a ribbon on a gift.

The rosemary in our herb garden have done well for several years with light pruning. The recent autumn rains have caused root rot on the rosemary plants on the low side of our garden. Even after freezing weather, tiny pale blue flowers are still on the Tuscan Blue and Prostrate varieties. The drive to Llano, west of here, has a resplendent crop of prostrate rosemary near the Buchanan dam.

Rosemary-Orange Pesto

1-2 cloves garlic, crushed

1 c green onions, cut in 1-inch pieces

½ c fresh oregano

¼ c extra virgin olive oil

2 tbs fresh rosemary

¼ c vegetable oil

1 tbs grated orange peel

¼ tsp cayenne pepper

Place all in blender or processor and blend until smooth. Refrigerate or freeze. Yields 1- 1 1/2 cups ³

¹Masabani, Joseph and Stephen King, Easy Gardening: Rosemary, Texas A&M Agrilife Extension publication E623, 1/13.

²Hill, Madalene and Gwen Barclay with Jean Hardy, Southern Herb Growing, Shearer Publishing, Fredericksburg, TX, 1987, pp.111-112.

³Ibid., p.148.



CRAPE MYRTLES for TEXAS

Val Black, MG 2014

Since January and February is the time to trim your crape myrtles, I thought this would be a good time to talk about them and how to care for them. *Lagerstroemia indica* (crape myrtle, crepe myrtle, crepeflower) are natives of China, not France, are the most popular flowering trees in the southern United States. It was introduced by a Frenchman, Andre Michaux, to South Carolina in about 1786. As one of the toughest, adaptable, and showiest plants grown in our Texas landscapes, they are very drought tolerant once established (which can take two years).

There are many new cultivars in different sizes and colors that do well in Central Texas including dwarf (3-6ft) and the semi-dwarf (7-15ft) varieties that can grow in containers. Most varieties also have nice fall leaf color and usually have a peeling bark providing interest in the winter months. Select one that meets the needs of your desired location in your yard. Please don't plant a crape that will be grow 30ft tall in a 10ft space. See link below for characteristics of crape myrtle varieties.

For years folks planted the older varieties which grew too large for their spaces requiring them to cut them back severely to make them fit in their space. It became an annual task evolving into an annual bad habit. Even some ill-informed landscapers think this must be done annually. Well, I am here to tell you: CRAPE MURDER is unnecessary! Excessive pruning looks very unsightly and the repetitive annual scarring will weaken the plant. Crape blooms on new wood, so it's best to gently trim your plant in the winter to promote new spring growth. If you trim late spring, you will remove the new growth resulting in decreased blooms.

The only exception to excessive trimming is when you first purchase a small tree. I like to have 3-5 main trunks so if there are more, I cut the weakest or ugly trunk branches all the way back to the ground. This will give you a more attractive tree. In subsequent maintenance, tip trimming to cut off old blooms, broken branches, and to tidy up the tree is all that is needed. Cut back to the ground any suckers that come up around the base of the tree. They also need a good trim before spring to promote more and bigger bloom production. If you prune off old blooms, it will also encourage new blooms to develop.

Start fertilizing in early Spring with a light application of slow-release fertilizer such as 19-5-9 before growth starts. I usually repeat this in early fall. A general recommendation is 2 pounds (two cupfuls) per 1000 square feet of root area for most trees and shrubs. The number of square feet in the root area is determined by the branch spread of the tree. I prefer the slow release fertilizer be-

cause too much nitrogen will give a lot of green bush, and more suckers coming up from the ground with less flower production.

Common problems with crape myrtles include aphids, crape myrtle scale, powdery mildew and sooty mold. The sooty mold is a result of fungus growing on the sugary honeydew produced by aphids and scale. Powdery mildew often is caused by poor ventilation in weak trees. Both cause leaf discoloration and subsequent early leaf drop. Due to the honeydew the leaves are sticky and stick to things like the bottoms of shoes. Planting in an area that receives at least six hours of full sun and providing good air circulation between plants will decrease chances of mildew and mold. Both are easily treated with a fungicide taking care to closely follow the label instructions. If planted in a shady area, crape myrtles will not bloom as profusely and will be more prone to diseases. There are many cultivars on the market today that are mildew-resistant.

