

# Williamson County Master Gardener JOURNAL

## President's Report

*by Jeanne Barker*

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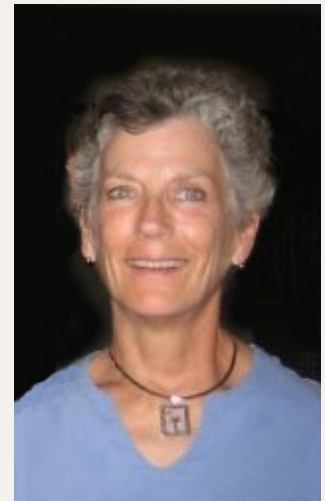
There are lots of changes in store for WCMGA. The most exciting change is that we have a new County Extension Agent, Fred Hall. Fred comes to us from Wichita County where he had an active Master Gardener program. I'm looking forward to a long and productive partnership with Fred.

Another change for us is that we are now being charged for all copies being made at the extension office. Previously, we only paid for color copies. But now we pay for all copies. Please try to go paperless whenever possible. It will save the environment and our budget.

If you want to get more involved in WCMGA, consider running for a board position. Our Nominating Committee will be forming soon and they will be looking for the 2014 slate of officers. If you are interested in how the WCMGA board works, our board meetings are open to all members and our meeting minutes are available on our website.

Be sure to welcome our new agent, Fred Hall!

Jeanne Barker



# Berry Springs

county park and preserve

*by Susan Blackledge*

*May was a very busy & productive month at the park!*

## Pecan Tree Care

Our neighbor and owner of Schwegmann Pecans, David Schwegmann gave a very informative hands-on training on the care of our native pecan trees. Nineteen folks gathered at the amphitheater to learn all about how to nurture pecan trees to ensure their health and hopefully their production of pecans. Following the lesson everyone went out into the fields and learned how to prune limbs for future growth, mulch their beds to ensure moisture and to keep weeds out, and how to spray zinc for the nutrition and vitality of the trees. In January 2010, one hundred 4-year old trees were planted and put on an irrigated drip system. Four different varieties of pecan trees, (Caddo, Kanza, Nacona and Pawnee), were chosen to see if they were suited for this area of Texas. We have lost a few to the drought. However, tree seedlings have come from the roots of the ones we lost. Most trees are thriving.



**We are still spraying zinc on the trees every other Tuesday from 9am till noon. Our dates to spray are July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>. If weather does not permit on Tuesdays, we spray the Thursday of the same week.**

## Bluebonnet and Poppy Seed Harvesting

What a wonderful spring it has been! Another park neighbor, Alice George, every year offers access to her ten acre field for us to harvest bluebonnets. Fourteen folks geared up to do some serious picking. We gathered 15 five-gallon buckets of seed which were taken by individuals to do home work of harvesting the seeds. These seeds will added to our nature trail

and prairie restoration areas in the fall.

In addition to bluebonnets we had a bumper crop of red poppies to harvest from our flower beds. We have enjoyed the blooms much longer this year due to a cool spring. These seeds were also taken by individuals and given to the WILCO Juvenile Services to harvest. In the fall, the seeds will be added to our flower beds and wildflower areas.







### Juvenile Services Work Days:

WILCO Juvenile Services has adopted Berry Springs Park. They have scheduled work days to perform Community Service. On Wednesday June 12<sup>th</sup> the kids had a scavenger hunt to identify and remove invasive plants in our wildflower areas. They were quite successful and really seemed to enjoy learning about the different plants. We have three more scheduled work days on Wednesdays, 8:30 am to noon on July 10<sup>th</sup> and August 14<sup>th</sup>. Volunteer hours for working with the youth is considered credit for JMG hours for MG Interns.

For  
all of the above  
mentioned scheduled work  
days and any other time you may  
like to volunteer please contact  
Susan Blackledge at 512-930-0040  
or [sblackledge@wilco.org](mailto:sblackledge@wilco.org). We  
always have need of help and we  
can work with your schedule to  
accommodate you. Thanks to all  
for your ongoing support of Berry  
Springs. Your efforts are truly  
appreciated.



