

Williamson County Master Gardener Journal

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The 2008 Texas Master Gardener Class Finishes Training



Twenty-nine trainees became interns after fifteen weeks of study and training. The WCMGA welcomes you all and are proud to county you in our numbers. Four became certi-

fied MG having completed all the requirements by the end of the classes. They were Sandy and Paul Lawrence, Lisa LaPaso, and Kris Stanley. Well Done! This issue is dedicated to you.



In the News

Another Award for Wayne!

Wayne Rhoden received 2008 Texas Recreation Parks & Recreation Society (TRAPS) Region 5/7 Individual, Conservation, Service Club, and Commercial Award.

The Texas Recreation Parks & Recreation Society (TRAPS) Region 5/7 (covering an area as far north as Williamson County to as far south as Corpus Christi) each year accepts nominations for their Individual, Conservation, Service Club, and Commercial Awards workshop/luncheon. This year's recipient in the Individual Category is Master Gardener President, Wayne Rhoden. Wayne was nominated by Williamson County's Berry Springs Park Manager and Master Gardener Intern, Susan Blackledge. In the application she submitted Susan wrote;

"Wayne has touched upon a population of agencies who were in need of horticulture education for plants, landscaping, environmental issues, and beautification of the lands that they oversee. Wayne came to Williamson County with the knowledge that was desperately needed in this area. He dedicates his life to better others "quality of life". At one of WILCO's Parks, Berry Springs Park & Preserve, Wayne designed and implemented all of the flower beds at the park. He has helped with ensuring that volunteers from the Master Gardeners program dedicated time to the ongoing beautification of the park. He is always accessible for information and or guidance for the care and development of the park. I constantly receive compliments regarding our beds and wildflower areas in the park. He continues to be an extremely valuable asset to Williamson County, volunteering from 500 to 800 hours a year. I cannot say enough good things about Wayne Rhoden. He is one of a kind and we are blessed to have him working with us."



Berry Springs Work Day: October 4, 2008



(Above) Planting the Butterfly Garden, Sandra Pikoff, Lisa LaPaso, and Kris Stanley. Preparing seed bed for planting wild flowers, Jane Williamson, Janelle Crego, Janet White, and Sally Todd. (Below) Mixing wildflower seeds with creek bottom soil so seeds can be sown, Joanne Dieterich and Liz Grieder. Sowing wildflower seeds, Janet White, Sandra Pickoff, Sally Todd, Jane Williamson, and Janelle Crego. (Images by Jack Grieder)





Green House Work Session: October 11, 2008

(Left) Preparing cuttings for propagation planting, Jane Williamson, Winola Van Artsdalen, Walt Krueger and Paul Lawrence.

(Right) Brenda McIndoo, Beth Blankenship, Winola Van Artsdalen, and Jo Groves. (Images by Jack Grieder)

From Bob's Blog

Some Williamson County Master Gardeners may not know that our County Extension Agent, Bob Whitney, has a web log ("blog," sort of an internet diary) at <http://theagriculturalist.blogspot.com/> Here are some recent highlights:

Monday, December 1, 2008

Bareroot, Balled and Burlapped and Container Grown Plants

Winter is a great time to plant trees and shrubs. It is highly recommended that you put any tree or shrub out well before hot weather to give plants a time to grow some roots before they have to face hot temperatures. Now, this winter is a little different than most, since we haven't had rain so planting any plant may take some pre-watering to even be able to dig a hole! Container plants have the advantage of having all of their roots intact and ready to grow if the pot was properly cared for. Container grown plants are great but be careful! Nurseries grow plants in pots so that they can be sold easily but trees continue to grow even in a pot. This growing means that pots can become too small for the tree as it grows and so the plant becomes root-bound (stunted). To check and see if a plant is root-bound, just hold the pot and lift the tree out of the pot. If the roots are just to the pot sides and no roots are circling then

the tree should be okay. When planting a container grown plant, dig a hole bigger than the plant by double the width but no deeper. Remove the container and plant into the hole as quickly as possible. Air kills the little white hair roots very fast if not put into the ground. Once the hole is back filled with soil then water thoroughly to remove the air spaces. B&B or Balled and Burlapped plants are not container grown and you need to understand that before ordering them. These plants may have been grown in a nursery but they were dug out of the ground so that many of the roots have been cut off but the soil ball is still intact and very heavy. In fact there should be about 10-12 inches of ball for every inch of tree trunk diameter. When you get a B&B plant remove all plastic including any string or twine. You can leave the burlap only if it is not plastic. If there is a wire basket, you can leave it, as the roots will grow right through. The biggest problem with B&B trees is that the hole is usually dug with the same tree spade that dug the tree. Tree spades leave the hole sides very slick and hard for roots to penetrate. The best hole is wider but not deeper than the ball. Bareroot trees are just trees that have been dug very carefully in the nursery so that the roots are pretty much intact but there is no soil. As you can imagine these trees are much more fragile but without the soil they are easier to handle both for the nurseryman and you. Most

bareroot trees are dug and then "healed in" at the nursery till you purchase them. To plant them be very sure you keep the roots moist at all times while you're planting. Dig the hole as deep as the roots go and just as wide. Put the tree in the hole and back fill slowly adding dirt while you pack it. Once the hole is full you need to water well to take out air pockets. Bareroot trees need to be planted now and most fruit and nut trees are sold this way.

Water! Water! Water!

If you haven't noticed before, now let me tell you: we are way behind in rainfall last 12 months with few signs it will get better. I have had a few calls about watering in the winter and I want you to know that if you don't get rain then all your landscape plants need at least one good watering per month to survive. Fortunately plants don't use much water in the winter so watering is not a priority but we do need to maintain some level of moisture in the soil to protect plant roots from completely drying out. So unwind your hoses and set up your sprinklers to water at least a couple of hours for all your trees and grass.

Monday, November 17, 2008

What Do Deer Eat?