Aphids are a perennial problem during the growing season throughout the garden and certainly on crape myrtles. Generally, they are easily managed with a strong spray of water to knock them off the leaves and onto the ground where they die. A drenching spray with horticultural soap is quite useful but, if your crape is tall, it can be hard to spray that high. Lady beetles are good at keeping aphids under control so making your yard friendly to them is helpful. The best way to do this is avoid broad spectrum insecticides. See the link below for more information.

We are beginning to see more Crape Myrtle bark scale disease in the area. As insects go, this is a newcomer, first discovered by a landscaper in Richardson, TX in 2004. Entomologists with Texas A&M are currently conducting more research for this insect. It still appears that for the home owner, the systemic insecticide Imidacloprid applied as a soil drench around the affected plant during May is your best chance of controlling the population. Typically, the pest is not lethal to your plant. It just creates a mess on the leaves and branches when it's bad. The Twice Stabbed Lady Beetle eats scale later in the growing season, but they are slow feeders and can't keep up with the scale reproduction rate to maintain good control. See the link below for more information.



Powdery Mildew on Crape



Crape Myrtle bark scale



Twice Stabbed Lady Beetle

If Ladybugs are around your garden, you will likely see small crocodile-looking insects on your plants. These are ladybug larvae and have ravenous appetites for aphids. They are the hungry teenagers of the garden. These are great beneficial insects to have around so we don't want to hurt them with broad-spectrum insecticides. Water sprays and horticultural soap will not hurt them. There are a lot of good bugs out there, not all bugs are bad bugs.

Remember if you keep your crape myrtles healthy, lightly trimmed and properly fertilized, your crape myrtles will reward you with many years of beauty and enjoyment. For further questions you can also contact the Williamson County AgriLife Extension Service 512-943-3300



Ladybug larva

Crape Myrtle varieties

https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/databases/crapemyrtle/crape_myrtle_varieties.html

Aphids

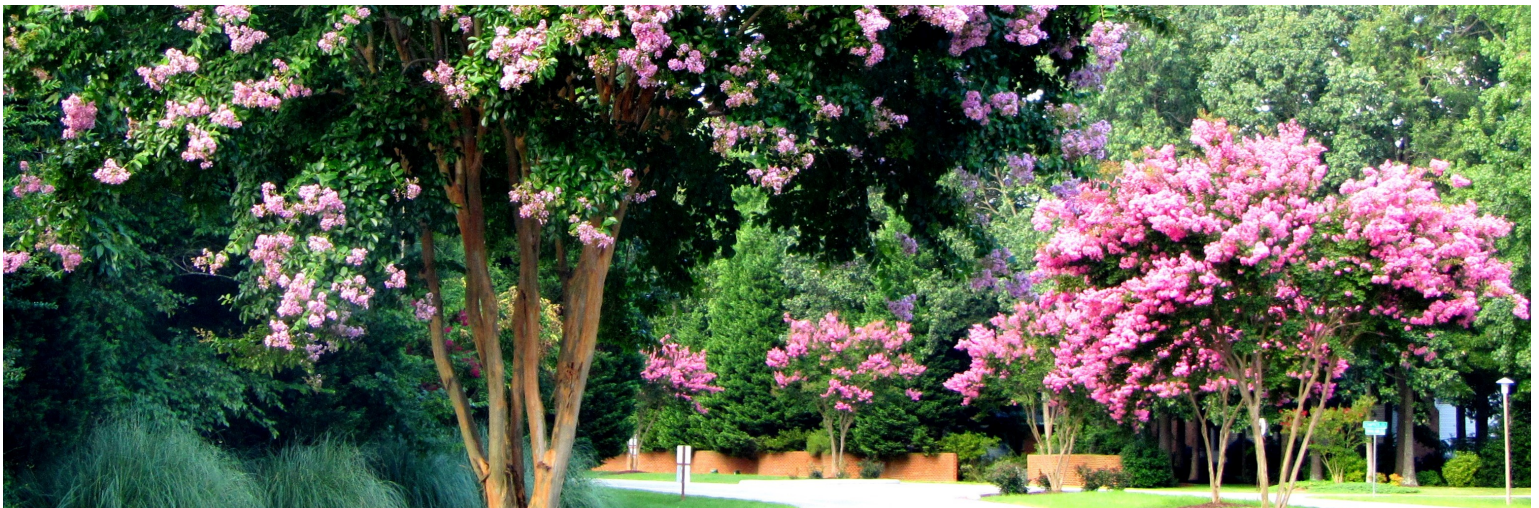
<http://austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Watershed/growgreen/factsheets/aphids.pdf>