## Working in the Demo Garden, An Intern's Perspective

by Shelia Nally

I really enjoying working the Demo Garden! The people are exceptional people and gardeners and I always learn something. One Tuesday morning, I was working in the demo garden with a couple of ladies. One was trimming her tomato plants. She was trimming off the stems, branches and leaves that were between the ground and about nine inches up the stem of the plant. She said it was to aerate the plants to defend against disease. Never heard of such. Another MG told her about it. Those plants are gloriously healthy and loaded with tomatoes. Since then, I have had the pleasure of eating one or two of those tomatoes and they are delicious.

The same tomato lady has hung a red ball on the bottoms of two of her tomato plants. When I asked someone about it, they said it was to fool the birds into thinking that there was nothing to eat on the plants. How clever! Where did she learn that and, more importantly, where did she get it?

I learn so much that I would not learn anywhere else that I know of. Some things are more important than others - such as the fact that there is one corn silk per kernel of corn. Interesting? Yes. Important? Maybe!

The day we trimmed 700 pounds of onions, we sat around the onions and chatted while working. How this came up, I do not remember, but I learned there was such a thing as key hole gardening. It is an interesting concept. I looked it up on the internet and found several versions. I would love to see a working one. One of the ladies at the table said her neighbor has three! It might be a good idea to add one to our garden.

One day, as I was hand watering a raised bed, something moved in the carrots. I thought it was a mouse! But no! It was a baby rabbit! I found five baby rabbits in the bed I was watering! We dried them off and left them for mama to come back to - among the carrots. Yes, that presents a problem, but we will just put cages around the beds to keep these babies, and their mama, out as they get bigger. Normally we water by timed drip system. So, it was just meant for us to have a blessing by discovering these babies.

For me, hands on learning is more fun than any book. So I look forward to every Tuesday that I am able to work at our Demo Garden. Maybe you should join us. You might just learn something you didn't know.

We are also working on the arbor and circle and paths to each of our gardening areas. It's a lot of hard work but lots of enjoyable socializing. You can't beat the people or the topics. See you there!



# Over 700 Pounds of Onions!!

by Jinna MacLaurin, with pictures by Chuck McKelley and Mike Harper

At the end of May, Master Gardeners harvested more than 700 pounds of onions at the demonstration garden!



The onions were laid in a row to dry, with the greens of one onion covering the preceding onion so as to protect the bulb from the sun.



The following week, volunteers spent four hours trimming and bagging the onions. Almost 350 pounds of red, yellow, and white onions were then donated to The Caring Place Serving Center and another 350 pounds to the Round Rock Serving Center.



Workers at the serving centers were a bit amazed by the quantity of the donation (a pickup truck load full), but fortunately the onions will keep well and provide a good supply for several months.





Every year, the demonstration garden donates many kinds of fresh produce to county serving centers. It is a wonderful place to volunteer and to learn.



The Williamson County Master Gardener demonstration garden is located north of the Williamson County Extension Office driveway at 3151 SE Innerloop Road, Georgetown, Texas. Master gardeners are usually in the vegetable garden on Tuesday and, sometimes, Friday mornings from roughly 8:00 to 10:00. When the weather is cooler, work starts about an hour later. For more information on the demonstration garden, or to help with the harvest, please visit, or contact [George Prall](#). Another great source of information is Chuck McKelley's blog [In the Veggie Garden](#), which can be found on the WCMGA website.





# GREAT PROGRESS IN THE ARBOR AREA!

BY JINNA MACLAURIN



The Landscape Committee, along with many volunteers, is beginning to implement some of the suggestions of the WCMGA Survey. Work has begun on the first phase of a pathway system that will eventually link all the current and future gardens in the WCMGA Demo Gardens at our Extension Office grounds.