[Even gardeners who are not interested in hunting may be interested in what deer would

eat rather than their gardens, if it were available!] This has got to be one of the worst Falls I have ever seen. It is so dry and hot for fall weather, and all of this has taken a toll on plant growth. Just look for an acorn crop—there isn't much of one and on top of that most of the browse, forbs, and grass deer might eat is dry. Anyway, with all the problems landowners do need to know what deer eat to manage for this important resource. One of the best publications for plant identification in the Cross Timbers I own is "White-Tailed Deer: Their Foods and Management in the Cross Timbers." This is a publication of the Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation and is probably the most valuable book anyone interested in deer management could have, but it also makes an excellent reference because of its color photos of area plants. In the front of this publication is an appendix that lists the species composition of deer diets from Summer 1985 to Spring 1987. This chart shows hundreds of plants and basically how much of them a deer eats.

The top plants for the fall and winter may surprise you at least they did me. Bromes and tall fescue can make up to 25% of the diet composition. These are the green grasses that you see growing mostly under trees and resemble wheat or oats. Two to eight percent of the fall diet can be made up of honey locust but not necessarily the plant mostly the seed pods. Osage orange or Bois d'Arc (horse apple) trees can make up 17% of the diet mostly for their leaves. Deciduous oak trees like post, red, blackjack all are very valuable in a deer diet most of the year but acorns can account for a significant percentage in the fall if the acorn crop is good. In 1985 42% of the diet was acorns but in 1986 only 1.5% was acorns, owing I'm sure to a bad acorn crop. Coralberry is a significant plant for the deer diet in the fall and winter of every year. As much as 31% of the deer diet in the winter of '86 was composed of coralberry. What is coralberry? Around here we normally call it buckbrush and it is a shrubby plant 3 - 6 feet in height found in woody to open sites. It produces a small fruit but for deer all the plant parts are like t-bone steak. Here's one you may not ever guess that deer eat, mushrooms. Almost every

fall deer diets will consist of 4-5% mushrooms and I guess they don't have a problem with the poisonous kind like we do. Lastly let me add that small grains (wheat, oats, rye, etc.) can make up a significant portion of deer diets especially in the winter. In 1985 these were 21.5% of deer diets but almost 0 in 1986 when other plants were available. I am constantly amazed at deer hunters and landowners who want to provide small grains as a source of nutrition in deer diets in hopes of having bigger bucks and does, especially trophy bucks. If you want to produce trophy deer, extensive deer habitat management is almost always more important and more efficient than intensive management i.e. planting small grains and providing feeders. Plus the management of deer habitat means that they get the nutrition earlier in the year when they need it to produce the big antlers and develop good body condition.

Friday, October 31, 2008

The Economics of Farming?

The Blackland Crops Clinic was held this past Thursday, October 30 and we had some really interesting speakers. I think everyone was surprised by how much can be packed into just a few hours, but the information was really flowing! One of our speakers was Dr. Mark Welch, Extension Economist for Grain Marketing. Mark is really a down-to-earth economist basically because he was a farmer first, farming in the High Plains of Texas before becoming an economist. Mark gave us a situation analysis and discussed the outlook for grains in the coming months and there were some real interesting parts to his talk that I thought the general public should know about.

First his outlook for grain demand—and even price—is pretty good. We have seen corn prices drop continuously since the middle of summer, but according to Mark we are probably at the bottom basically because we don't have much corn in storage. Economists use the term "days of use on hand," to look at the amount of corn available in the world and currently we have on 49 days of corn left, the lowest since 1974. This means we are in short

supply and a short supply means higher prices are around the corner. Also, he said that ethanol accounts for 34% of all US corn use and this is up from 23% in 2007. This trend will continue which only helps to push prices higher; I hope he is right because we can't farm corn at \$4.00 a bushel!

On another note Mark discussed the costs associated with farming corn. Currently corn accounts for the largest share of nitrogen use of all crops and fertilizer is the largest expense of the variable costs for producing corn. Fertilizer is 43%, seed 21%, fuel lube and electricity 14%, chemicals 11%, repairs 6% and custom work 5%. In 2008 farmers saw a 65% increase in fertilizer prices paid over 2007, a 43% increase in fuel, 30% increase in seed costs, 7% for machinery, 6% in wages and 4% in chemicals. 2008 was a frustrating year for farmers as farmers paid high prices to plant the crop hoping the grain price was going to stay at the record prices recorded at planting time. Unfortunately, grain prices began their slow descent in August and only now are they slowing down. Farmers lost thousands of dollars over the course of just a few weeks or even a few days.

Lastly Mark had a few interesting facts for farmers to consider. One is that the bushels of corn produced per pound of nitrogen fertilizer have steadily gone up. We have improved our corn varieties and our technology such that in 1965 it took one pound of nitrogen to produce 0.9 bushels of corn. Today it takes one pound of nitrogen to produce nearly 1.2 bushels of corn. This is a phenomenal efficiency gain, but there is another fact that startled all the producers in attendance. In 1960 it took 141 bushels of corn to buy 1 ton of anhydrous ammonia, a nitrogen fertilizer source. Today it takes 161 bushels of corn to buy 1 ton of anhydrous ammonia. So even when we think we have it worse off today a quick study of history shows us we have seen these times before.

If you would like me to keep "From Bob's Blog" as a regular feature let me know!



St Richard Work Session: October 17, 2008

The St Richard's garden project headed by Walt Krueger is tuning into not just a major undertaking but a magnificent obsession. This is not a small bed or two at the entrance of the church but eventually a several acre project including various garden areas to suit every taste. When finished (is a garden ever finished?) it will be a very special place for the congregation to gather and wonder on the beauties of nature.

(Above left) Planting a section of a garden parterre, Sandy Lawrence, Walt Krueger and Liz Grieder.

(Above, right) Planting EarthKind roses, Paul Lawrence and Reeves Stuth.

(Right) Mulching Walter Hoke.



St Richard's Fall Festival: October 18, 2008

A Dad and kids (below left) looking at books on display at MG booth.