Powdery Mildew

<http://austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Watershed/growgreen/factsheets/powderymildew.pdf>

Crape Myrtle Bark Scale

<https://citybugs.tamu.edu/files/2010/05/EHT-049-Crape-myrtle-bark-scale.pdf>



Winola's Gardening Tips - December 2018

by Winola VanArtsdalen, MG 2007

You can prune oak trees but seal all cuts of any size immediately to guard against oak wilt.

Remove weeds now while they are easy to see.

Do not work soil when it is wet. Squeeze a handful of soil, and, if it breaks apart easily, it is okay to dig.

November and December are good months for planting/transplanting both trees and ever-green shrubs. Native or adapted trees and shrubs help wildlife as well as saving you time and money. Start with the tree selector information at <http://texastreeplanting.tamu.edu/index.html>

Go to <https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/earthkind/landscape/planting-a-tree/> and/or <http://texastreeplanting.tamu.edu/TreePlantingTools.html> for details on how to plant your tree.

If you have subtropicals, cover before an extended freeze or ice storm. Sago palm and oleander are especially difficult to cover, as well as being dangerous for pets and children, so consider carefully before planting.

Mulch two to three inches deep, but keep away from plant stems, including tree trunks.

Drain and store water hoses. Clean, oil and repair tools.



Dry Garden photos by Sonia Schuetze, MG 2016

IN THE WEEDS

Fall Asters: Beauty and the Weed

AJ Senchack, WCMG 2012

The Beauty. Autumn is such a redeeming time of the year for gardeners with all the rain, cool weather, and fall flowers! One of my favorite, long-lasting flowers in the September-November time period is the herbaceous, perennial known as the **aromatic aster** or **October skies** (*Symphyotrichum oblongifolium*¹). Its violet-blue-to-purple ray and yellow-disk florets (2-4 cm.) resemble small daisies that grab your attention, with a colorful flood of flowers smothering its 2'-3' tall, mounded, bushy mother plant. (See Fig. 1.) Its stems are slender and rigid, with the short, narrow rough leaves that become smaller at the top. This easy-to-grow member of the sunflower family (*Asteraceae* or *Compositae*) ranges from Minnesota and North Dakota south to Texas and then east to North Carolina and Pennsylvania. It loves our garden's calcareous soils, among other types, and even shows up as a wildflower in our prairies. But this newsletter column is about weeds, so...



Figure 1. Aromatic or Purple Aster (*Symphyotrichum oblongifolium*) that are found in our Drought-Tolerant

The Weed (or Is It “The Wildflower”?). In contrast, a diminutive lookalike of the **aromatic aster** has taken up a deep-rooted residence in my front lawn the last few years. Unlike the fall garden daisy, this impish imitator is not welcomed by most gardeners. Why? Its profusion of seeds generated in weedier lawns in the neighborhood easily invade and spread like wildfire in turf grasses. Once this perennial is established, natural eradication methods can prove trying.

¹**Technical Note:** It is estimated that the aster family comprises about very significant 10% of all flowering plants (of course, not all family members resemble a daisy, e.g., artichokes). Recently, botanists decided to restrict the genus *Aster* to only those asters found in Eurasia. North American asters are now divided into the genera *Symphyotrichum*, *Ionactis*, *Eurybia*, *Seriocarpus*, *Doellingeria*, *Ampelaster* and *Oclemena*.