Early in the morning on June 1, a sizable group of volunteers gathered for a work session. After some breakfast tacos and socializing, everyone got to work. Several hours later, volunteers not only had removed the sod at the entrance, installed landscape fabric and shoveled a yard of decomposed granite into the pathway, but also had completed the circle area (over 20 feet across), so that it is now ready for landscape fabric and the next load of decomposed granite.

For more information about landscaping volunteer opportunities, contact the chair of the Landscape Committee, **Sandy Lawrence** at [swlawrence@austin.rr.com](mailto:swlawrence@austin.rr.com).



# Texas Rainwater Catchment Association Annual Conference

*by Carol Parsonage*

As a Master Gardener Rainwater Harvesting Specialist, I find there are limited opportunities to stay up to date on developments in this specialty area. But the Texas Rainwater Catchment Association Annual Conference held in San Marcos on May 11<sup>th</sup> proved well worth the drive and the cost. Concurrent sessions offered a choice between product innovation and installation and rainwater harvesting experiences and futures. I chose to attend the second track.

Rainwater Harvesters John Knight and Stephanie and Rick Ertel, all from the Kerrville area, spoke of their experiences living entirely on rainwater. John's home is refreshing in its normality while the Ertel home is enlightening in its innovation. The custom built Ertel home built entirely "off the grid," is sited and constructed to be energy efficient, and includes both rainwater harvesting and solar installations.

Dottie Woodson, Extension Program Specialist for Water Resources at the Texas A&M Agrilife Research and Extension Center at Dallas, previewed the former caretaker's house which the Center and its partners transformed into a WaterSense demonstration home. The home interior includes dual-flush toilets, low flow shower heads and water efficient appliances. The exterior features a xeriscape landscape, water efficient irrigation and rainwater harvesting. Dottie explained that WaterSense is an EPA designation for lower water use similar to the Energy Star rating that has been adopted by many manufacturers and has helped consumers interested in lowering their energy use.

As part of his presentation Austin based Professional Engineer David Venhuizen provided a look into the future with a vision of residential development incorporating rainwater harvesting in place of utility supplied water. I found it gratifying that not only is such thinking occurring but it is being presented publicly in sessions such as this.

Finally, for the data driven among us, keynote speaker, Dr. David R. Maidment from The Center for Research in Water Resources at UT Austin, showed us how data from diverse sources such as the US Drought Monitor (a



synthesis of multiple indices and impacts), the Gravity Recovery and Climate Experiment (a satellite based monitoring of global water volume) and the Land Data Assimilation System (global land surface data simulated by land surface models) is closely correlated and indicates drought conditions in Texas. His striking images of the “browning” of Texas from September 2010 to September 2011 were taken from the Land Data Assimilation System. Among his conclusions: drought is a fact of life in Texas, the 2011 drought continues and its end is unknown, Texas surface water supplies are significantly diminished, rainwater harvesting is an important water source, and GIS and new water web service technologies can help with design.

Mr. Venhuizen's and Dr. Maidment's presentations are available on the [Texas Rainwater Catchment Association's website](#).

The 2013 class of the Williamson County Master Gardeners begins on August 6, 2013. Classes are held each Tuesday from 1-5 pm through November 12, 2013, at the Williamson County Extension Office in Georgetown. The class schedule is [here](#).

# Monthly Gardening Tips

*Winola VanArtsdalen*

## **Gardening Tips for July**

- Take care of yourself! Try to work early in morning, and do stay hydrated!
- Spend those hours of afternoon heat beginning your planning for fall, the best time to plant!
- Water deeply, infrequently, and mulch, mulch, mulch!
- Remove spent blooms. Trim back a few inches to prompt reblooming.
- Do not prune drastically or fertilize during this heat. Let the plant rest!
- You can trim oak trees on hot days in July and August, but paint all wounds on oak trees any size, any season, immediately!
- For spider mites, spray leaves with hard spray, especially underneath.
- Raise mower height, so blades of grass can shade roots.
- If you must treat for grubs, this is the time. Treat only if you have three or more grubs per sq. ft.
- For lawn care in drought, see the Texas A&M publication [Keep Your Lawn Alive during Drought](#).