MG Booth Bob Whitney, Liz Grieder and Reeves Stuth (below right)



All Images by Jack Grieder

Master Gardener Field Trip

A Visit to the LBJWC with Flo Christine Powell

On Saturday, November 22, Flo Oxley of the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center guided a tour for a group of Williamson County Master Gardeners. The group met at the front gate by one of the cisterns for the rainwater recovery system. The Center was a pioneer with this technology, at one time having the largest working system in the world. The buildings illustrate green technology, but they also represent the best of the Texas country design traditions.

After a look around the major public buildings and a stop for hot coffee or chocolate as Flo's guests, we headed into the back of the property where the public rarely goes. There are a number of experimental tracts that allow comparing the results if Hill Country land is simply left untended, as opposed to other tracts that are mowed or burned to control growth. Small lawn plots provide a side-by-side comparison under identical soil, water, and lighting of non-native Bermuda grass with native Buffalo grass and various mixtures of native grasses. Not surprisingly, the native lawns have visibly handled the dry conditions this year better. There are also a number of test frames with weather instruments that are used to calculate the benefits of various mixtures of vegetation for use on "green roofs."

Flo led the group back to the main public area of the Center and quickly walked us through the major demonstration gardens. They looked good even on a cold, damp late fall day. Unfortunately, both of the managers of the Center's greenhouse operations were under the weather, so we could not tour the propagation facilities that stock the Center and support its conservation mission. Instead, we headed to the Center's areas supporting the Millennium Seed Bank. This was originally organized by the Royal Botanical Gardens Kew, where the massive freezer warehouse that houses the main seed cache is located, but there are now a number of supporting institutions. The Wildflower Center is responsible for gathering species from much of Texas. We saw how seeds are cleaned and dried so they can be frozen without damage. A number of us had already participated in Flo's "seed cleaning parties," but others were seeing the process for the first time.

The tour concluded with a demonstration of the resources available on the Center's website (see sidebar). Again, some of us have used this on nearly a daily basis, but others had not realized that this amazing site existed. Afterwards, many of us then headed for the Wildflower Center's shop, full of books and merchandise fit to please almost any native-plant gardener.



(Above) Flo talks to the group about the Butterfly Habitat and its importance to the Research Center. She explained to the group the importance gardeners can play in helping wildlife in their own yards.

(Below Left) There are numerous volunteer opportunities available at the LBJ Wildflower Center including research at the turf experiment.

(Below Right) The green roof experiment was particularly interesting to all of the group. The variety of plants being used in this study was fascinating and led to an interesting discussion.





We were shown various aspects of the research center and how each of us can help. For those with an artistic bent then they could help mount samples in the herbarium (left). Seed cleaning is a very popular and important job that is carried out mainly by volunteers.

Images by C A Powell

A GREAT RESOURCE FOR ALL GARDENERS

Do you need a yellow flower that blooms in the spring, tolerates drought well, and can prosper in the shade? Ask the website at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center (<http://wildflower.org>). In addition to a wide range of advice on how to grow native plants in Central Texas, the site's database provides information on virtually every native species you might encounter. One of the most useful facilities is the ability to query on a wide range of criteria, like the yellow-flower search above. There are also links to other sites that can provide supplementary information about most varieties. Every Master Gardener could use this information to great advantage.

WHAT STATE'S BEST CHANGES THE WORLD
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

SHOP | RENTALS | SITE MAP | CONTACT

Lady Bird Johnson
Wildflowercenter
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

Search go

EN ESPAÑOL

ABOUT VISIT EXPLORE PLANTS EVENTS CONSERVATION EDUCATION SUPPORT

NATIVE PLANT DATABASE

Welcome to the latest edition of the Native Plants Database. From this page you can explore the wealth of native plants in North America. Use the options below to search for 7,009 native plants by scientific or common name or choose a particular family of plants. If you are not sure what you are looking for, try the combination search or our [Recommended Species](#) lists. If you are looking for non-native or introduced species, we suggest you visit the [USDA Plants Database](#).

Name search: go

Family: go

EXPLORE PLANTS

- EXPLORE PLANTS
- PLANT DATABASE
- IMAGE GALLERY
- MR. SMARTY PLANTS
- HOW TO ARTICLES
- SUPPLIERS
- ORGANIZATIONS
- BIBLIOGRAPHY
- RECOMMENDED SPECIES

Use the options below to search for plants based on a combination of characteristics. If there are too many results, try narrowing your search by selecting more characteristics. If the results are too few, broaden your search by selecting fewer characters.

COMBINATION SEARCH

Select State or Province

Habit (general appearance)

Duration (lifespan)

Light requirement

- Sun - 6 or more hours of sun per day
- Part shade - 2 to 6 hours of sun per day
- Shade - Less than 2 hours of sun per day

Soil moisture

- Dry - soil does not exhibit visible signs of moisture
- Moist - soil looks and feels damp
- Wet - soil is saturated with water

Master Gardener Field Trip

“Fruit – Edible, Inedible, Incredible”