Going by the common name, ***roadside aster***, this weed has smaller (1-2 cm.) white-to-lightly-blue rays with yellow-disk flowers (see Fig. 2). Yes, the eye of the non-gardener sees a hardy daisy that looks so delicate and attractive, and our native bees love it! But, a seasoned gardener knows different. Its behavioral traits clearly define it as a noxious weed, especially to those who pride themselves on a well-kept yard. Because the ***roadside daisy*** thrives in extremely dry, drought conditions like Central Texas has experienced in recent years, its thread-like leaves seem to explode under dry conditions, compared to our lawn grasses that struggle under water restrictions. Moreover, I find it difficult to see them unless I get down on all fours and look for the wiry leaves that seem to intertwine themselves among the wider grass leaves. Only when white flowers burst out in October do I fully comprehend how perniciously this weed has spread during the summer!

So, I'm not a big fan of these "cute little daisies." First, their presence speaks poorly to how well I care for my lawn. Second, and even worse, they can take over your lawn in a few years if you let them. What if you share my sentiments, how do we avoid these little pesky devils? Neil Sperry says that the best cure is to take better care of your lawn (Ouch! That hurts!). Of course, with our recent drought conditions and water restrictions, how much better can you treat your lawn? Nevertheless, Sperry says water, fertilize, and mow our lawn "properly", and this aster weed will be the first to disappear. **TRANSLATION:** As always, a vigorous, healthy turf is the best cure of weeds. I suspect Sperry probably spends more on his water bill to maintain his gardens than I do on my entire electric, trash, AND water utilities (and that doesn't include the gardeners he hires). Alternatively, I find hand-pulling younger plants is not difficult after an October rain or good ground soaking. But, if I try to pull out last year's or older plants with their long taproot (see Fig. 3), my lower back starts talking to me. Better to use a sharp hoe to sever the taproot of these troublesome characters. A very last resort is to apply a broadleaf weedkiller such as 2,4-D.

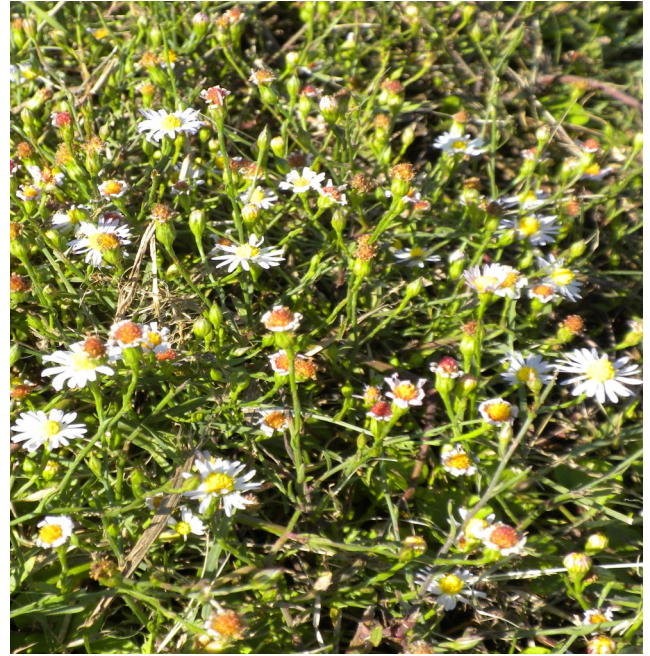


Fig. 2. Roadside asters. These weeds/wildflowers can be found lying in the grass on the north and east sides of our Drought-Tolerant garden



Fig. 2. Roadside asters enjoying my lawn. Also, In the grass on the north and east sides of our Drought-Tolerant Demo Garden is a "good collection" of Roadside Asters.

So, enjoy this very pretty wildflower as long as it's growing alongside the roadway or in a meadow. But, as Sperry says it, "...to those who say "I actually think it's kinda pretty," from those people who contribute seed to my lawn, people who are trying to maintain attractive lawns won't agree with you at all. To them (us), this weed is a bit like somebody throwing trash all over our yards."²

²From Neil Sperry, "Preventing Roadside Aster," downloaded November 12, 2018, from <https://neilsperry.com/notes/2013/10/preventing-roadside-aster/>



Fig. 3. The wiry (woody) Roadside Aster leaves and their long, tough-as-a-



Skipper on Golden Lantana, photo by Jim Williams MG 2017

Tree Maintenance – Remove Those Stakes!

by Linda Collins, MG 2017

I love being a Master Gardener (MG)! The more I learn, the more I realize I don't know – *or remember*.