## **Gardening Tips for August**

- Use sharpened blades, and keep mower height raised during hot weather. Never cut more than 1/3 height of grass.
- Though fertilization is usually recommended in August for Bermuda grass, do not fertilize during drought.
- For fall planting, begin to prepare soil now, as organics are best in soil several weeks before planting. Start now to be ready to pull back the mulch and plant late next month.
- Have wildflower seeds ready for planting October 1.
- Be prepared to apply a pre-emergent herbicide September 1 for control of annual winter weeds in lawn .



## ***SPRING GARDEN FAIR***

*by Alicia Shamblin, reported for Linda Zazula, Cathy Sariego and Carrie Pitt*



Can you lip read? This lovely little doggie (Mancha) is trying to get your attention. He is so happy with the success of the Master Gardener Spring Garden Fair 2013 and he is searching for the next Master Gardener who will want to “outdo” 2013 and take the lead the 2014 Spring Garden Fair. And in your spare time, you can rub his belly. Cute.

Won't you step up to the plate for 2014? Planning has to be done now to reserve dates, etc., to have another successful Williamson County Master Gardener Spring Garden Fair 2014.

This year's fair was good in many ways because we all learned how to make things work better and how to come up with quick, working solutions when what was initially planned did not work and quick fixes had to happen.

Saturday, April 6, 2013 was a cold, very windy day, making canopies unnecessary. Designated Fair speakers had to be moved indoors and it was later decided to keep speakers indoors in the future as they are a very important part of the Fair and also allow for better general atmosphere and screen visibility.

The 4-H kids were in the same room as the speakers and also very respectful of the speakers and did not create noise problems. Discussions were held with Laura Epps, 4-H volunteer, regarding alternative locations for providing food at future garden fairs. She is anxious to continue with this program.

More Demonstration Stations will be planned next year because visitors to the fair were requesting certain topics, e.g., soil preparation, landscaping ideas focusing on native and adaptive plants and hypertufa demonstrations. The number of Demonstration Stations would be dependent on the number of Master Gardeners willing to participate.

Plant sales were good and credit card acceptance went smoothly and efficiently.

The fair flowed very well from the exuberant greeting at the “Ask the MG” Station through each station in between and all the way over to the different gardens. All stations and areas looked really great. While everyone of the stations was eye-catching, the real focus was “hands on teaching”. A tremendous amount of teaching and learning was done at the fair and a lot of fun was had in the process.

Thank you to all the Master Gardeners and many spouses and friends that volunteered to make this year MUY BUENO! Cha Cha!



