

# Williamson County Master Gardener JOURNAL

## President's Report

*by Jeanne Barker*

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### EDITORS:

[Martha Baddour](#)  
[Jinna MacLaurin](#)

Williamson County Master Gardeners are busy!

I hope everyone is reading the wonderful blog posted by Chuck McKelley that details all that is happening in the vegetable garden. You can read Chuck's blog on our website or on Facebook.

We have a new training class underway. Brenda McIndoo and John Papich are class facilitators for this large class of 38 trainees.

The Board of Directors, along with our agent Fred Hall, spent a recent Saturday working on long term plans. Your responses to the WCMGA Membership Survey were most useful as we worked on goals and plans. As we finalize the details, we will share those goals and plans with you.

Paul Howe and his volunteers are doing a great job at Joss Growers.

Susan Blackledge, and WCMGA have been busy at Berry Springs Park. Susan has a lot more volunteer opportunities planned and is hoping many of you will sign up.

Claire Hall, Wayne Rhoden and I recently attended the TMGA Directors' Meeting at Texas A&M to learn more about tax laws and to make sure we were following all the rules.

Our Speakers' Bureau is busy making presentations all over the county.

Winola Van Artsdalen and her team are wrapping up details for the wonderful WCMGA fall event planned for September 21, Landscaping Your Home in a Drought. Hopefully, you have already made your reservations to hear the impressive speakers scheduled.

This is just a sampling of all that is going on with WCMGA!

Despite the hot weather, I hope you are finding a shady spot in your yard to relax and enjoy a cool drink.

Jeanne Barker



## Common Sense Gardening

by Sallie Burk



Consider placement of plants according to their nutritional and water needs. Keep in mind that native and adapted plants will thrive in our climate and soil without adding fertilizer or watering. The exception is new plants that need more water the first year or until they are well established.

Some native and adapted plants are: Lantana, Coreopsis, Fall Aster, Esperanza, Salvia Gregi, Pride of Barbados, Plumbago, Rock Rose, Dwarf Ruellia, and Purple Coneflower. If you place these perennials together in your garden, their water and nutrient needs will be similar.

Of course some of us want begonias, petunias, caladiums, pansies, hybrid roses, coleus, ferns, hibiscus, and other plants that are not native to Texas. If you group these plants together in your garden it will be easier to give them the water and fertilizer they need.

When you mix native plants with plants that have higher nutrition and water needs, you will be either over fertilizing and over watering one or under fertilizing and under watering the others.

## Plant Nutrition Basics

by Sallie Burk

Many people do not realize that in Texas, autumn is a great growing season that usually stretches into December. It will soon be time for a fall application of fertilizer to your lawn and garden. The best time to apply fertilizer is early morning, followed by a good watering. Application in full sunlight might burn plants and watering late in the day encourages plant fungus. Carefully follow the application rate on the label or you risk burning or even killing the plant.

There are 16 nutrients essential for plant health, but nitrogen(N), phosphorus(P), potassium(K) are considered macronutrients because plants need more of them. Secondary nutrients are calcium, magnesium and sulfur. The rest are considered micronutrients, which are just as important, but in smaller quantities.<sup>1</sup> You have probably seen three numbers or something like, 10- 5- 7, on fertilizer bags. This analysis refers to the amount of each primary nutrient (Nitrogen-Phosphorus-Potassium) based on a percent of the weight of the bag.

Nitrogen is needed for plant growth. Nitrogen is constantly leached from the soil by water runoff and can be immobilized by soil microbes that convert it into forms that are not available to plants. The dynamic nature of nitrogen makes reapplication necessary. I think of it as the “greening” nutrient.

Phosphorus stimulates early growth and root formation. It promotes plant maturity and seed production. I remember it as the “rooting” and “fruiting” nutrient. Phosphorus is stable (immobile in soil), so constant reapplication is not recommended. Over fertilization of phosphorus can limit the intake of iron and zinc.

<sup>1</sup> Texas Master Gardener Handbook, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, Sixth Edition, July 2011

Potassium is essential for the uptake of water and nutrients. It increases disease resistance and promotes strong stalks. Plants deficient in potassium have weak stalks, tip and marginal burn, and small or misshapen fruit. Excess potassium can result in salt injury.

For many years, fertilizers with even ratios, 8-8-8 or 13-13-13 were recommended, however, most plants use ratios more similar to 3-1-2 or 4-1-3. Application of even ratio fertilizer to meet nitrogen needs has resulted in over application of phosphorus by three to four times with each application. Runoff of excess phosphorus has been bad for the environment.

More to follow on fertilizer application methods, timing, and benefits of organic fertilizers.