Two years ago, I bought a new home in Jarrell. The builder installed two trees in every front yard securing them with very constraining wraps and stakes. I take pride in my yard and have often been complimented on how well my yard looks. My front trees (Monterey Oaks) have not grown much but they looked healthy until I took a closer look last week. I was very wrong! The trunks, where they were secured, had about a quarter inch deep gouging cut around them. At that moment I felt horrible and realized I had failed my precious trees. I quickly removed the restraints and realized that I forgot an important lesson I was taught during my MG classroom training:

“Remove all support from small trees within 1 year after planting. The tree should have become established within this period. Growth and trunk strength are reportedly reduced if the supports are left in place for longer periods.”¹

My trees are now free and I hope they will forgive me!

¹Texas A&M Agrilife Extension, Master Gardener Handbook, Chapter 7, Landscape Horticulture, p. 7-21.



From My Garden To My Table

Martha Baddour, MG 2004

I fell in love with Meyer lemons when a friend gave me two lemons from her garden and this recipe. It was love at first bite!

Meyer lemons (*Citrus x meyeri*) are a cross between a lemon and orange. The tree is native to China and was brought to the United States in 1908 by Frank Meyer. The original tree was banned in the 1940's due to the spread of viruses such as citrus tristeza virus. In the 1970's, a virus free, Meyer Improved Lemon Tree was developed and is now widely available in garden centers.

Meyer Lemon Trees grow well in containers in Central Texas and are incredibly easy to grow. They produce fragrant blooms in the spring and start setting fruit shortly thereafter. The lemons are ready to harvest in the fall when they turn a golden yellow hue—much like the color of an egg yolk. They need to be protected from freezing temperatures and can be covered on a protected patio or brought indoors.

The Meyer lemon is versatile and can be used in most recipes that call for lemons. The fruit is sweeter than a lemon, has a thinner skin, and no white pith so the whole fruit can be used in recipes. If you do not grow your own Meyer lemons, you can usually find them in local grocery and specialty stores.

I hope you enjoy this amazing tart!

Lazy Mary's Lemon Tart

- Your favorite 9-inch tart shell or pie shell, blind baked
- 1 large Meyer lemon cut into 8 pieces.
- 3/4c -1 1/2 cup sugar (since the Meyer lemon is sweeter than a regular lemon, I use the lower amount of sugar)
- 1 stick unsalted butter cut into chunks
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 4 large eggs
- dash salt

- 1) Preheat oven to 350*.
- 2) Put all ingredients (except the tart shell) in the blender and whirl like crazy! (Note: If there are still large pieces of lemon seeds after blending you can remove these)
- 3) Pour into tart shell.
- 4) Bake for 35 to 40 minutes or until set, watching so that the top doesn't burn.
- 5) Let cool and serve at room temperature or chilled. It is good sprinkled with powdered sugar and a dollop of whipped cream.

Homegrown Herbs Dress Up Store-Bought Ingredients

by Radhika Baliga, MG 2015

Homegrown herbs have the power to transform ordinary foods into extraordinary fare. But you don't have to spend hours in the kitchen to prepare delicious foods with herbs. Cooking with herbs can be quick and easy. Here are some fun ways to use homegrown herbs to dress up common store-bought ingredients. Try these ideas when you're entertaining guests or attending potlucks this holiday season.

Green Hummus for a Vegetable Tray

Buy: Hummus, vegetable tray

Clip: Cilantro, parsley, mint, dill

Add extra color and flavor to hummus with a mixture of tender green herbs. Put cilantro, parsley, mint, dill, and hummus into a food processor and blend until smooth. Pour hummus into a serving bowl and drizzle with olive oil and garnish with pomegranate arils (optional). Serve hummus with a vegetable tray (or with pita chips).