Christine Powell

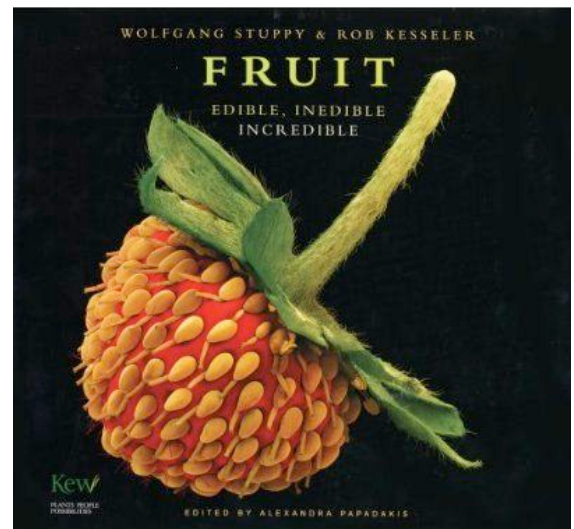
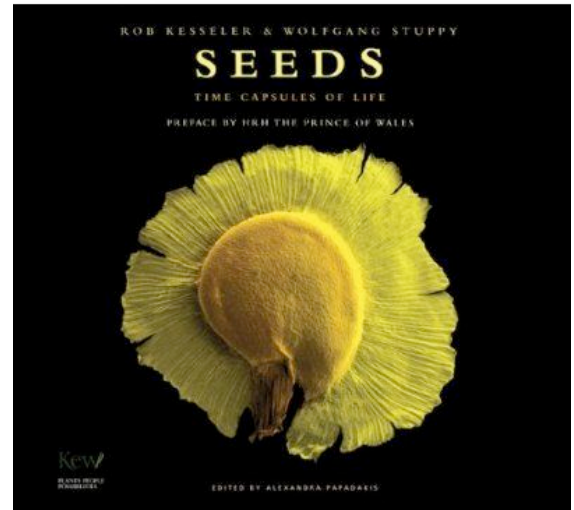
On Wednesday, October 22, at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, an enthusiastic crowd assembled for a presentation by Dr. Wolfgang Stuppy, Seed Morphologist of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. Dr. Stuppy joined the Royal Botanic Gardens in 1999, and became its first seed morphologist associated with the Millennium Seed Bank Project. The Project, one that the Wildflower Center is a part of, seeks to collect and store seeds from around the world. As a part of his role with the Gardens, Dr. Stuppy teaches Project participants about fruit and seed morphology.

He is the co-author of *Seeds—Time Capsules of Life* and *Fruit—Edible, Inedible, Incredible*. From one perspective, these are very useful science textbooks on the reproductive strategies of the flowering plants. From another, they are stunningly beautiful visual treats. Co-author Rob Kessler provides the amazing illustrations, based on close-up photographs and scanning electron micrographs. *Style at Home* magazine named *Seeds* its “Coffee Table Book of the Year.” Fruit is a similar treat. Both books are available from Amazon or in large bookstores.

As a publisher’s description states, “Seeds are the most complex organs plants ever produce. A major keystone in the evolution of land plants, the first seeds appeared some 360 million years ago. Since then they have developed into highly sophisticated propagules that enable plants to dominate the Earth’s surface and conquer almost every possible habitat from the Antarctic to the hottest deserts. The diversity of shapes and sizes encountered in seeds is nearly endless and ranges from the impressive Seychelles nut at twenty kilos to the dust-like seeds of the orchids. No matter how small, packed into every seed is the complete genetic information needed to give rise to a new plant, whether it is a tiny herb or a giant rainforest tree. True time capsules of life, seeds may travel thousands of miles and wait, if necessary, for hundreds of years before they germinate.”

That was the theme of Dr. Stuppy’s presentation in Austin. Plants have developed a multitude of ways to disperse their seeds. Fruit represents one of those methods... or rather a whole range of methods. Some of the most interesting of these have developed as plants and animals have co-evolved to serve one another’s survival and reproductive needs. In the Americas, there are some plants that seem to require an animal that simply does not exist any more. The Bois d’Arc or Osage Orange tree is a good example. It is sometimes called the Horse Apple because its hard-shelled fruit is so large that it would require an animal at least as large as a horse to eat them to disperse the seeds. Of course, the horses now in the New World did not arrive until after 1492, and the same is true of cattle and the other large mammals we are familiar with today. That raises the question of how the tree evolved with fruit that are so apparently maladapted to their environment.

The answer is that the large mammals in the Western Hemisphere today are not the only ones who have ever lived here. Until about the end of the last Ice Age, there were New World mammoths, mastodons, horses, camels, giant sloths, and other large animals that could easily have eaten the Bois d’Arc fruit and spread its seeds. About the time that they disappeared, human beings had arrived to cultivate the trees for their useful wood. Less valuable species with similar fruit were left to their own devices and are now repre-



sented—if at all—by declining populations and very old specimens.

No one who attended the lecture failed to discover something that they had not known before. The slides taken from the books were fantastic and the expertise was unparalleled. If one isn't thriving, find a spot that makes it happy.

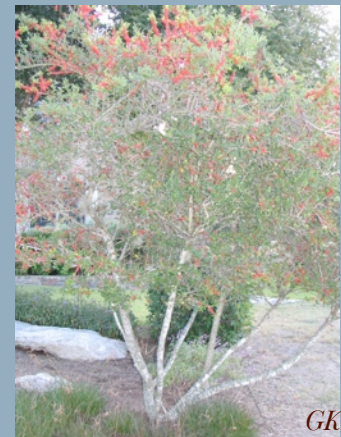
Rows of these spiny plants served as fences in the grassland plains before the introduction of barbed wire. The name Bodark is from the French bois d'arc, meaning bow wood, referring to Native Americans use of the wood for archery bows. It is also used for fenceposts. Early settlers extracted a yellow dye for cloth from the root bark. The fruit is eaten by livestock, which has given rise to yet another common name, Horse-apple.



SUPERSTAR

Gaye Kriegel

Right on cue, just as we're decorating for the holidays and trying to add red to our yards, the female Yaupon Holly (*Ilex vomitoria*) is suddenly stunning in vivid red, showy berries. My Pride of Houston Yaupon serves as a mid-height specimen tree in the full sun front yard. Oblivious to drought, the many trunks with attractive gray bark sport evergreen foliage. This tree will maintain those lovely berries until, quite likely, a flock of Cedar Waxwings will descend and devour them all at once. The only drawback I've found to this tree are annoying suckers.