Happy Gardening, Sallie Burk

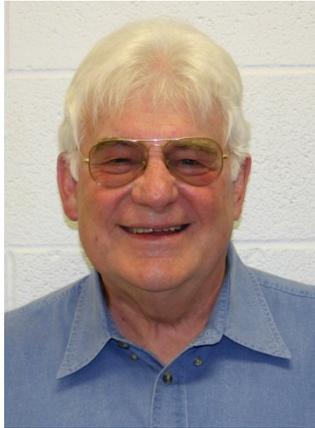
Before embarking on a fertilization program, or buying plants for that matter, get your soil tested. In exchange for a bag of your earth and a small fee, you will receive a detailed report showing the nutritional composition of your soil. Information on taking a soil sample and sending it to Texas A&M can be found [here](#).

# Proposed Slate of Officers for 2014

The standing rules of the Williamson County Master Gardener Association require the appointment of a nominating committee each year to recommend a slate of proposed officers for the upcoming year. The members of this year's nominating committee are: Susan Ginnings, Jeanne Holmes, John Papich, Wayne Rhoden, Janet White and Chuck McKelley, chair. The committee's proposed slate of officers is: Wayne Rhoden, President; Cat McGrath-Farmer, Vice President; Sandy Lawrence, Treasurer; and Annie Bowersox, Secretary. Below is a brief biography for each candidate.

This information will be presented at the September Master Gardener monthly meeting. Any other members who wish to run for office can declare their desire to run at that time.

## Wayne Rhoden for President



Native Texan - Born in Camp Ruby, Texas (A saw mill camp near Livingston, Texas)

Retired from Southwestern Bell Telephone/SBC/AT&T Company (Houston Engineering Department) in 1999 after 40 years service

Master Gardener since 1996 (trained in Ft. Bend County)  
Vice President of Fort Bend County Master Gardeners 1997-1998

President of Fort Bend Master Gardeners 1999-2003

Vice President of Texas Master Gardener Association 2003-2004

President of Texas Master Gardener Association 2005

Tax Advisory Committee Chair for Texas Master Gardener Association 2006-2013 Moved to Georgetown, Texas in 2005

President Williamson County Master Gardener Association 2007-2009

Past President Williamson County Master Gardener Association 2010

Secretary Williamson County Master Gardener Association 2012

Texas Master Naturalist since 2000 (Now in Good Water Chapter in Georgetown, TX)

Training Chair - Good Water Master Naturalist Chapter 2010/2013

President of Good Water Master Naturalist Chapter 2013

Texas Master Gardener Specialist Vegetable Gardening

Texas Master Gardener Specialist JMG

Texas Master Gardener Specialist Entomology

Hobbies include gardening, hiking, birding and traveling

## Cat McGrath-Farmer for Vice President



As a three state certified Master Gardener (Texas, Missouri and New Mexico), Cat is a Xeric specialist with an emphasis on native, drought tolerant and adaptive plants. With her first certification in New Mexico she established the initial Master Gardener Association for Socorro County where she served as President the first two years. With the changing environment always as a focus, Cat started RioFest, an international environmental film festival with films accepted for showing from the US, Europe and Australia. Al Gore provided his film, “An Inconvenient Truth”, at no charge for the event and made an opening address to the audience via web.

While serving on the Missouri, Nevada County Master Gardener Association Board, Cat McGrath-Farmer developed the first public Garden Walk for her city. This successful endeavor continues to this day.

With her move to TX, Cat continues her MG involvement on the WCMGA Project Committee, chairs the 2013 Program Committee and is a speaker for the Speaker’s Bureau. She is currently certified as an instructor through the National Botanical Association with Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center on the Landscape for Life - Sustainable Landscaping series. The major focus of her personal gardening time is changing her recently purchased traditional landscape to a drought tolerant and sustainable landscape which she hopes to finish within 5 years!

## Sandy Lawrence for Treasurer



A fourth generation Texan with roots in the farming communities of Robertson, Falls, Fayetteville and Austin counties, I grew up in Houston & Katy. After high school, I attended Southwest Texas State University (now Texas State University) earning a Bachelor of Business Administration degree, with a concentration in Accounting.

In 1981, we moved to West Virginia and lived there for 5 years, then moved to Maine where we lived for 20 years. While in Maine, I started a bookkeeping and consulting business, which I owned and operated for over 15 years. Since returning to Texas in 2006, I have formed a new bookkeeping and consulting company. Most of my clients are in Travis and Williamson counties, and I enjoy helping them reach their full business potential through the establishment and maintenance of solid accounting and financial records and systems.

It is my belief that solid accounting records are a vital part of any organization, and as Treasurer of WCMGA, I will continue to support that effort to bring our group up to the next level.

## Annie Bowersox for Secretary



After growing up in Florida and living there most of my life, my husband and I moved to Corpus Christi, Texas twenty years ago. So, I am used to subtropical temperatures and humidity. In addition to very different plant life in Central Texas west of Interstate 35, there are no roaches! When I retired from teaching high school and being a principal of vice, I went to Master Gardening classes in Corpus Christi. Plants don't talk back. They silently present their issues.