Dill Goat Cheese Log for a Cheese Board

Buy: Chevre goat cheese log

Clip: Dill

Create a festive, verdant addition to your cheese board by rolling a goat cheese log into chopped fresh dill. Serve with crackers or toasted bread or, for an interesting twist, with beet chips and smoked salmon.

Rosemary Olives for a Cocktail Party

Buy: Mixed olives (jarred or from olive bar)

Clip: Rosemary

Rosemary olives are a fun salty snack to serve with drinks. Heat olive oil, sliced garlic, lemon or orange peels, and chopped rosemary leaves in a small saucepan. When the garlic is golden, turn off the heat and add the warm olive oil to drained olives and stir. Let sit for 15 min before serving.

Cilantro Ranch Dressing for Salad

Buy: Bottled ranch dressing, pickled jalapenos, and salad greens

Clip: Cilantro

This ranch dressing may remind you of something from a local Tex-Mex restaurant. Combine cilantro leaves, pickled jalapenos, and ranch dressing in a blender jar and process until smooth. Serve cilantro ranch with salad greens (or tortilla chips, a vegetable tray, chicken wings, fish tacos...you get the idea).

Rosemary Dipping Oil for French Baguette

Buy: Baguette from bakery section, extra virgin olive oil

Clip: Rosemary

Instead of serving bread with butter, why not try bread with an herb-infused dipping oil? Gently heat olive oil in a small skillet and add chopped rosemary, and garlic. When the garlic turns golden, turn off the heat. Pour the oil onto small individual serving plates. Sprinkle each plate with flaky salt and cracked black pepper. Serve the dipping oil with warm baguette slices.

Fried Sage Garnish for Butternut Squash Soup

Buy: Butternut squash soup

Clip: Sage

Fried sage adds flavor and texture to creamy butternut squash soup. Start by heating up the butternut squash soup. Meanwhile, warm olive oil or butter in a small skillet. Add sage leaves to the oil or butter and fry. Put sage leaves on a plate to drain. Ladle warm soup into individual serving bowls and garnish each bowl with crispy sage leaves and a drizzle of the olive oil or butter used for frying.

Thyme Breadcrumb Topper for Macaroni and Cheese

Buy: Macaroni and cheese from prepared foods section, breadcrumbs

Clip: Thyme

Macaroni and cheese casserole always seems more glamorous when it has a crunchy topper. Combine breadcrumbs with melted butter, grated parmesan cheese (optional), and fresh thyme leaves. Sprinkle breadcrumbs over the macaroni and cheese and bake in a 350 deg F oven until the macaroni and cheese is heated through and the breadcrumb topper is golden brown.

Mexican Mint Marigold Chicken Salad in Lettuce Cups

Buy: Chicken Salad from deli section, butter lettuce

Clip: Mexican mint marigold

Mexican mint marigold is our regional substitute for tarragon and it pairs well with chicken. To amp up a mayo-based chicken salad, just add chopped Mexican mint marigold leaves. Serve the chicken salad in lettuce cups (or on crackers or in croissant sandwiches).

Chimichurri Sauce for Roasted Chicken

Buy: Rotisserie Chicken

Clip: Parsley, cilantro, oregano, chives

Chimichurri is a tangy, herbaceous, green sauce that balances the richness of roasted chicken. To make the chimichurri, blend red wine vinegar, olive oil, garlic, herbs (parsley, cilantro, oregano, chives), red pepper flakes, salt, and pepper in a food processor until a loose sauce forms. Portion carved roasted chicken pieces onto serving plates and drizzle the chicken with chimichurri sauce.



WCMG EVENTS

December 6

Annual Master Gardener Association Awards Banquet
Georgetown Country Club

December 7

Lettuce Program Lunch N Learn
AgriLife Training Room
Noon to 1 pm

December 22

Hands On In The Garden—Compost with Tommy King
AgriLife Training Room
9 to 11 am

January 7

WCMGA Board Meeting
AgriLife Training Room
1 to 3 pm
All members are welcome to attend

January 14

WCMGA Monthly Membership Meeting
“Winter Care of the Perennial Garden” with Colleen Dieter
6:30 to 8 pm

January 21

WCMGA Horticulture Field Trip: De Leon, TX
8 am to 6 pm

January 26

Hands On In The Garden