### **W-A-N-T-E-D!**

**CHAIRPERSON TO LEAD SPRING GARDEN FAIR 2014.**

**CAN BE MALE OR FEMALE. ANY SIZE OR COLOR.**

**POLKA DOTS NEED NOT APPLY.**

**ABLE TO LEAP TALL BUILDINGS IN A SINGLE BOUND.**

**ABLE TO LEAD, ORGANIZE, BE PATIENT, ASK FOR HELP,  
LISTEN, READ, WRITE, SPEAK ENGLISH.**

**MUST PLAY WELL WITH OTHERS.**

**HIGH PAY POSITION FOR LOTS OF WORK.**

**EXTRA PAY AND BENEFITS FOR OVERTIME WORK AND  
KNOWLEDGE OF OTHER LANGUAGES.**

**MUST RESPOND AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. THIS POSITION WILL  
NOT BE OPEN FOR LONG.**

**WARNING! WITHOUT THIS LEAD PERSON, 2014 SPRING  
GARDEN FAIR MAY NOT HAPPEN.**

**CONTACT:**

**ALICIA SHAMBLIN 512-534-5400 OR**

**e-mail: [mancha86@gmail.com](mailto:mancha86@gmail.com)**



# Save the Date

## Williamson County Master Gardener Meetings

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

**July 8, 2013 6:30 p.m.**

*Central TX Native Tree Selection and Care*

April Rose, executive director at TreeFolks in Austin. TreeFolks is a central TX nonprofit urban forestry organization. TreeFolks mission is to grow the urban forest through tree planting, community partnerships and public education. Ms. Rose oversees TreeFolks operations and partnerships which annually plant more than 13,000 trees in central TX, serve citizens and seven counties and engage the public in nearly 30,000 hours of volunteer service. Ms. Rose is an ISA certified arborist with a B.S. in Forestry and enjoys sharing information about tree selection and maintenance to further citizens tree planting.

**August 12, 2013 6:30 p.m.**

*Backyard Beekeeping*

Elizabeth and Paul Exley

**September 9, 2013 6:30 p.m.**

*Fall Vegetable Planting & New Vegetable Types*

John Dromgoole

**October 14, 2013 6:30 p.m.**

*Cactus and Succulents*

Jeff Pavlat

**November 11, 2013 6:30 p.m.**

*The Personality of Roses*

Speaker?

**January 13th, 2014 6:30 p.m**

*Citrus Plants in the Pot and In the Yard*

Michele Pfluger

## Educational Opportunities for Master Gardeners

Summer is a good time to build up your educational hours in air conditioned comfort! Here is a list of some of the educational opportunities in the area.

### Williamson County Master Gardener Education Classes

JMG Specialist Training is being held in Williamson County in July. And, a class on Landscaping Your Home in a Drought is being held in September. These classes are listed [here](#).

Also classes (and volunteer opportunities) are available in Leander and Cedar Park. Contact [Mary Hargita](#) for more information. Here is the schedule for the next 6 months, but in the spring, there are more things planned by both cities, in partnership with the Williamson County Master Gardeners and also more classes if we have good attendance.

Leander gardening classes are held from 7:00 pm – 8:30 pm at the Mason Homestead, 11015 Bagdad St (next to the Leander Library). Some speakers and volunteers are needed.

- July 11 - Xeriscaping, It's Not All Cactus and Rock
- August 8 - Preparing Your Garden Beds For Fall
- September 12 - Vegetable Gardens By Seasons (have speaker)
- October 10 - Propagation
- November 7 - Testing and Amending Your Soil

Cedar Park gardening classes are held from 7 pm - 8:30 pm at their Recreation Center, 1435 Main St, Cedar Park, TX 78613, on the 3rd Tuesday of each month except for the August class which will be on the 27th. Some speakers and volunteers needed.

- July 16 - The Fall Vegetable Garden (have speaker)
- August 27 - Grow a Beautiful Lawn with Less Work, Expense and Chemicals
- September 17 - Water-Wise and Drought Tolerant Plants (have speaker)
- October 15 - Home Landscaping 101 (have speaker)
- November 19 - Indoor Container Gardening including Living Arrangements for the Holidays

### **Travis County Master Gardener Education Classes**

Most of these seminars are free, others have an associated fee. Some require advance registration, others do not. See the [class list](#) for more information

#### **Natural Gardener:**

There are free classes available at [The Natural Gardener](#).

#### **Online classes:**

The state Texas Master Gardeners allow only 3 online educational hours per year. They offer 12 different free online EarthKind Modules from which to choose. The link for these classes is [here](#):

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

A total of 3 online educational hours per year is allowed whether they are all through A & M or a combination of EarthKind and Wildflower.





You can find the WCMGA Calendar [here](#):

### **Newsletter Submissions**

Thank you to those Master Gardeners who submitted articles, pictures, and ideas for this newsletter issue. If you would like to contribute to the September/October 2013 *Williamson County Master Gardener Journal*, please send your submissions to Martha Baddour at [mars418@yahoo.com](mailto:mars418@yahoo.com) by August 15th.

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