When my husband retired a few years later, we moved to Austin to be near our two grandsons in Cedar Park. We have too many house plants for practical living, and our daughter mercifully kept half a dozen alive through the winter in her large soaking tub.

I love working at the demo garden and at Berry Springs and appreciate the fellow gardeners at Joss Growers. I still have tremendous amounts to learn about gardening here in Central Texas!

## Plant Flowers in Fall!

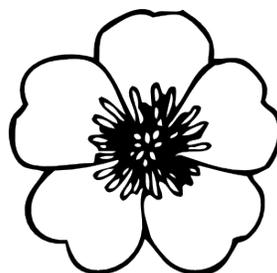
by Winola Van Artsdalen

For gardeners, the delight of fall is not only the cooling temperatures, but that it is time to plant. This sounds strange to you, if you came from the North, but roots continue growing here during our mild winters, so fall is the best time to plant. Fall planting makes your plants ready to withstand the stress of high temperatures next summer. The exception to recommended fall planting is tropical plants such as lantana which are best planted in spring to develop strong enough root structure to withstand cold temperatures.

Now is the time to plant seeds for spring bloomers like columbines (in shade), larkspur (in part sun/shade), and poppies (in full sun.) The spring bloomers take advantage of spring moisture. Then, when summer stress comes, they have done their show and are ready to rest. Very waterwise! You can wait until late spring to sow seeds for summers bloomers like cosmos, but now is the time for planting spring bloomers.

Whether from a local nursery or mail order, purchase seeds of native wildflowers from a reliable Central Texas source. Seeds planted now will give you months of color next spring, as well as the fun of seeing little green seedlings coming up through the winter.

1. Rake the soil surface smooth, removing rocks and sticks. If there is mulch, poke holes for planting.
1. Sow seeds evenly over soil; use rake to barely cover them; press seeds to make contact with soil.
2. Water gently; keep evenly moist first couple of weeks to ensure germination. After that, Mother Nature should take care for them unless it is an unusually dry fall/winter.



# Monthly Gardening Tips



*by Winola Van Artsdalen*

## September Gardening Tips

Dig weeds; control nutgrass.

Cover any bare areas with compost, then mulch. If you have a turf area you are planning to convert to groundcover and/or plants, cover with cardboard to smother the grass, then compost, then mulch. A third to a half organics is best for moisture retention, so, before covering with cardboard, after getting rid of grass, I cover soil with two to three inches compost, then dig in with garden fork or till. Organics are best in soil several weeks before planting.

Divide oxalis, bearded iris, daylilies, and daisies.

Basil needs temperatures 50 degrees or above, so harvest now. Mix with butter or cream cheese, shape into rolls and freeze for later use.

Turf: Apply pre-emergent September 1 to prevent annual winter weeds.

Keep mower height raised until weather cools.

Use sharpened blades, never cutting more than 1/3 the height of grass in one cutting.

## October Gardening Tips:

Remove leaves from turf, so blades of grass can get sunlight.

In beds, add an inch of organics for nutrients, then mulch 2", or you can use only mulch which will later break down. Mulch not only keeps out weeds, but insulates plants from extreme temperature changes, helps soil retain moisture, and organic mulch improves soil fertility and texture.

Prune diseased or dead wood any time, but wait until late winter/early spring for heavy pruning.

Make plans and buy bulbs you want to plant this fall. Prepare soil with any needed amendments, but do not plant yet. Follow instructions that come with bulbs.

Turf: Install new sod and grass plugs; water frequently until established.

Apply last application of fertilizer October 1-15 for both turf and beds.

Spread top dressing 1/4 to 1/2" thick for increased nutrients and soil depth. This will increase soil retention next summer. Any time you spread top dressing on turf, do not use your usual application of fertilizer for that season, as it would be too much nitrogen.

# Welcome 2013 Interns!

The 2013 class of the Williamson County Master Gardeners started 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](#).

# 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.

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

*Fall Vegetable Planting & New Vegetable Types*

John Dromgoole, owner of the Natural Gardener Nursery will be speaking at the September meeting on *Grafted Tomatoes & Gardening in Drought and the Changes Needed in Response to the Climate Shift.*

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

*Cactus and Succulents*

Jeff Pavlat

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

*The Personality of Roses*

Speaker TBD

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

*Citrus Plants in the Pot and In the Yard*

Michele Pfluger

## Educational Opportunities for Master Gardeners

### Williamson County Master Gardener Education Classes

**September 21, 2013 8:00 am - 2:00 pm** [Landscaping Your Home in a Drought](#) will include talks by Cat McGrath-Farmer, Bob Whitney, and Pam Penick, as well as plant sales and our country store.

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 few 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.

- 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.

- 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 Gardener Association allows 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 November/December 2013 *Williamson County Master Gardener Journal*, please send your submissions to Martha Baddour at [mars418@yahoo.com](mailto:mars418@yahoo.com) by October 15th.

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