Savannah Gardens

Patty Hoenigman

In mid-November my husband and I took a trip to see Savannah, Georgia. Two things really surprised me about the flora there. The first was that their large moss covered trees are the very same Live Oaks that we have all around Austin! However, their trees are much taller. I'm guessing it's because the water table is so close to the surface of the ground, being near the coast. The other thing that put a smile on my face was finding chard growing in some charming planters in front of a little cafe near our hotel, and then again in a garden in front of the Maritime Museum. They add a nice vertical element and the stems give a good splash of color in with the greenery. One minute in the microwave and you're good to go!



A Master Composter's Summer Tips

Composting with Fall Leaves and Eggshells

Patty Hoenigman

Being new to Texas, I've been in a quandary about when Fall begins here in Austin. Having grown up in Ohio, I thought Fall began when the leaves turned colors. I've been patiently waiting and now I know that Fall in Austin begins at Thanksgiving, when the leaves eventually turn subtle colors of red, yellow and brown, and at last fall to the ground to be harvested by composters! So late November and December would be the perfect time to start a compost pile. Rake your leaves just after a rain and you won't have to add any more water...just pile them into your bin and let them sit for a while! Many people talk about adding eggshells to their compost piles. You're bound to collect

some eggshells as you're entertaining for the holidays. The thing is that if you just dump eggshells into a compost pile they won't break down...they'll just crack into smaller pieces, which may provide some percolation to the soil, but that's about it. The calcium in the shells is a good addition to your soil if you care to do what's necessary to make it accessible for the insects that need the calcium for their reproductive systems. Here's what I suggest. Set aside a brown bag for your eggshells. Toss them in there and let them air dry really well. I usually collect several dozen shells over a few months. Next get yourself a small coffee grinder; an electric model is perfect. Crunch a shell or two in

your hand and stuff it into the grinder. Then give it a good zap until the shell has been pulverized into a fine powder. Empty it out into a plastic container or zip-lock bag, and continue zapping until they're all done. Now you can sprinkle a bit of this powder onto your compost pile while you're building it. This way the calcium will continue to break down as the pile is working. Sprinkle it around; sort of like adding salt to your soup! If I can be of help to anyone by answering composting questions, please feel free to contact me directly at patty@thetaxcenter.us I used to take calls on the "Rot Line" back in San Diego, so I've fielded a lot of questions about composting and am always happy to help!

***Aloe barbadensis*—Aloe Vera**

Aloe is a great landscape plant that is not only attractive but also functional. The Aloe Vera family has over 300 species and has recorded uses that date back over 3500 years. While it is believed to be a native of South Africa, it has been highly valued for its medicinal properties and mentioned in the writings of the great Egyptians, King Solomon, Alexander the Great, the Orient, and even in the Bible.

The Spanish Conquistadors transported new species of Aloe from South America to Europe, making it part of the foundation of Western medicine.

Aloe Vera has been credited for being a cure all for many ailments and—while our medical professionals only approve the plant for some products like skin care and laxatives—the flesh, salve, and flower are believed to have many medicinal properties in many different cultures.

Aloe is a perennial plant in the Lily family, though it lends itself beautifully to a succulent bed with Agave and Cactus. The flowers range in color and size ranging from inches in height to several feet. The flowers are in shades of pink, yellow and salmon/orange. The leaves range from gray to bright green to mottled in color.

The plant itself is striking, both figuratively and literally. The upright rosette statuesque plant has long, thick, large fleshy leaves with a spiny margin and a spike at the end of each leaf. This is not a plant anyone should handle casually. The careful gardener would approach the handling of this plant with good gloves and long sleeves.

Aloes will produce many, many "pups" each year. The mother plant puts out dozens of smaller plants around its base. Each of these has its own root system and—if they are carefully removed from the mother—they can be transplanted immediately without any shock. This is also a great opportunity to share with other gardeners, or trade for new aloes or succulents.

Aloes prefer full sun but will tolerate some shade. They like reasonably good, well drained soil and require very little water. It is important to plant your Aloes in a relatively protected area as they can be damaged in a hard frost. You can protect your Aloe's with a frost cloth or bucket, and watering them well before the frost to help keep the ground temperature warmer can help keep the roots from freezing. You may lose some of the top plant but the mother will protect the pups. The root system will usually recover and put out new plants if the frost damage is not too severe.

Try adding an Aloe to your landscape next season! You will be amazed by how lovely and functional a plant it really is. Google some of the many websites that provide the medicinal information, as the uses are endless.

Happy Gardening!

Lisa La Paso



Preventative Treatment for Oak Trees at the Courthouse Annex

Kris Stanley

County Extension Agent Bob Whitney, Extension Horticulturist Christi Stromberg, Master Gardener trainees Liz Grieder and Kris Stanley met at the Courthouse Annex on Wednesday, September 17th to treat oak trees for oak wilt.

It was fascinating to me to be able to see how the treatment was actually given after I had already had the class on Oak Wilt. All the pieces fell into place of what I had learned in class.

It is a lot of work to even get to the point of actually starting the treatment. You have to dig around the trees until the roots are exposed. Then very carefully start digging deeper around each individual root. Sometimes even using a screw driver to help us get deeper, you need to have three to four inches on each side for hand and drill to fit. They must be deep enough for the drill to make a lateral hole where the nozzle and tubing can be inserted. You have to do this all around the base of the oak tree. As you can see by the picture below, it looks like a spider web. The name of the chemical they use to treat the tree is a fungicide called Alamo To know how much to give each individual tree is different depending on the size. A special tape measurer is used to record the trees size and to calculate the amount of fungicided that is needed.

The inserts and tubing is a slow process, after you drill the holes the insert is placed in the hole and you tap it with a hammer, you continue until you go all the way around the base of the tree. The chemical is placed in a pump sprayer and primed. The tree starts to drink, and each tree is different on how fast it absorbs the liquid.



Another Day, Another Trip to the Greenhouse!

Pictures by Joan Adams from the greenhouse on Sat Oct 25, 2008 with members of the new class.



Meet Your Master Gardeners

Life In The Garden

Sally Todd

Thinking back to what inspired my love of plants and gardens, I don't remember a grandmother or my own mother teaching me how to tend the garden. There was no real "moment" in time that washed over me. Back in the day, we could disappear for hours. No one thought twice about where we were or if we had been abducted by strangers. We would pack a picnic and head off on our bikes to places far away (at least they seemed far at the time, but I know now I only traveled about a mile) There was an arboretum not far from where I lived, and many a Saturday afternoon was spent exploring the splendid grounds.

I remember wanting to take over mowing the yard from my dad. In my mind, he was sooo old! I was sure he might suffer a heart attack while mowing! Of course, that was a ridiculous notion; my dear dad went on to live to the ripe old age of 92. He did, however, let me do some of the mowing. I twisted his arm, right? I loved the hum of the mower, blocking out everything except the thoughts in my mind. To this day, I still like to mow for that very reason (please don't tell my husband!) for I am alone with my thoughts, left to figure out all the things needing pondering in my life. As a kid, one of my favorite things was to take my dog off into the woods for walks among the green trees, a meandering creek, and the serenity and peace of the quiet woods by my house.

As a teenager seeking my first job, I stumbled upon a local florist shop in need of help for Easter and Mother's Day. I can still conjure up the wonderful fragrances of the cut flowers and potted Easter Lilies in the shop. I was charged with sweeping up after the designers, and taking orders over the phone, menial work, but I somehow actually enjoyed it. I was sad to have that seasonal job come to an end, but a short time after, I went to work for a wonderful couple that owned a nursery. Every day after school, I would go to the main house and get cookies from Mrs. Betz, then go off to happily water the zillion of pots around the nursery. That was the spark that ignited my love affair with horticulture. I was then blessed to enroll in a concurrent two-year program offered at my high school spending one year in greenhouse management/floral design and one year of landscape practices. My certification, however, lay dormant for a good twenty years, only sprouting up during summers of home vegetable and flower plantings, and of course the bliss I found when I mow the grass. It is only in the past ten years that I found that my desire to learn and cultivate my horticulture interest are once again ignited. I find myself giddy when I see a pretty flower, almost dizzy with the effect it has on me. Nutty, perhaps? I'll let you know the next time I mow the grass.



Master Gardener Finds Great Finds
Gaye Kriegel

Enjoy a year-round workout from French flower market (or other) containers. By summer, my pair of aluminum containers add instant height to the yard and are filled with annual sweet potato vines. However, by winter, when the sweet potato vines have frozen, these same containers are filled with poinsettias and flanking the front door. They'll look even better when I add some trailing English ivy, sprenger fern, or rosemary. Happy Holidays!



Submissions?

If you would like to contribute to the *Williamson County Master Gardeners Journal* please send your articles, items, and photographs to Christine Powell at xtinepowell@verizon.net by the 25th of the month. Remember to include captions and attribution details. The Editor is grateful to all those who have submitted items in the past and would like to thank those who would like to send things in the future. Thank you!

A Master Gardener Explains

Fall foliage

Grace Bryce

Fall foliage can be spectacular, especially if you catch it at its peak. Weather can dictate a good or poor year for color, and the fall display can last from days to weeks. In Central Texas, we don't have the colorful hardwoods of East Texas or the "Lost Maples" of the Hill Country, but we do have some Fall color. As the nights get cooler and our days get shorter, we begin to see some of Fall's first blush.

We all wonder at one time or another, "Why do leaves change color in the fall?" Or maybe, "Why are these leaves red and those leaves yellow?" The scientific explanation is based on changes in temperature, moisture, and light, which set the internal chemical changes in motion. The leaf color changes from green to brilliant shades of yellow, orange, and red. A transformation in leaf pigments takes place.

The green pigment, chlorophyll, is attached to the membranes of disc-like structures, called chloroplasts, inside the cells of the leaf. Chloroplasts are the actual site of photosynthesis, where light energy is converted to chemical energy. The light absorbed by chlorophyll supplies the energy used by plants to transform carbon dioxide and water into oxygen and carbohydrates (sugars and starches). This chemical energy is stored in carbohydrates and drives the biochemical reactions that cause plants to

grow, flower, and produce seed. Chlorophyll is easily broken down by bright sunlight. To maintain the level of chlorophyll in their leaves, plants must continuously synthesize it, which requires sunlight and warm temperatures. During the summer months, chlorophyll is continuously broken down and regenerated in the leaves of trees.

http://www.biology4kids.com/files/cell_chloroplast.html

Another pigment found in the leaves of many plants is carotene. Carotene is also contained in the chloroplasts. When carotene and chlorophyll occur in the same leaf, together, the leaf appears green. Carotene functions as an accessory absorber. The energy of the light absorbed by carotene is transferred to chlorophyll, which uses the energy in photosynthesis. Carotene is a much more stable compound than chlorophyll. Carotene persists in leaves even when chlorophyll has disappeared, so when chlorophyll disappears from a leaf, the remaining carotene causes the leaf to appear yellow.

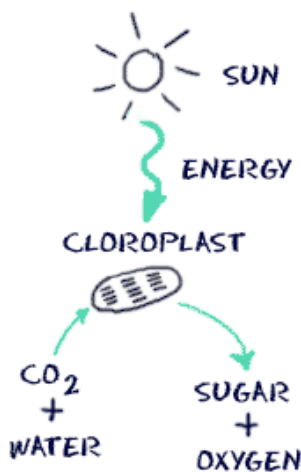
A third pigment, or class of pigments, that occur in leaves are the anthocyanins. Unlike chlorophyll and carotene, anthocyanins



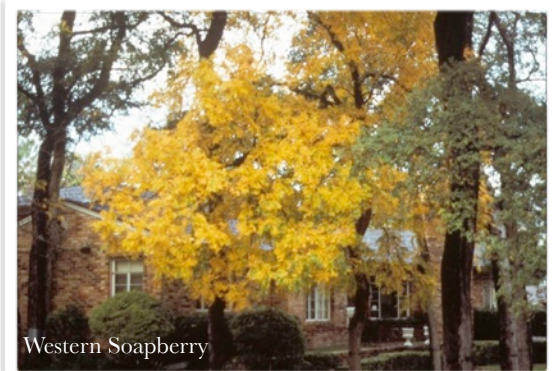
Cedar Elm

are not attached to cell membranes, but are dissolved in the cell sap. Anthocyanins are formed by a reaction between sugars and certain proteins in cell sap. This reaction does not occur until the concentration of sugar in the sap is quite high. The reaction also requires sunlight. The color produced by these pigments is sensitive to the pH of the cell sap. A more acidic sap results in a red color and a less acidic sap creates a more purple shade. Anthocyanin pigments make the red of ripe apples and the purple of ripe grapes.

The shorter days and cool nights of autumn trigger changes in the tree. One of these changes is the growth of a corky membrane between the branch and the leaf stem, which interferes with the flow of nutrients into the leaf. Because the nutrient flow is interrupted, the production of chlorophyll in the leaf declines, and the green color of the leaf fades. If the leaf contains carotene, it will change from green to bright yellow as the chlorophyll disappears. The



Chinquapin oak



Western Soapberry



Red Oak

Cedar Elm (*Ulmus crassifolia*), Western Soapberry (*Sapindus drummondii*), and Chinquapin oak (*Quercus muhlenbergii*) are examples of our native trees in Central Texas that display beautiful yellow leaves. Many of the imported trees display beautiful color but are proving problematic in our environment, such as the Chinaberry or the Chinese Tal-

low, which is on the Texas Department of Agriculture's Noxious Plant List.

In some trees, as the concentration of sugar in the leaf increases, the sugar reacts to form anthocyanins. These pigments cause the yellowing leaves to turn red. Texas native Red Oaks (*Quercus texana*), and Prairie Flameleaf Sumac (*Rhus lanceolata*) produce anthocyanins in abundance and display the brightest reds and purples in our autumn landscape.

The range and intensity of autumn colors is greatly influenced by the weather. Low temperatures destroy chlorophyll, and if they stay above freezing, promote the formation of anthocyanins. Bright sunshine also destroys chlorophyll and enhances anthocyanin production. Dry weather, by increasing sugar concentration in sap, also increases the amount of anthocyanin. The brightest autumn colors are produced when dry, sunny days are followed by cool, dry nights.

To add to the color display, we also have several flowering perennials in our Central Texas Autumn. My favorite is the Chrysanthemum. Chrysanthemum is actually the Genus name and there are many species available and many colors to choose from.

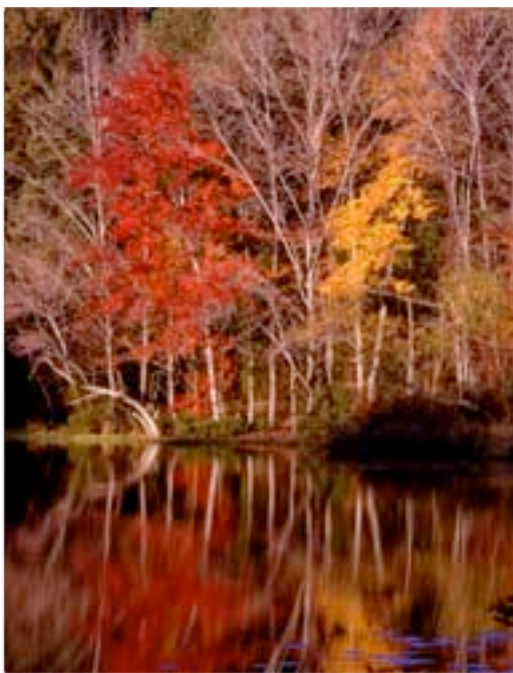


Prairie Flameleaf Sumac

Plant images courtesy of LBjWC



Lovely Lone Star Autumn



Lake Bob Sandlin State Park.

Each year, Texas State Parks offer some of the best places to view spectacular Texas fall foliage. Across the state, you can see autumn's annual display of dazzling color - from the legendary Bigtooth maple trees at Lost Maples State Natural Area in the Hill Country, to the shades of red and gold of sweetgum and oak amidst the famous Pineywoods of East Texas at Daingerfield, Lake Bob Sandlin, and Cooper Lake State Parks. An even better secret are the lofty cottonwoods, which turn a brilliant yellow during fall at Caprock Canyons and Palo Duro Canyon State Parks in the Panhandle and Davis Mountains State Park in far West Texas.

Numerous other parks also have great fall views, and in Texas, autumn represents some of the best weather of the year. So no matter where you are in Texas, some beautiful scenery awaits in a state park near you. Make sure and check this Web site for regular fall foliage updates.

<http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/spdest/parkinfo/seasonal/foilage/>

A Master Gardener Walks

...along the trails
Annette Banks

The Trails of Georgetown offer the perfect habitat for the Rusty Blackhaw (*Viburnum rufidulum*)...dry conditions, limestone-based soils along streams or river banks, open woodlands, or thickets.

In the shaded, moist areas of the trails, the rusty blackhaw may appear as a single understudy tree with a few other blackhaws nearby. In other areas of little rainfall, calcareous soil, and more light on the trails, they appear as groves or drifts of numerous small trees.

There are many labels for the Rusty Blackhaw (Black-haw). It is known as Southern Blackhaw, Downy viburnum (because of the hairy patches on the leaves), Southern Nannyberry, and Rusty Nannyberry.

One of the delights of the tree is the thick glittering, glossy, leather-like texture of the bright green leaves. The leaves are single and opposite, oval in shape and two to four inches long; there are spots of rusty pubescence on both the top and underside of the leaves and on the terminal buds. This hairy leaf and slightly larger size distinguishes the rusty blackhaw from the northern blackhaw. Right now you can experience the mystic mauve, pink, or other shades of reddish-purple tones in the fall foliage.

The Southern blackhaws range from shrubs of 10 feet to 25 plus foot trees with a 10 to 15 foot spread. The trunks are thin. The bark is dark, rough, blocky; and it resembles that of an older flowering dogwood tree.

In the spring the tree sports two to five inch clusters, which are composed of dozens of little white flowers. Following its flowering, the tree produces red stems with dark blue-black fruits, which are eaten by birds and mammals. Since the tree is extremely compatible to our environment, it would make a good addition to our landscaping. Recommended variety: Royal Guard Hardiness: Zones 5-9.

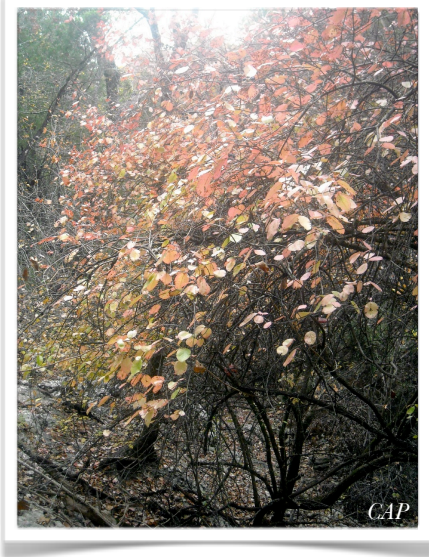
Propagation techniques: *Viburnum* seeds require a period of dormancy and will take up to a year to germinate. Too, the rusty blackhaw is self-incompatible so it cannot cross-pollinate itself. You will have flowers; but to obtain fruits you must use two different seedling plants. Clones of the same plant will not work. If you choose this method, clean the stones by removing the fleshy pulp traces, sow or pot in good medium, and leave the seedlings in shade for a year or two. You can propagate from fast-growing green-wood cuttings taken in the summer.

It is recommended for large containers, parking lot islands, highway median strips, and residential landscaping. It is a slow-growing tree that needs little pruning, but it can be pruned and trimmed to emphasize its vase shape. It is drought tolerant, grows in light or shade, moderately deer resistant, usually pest free and disease tolerant. An absolute requirement for a thriving tree is good drainage.

To quote Christine Powell after her walk on the Cedar Breaks trail around Lake Georgetown: "It was almost a pink-gold color with the sun on it. I felt like I was in an enchanted forest - really quite wonderful."

Take advantage of the deciduous tree's tardiness in dropping its leaves, and treat yourself to some seasonal enchantment by walking our wonderful trails soon!

Interesting fact: The National champion rusty blackhaw is in Hempstead City, Arkansas; and it is twenty-five feet tall.



Junior Master Gardeners

Growing Assets.....
Carey Thornell



Each Month we feature students in the After School Action Program (ASAP) who are putting Assets into Action! The Search Institute’s 40 Developmental Assets® are common sense, positive experiences and qualities that help influence choices young people make and help them become caring, responsible adults. We have so many wonderful kids doing amazing things! Student story # 1 is a collection of amazing young ladies. I have had the opportunity to know these young ladies for the past two years. In that time they have become amazing young women with strong opinions, leadership abilities, and fantastic personalities. Through their

involvement in our Junior Master Gardening Program, I have watched them hone and develop these skills. The “Benold Butterflies” as they call themselves now serve as the leadership group for the younger ASAP students working to become certified Junior Master Gardeners. Their involvement is a true testament to the power of peer-to-peer teaching. They have done an amazing job engaging other students in the activities and teaching them all of the valuable information they learned last year. The following is what they have to say about their involvement in the JMG program.



JMG—By Lauren

The Junior Master Gardener Program has meant a lot to me because I have had a lot of good experiences with my friends and wonderful teachers. My friends and the teachers have taught me a lot in this course of Junior Master Gardener. I have been in this for two years, and I have loved every moment of it. Instead of being bored at home and being lazy, I’ve now learned how to plant flowers and other things, like the Aloe Vera plant, which can be used for bad sunburns. And there are other different kinds of foods that you can plant, like wheat that makes bread and can be used for many things that we use in our daily lives. Instead of going to the store, you can just plant your own at home. When I first came into the Junior Master Gardening program, I didn’t know that much about gardening but now that’s changed a lot. I know I’m not a pro gardener or anything, but I will carry these skills with me later on in life. I am very thankful for this program.

This is a great JMG activity you can do at home—By Liliana

One of my favorite things we’ve done in JMG is the plant person. I liked doing that because you got to put dirt in panty hose and make it into a ball. First you put grass seed into the toe of a pantyhose or nylon stocking, then put in dirt, roll it into a ball, tie it up and put the end of the panty hose inside a soda can filled with water. Then sprinkle water on top of the head, which is where the grass grows as hair for the person.... and Decorate!



Q: What is Santa's advice to keep weeds out of the garden?

hoe-hoe-hoe! :)

Master Gardener Basics

Back to the Basics

Winola VanArtsdalen

Each month, this "Back to the Basics" series highlights a technique to help us get best results from our gardening efforts. As we enter into the winter season, transplanting is the topic chosen to be considered.

TRANSPLANTING

Thanksgiving is over, and we are headlong into the Christmas rush, but wait! Gardeners can always steal time away for the garden. Do you have plants you would like to move? If it is wet, do not disturb the soil until later, but if it is dry enough, the time to transplant is soon. Perhaps a friend has an overgrown area and offered you a bush or tree. Perhaps one of your plants is not doing well, and you want to try it in a different location. If so, you have an excuse to get away from the holiday rush and get out there to enjoy working in your yard!

First comes the question of when is the best time for transplanting. For smaller, herbaceous plants, transplanting earlier in the fall or next spring would be better. Plants not completely winter hardy like lantana need to be planted in the spring and given the whole summer to develop a root system for survival. For most others, they can handle the winter move if they are mulched well. For hardy, woody plants like bushes and trees, winter is the ideal time. I once asked a respected gardener the best time to transplant small trees from my woods, and she advised, "On the coldest day of the winter when you will be most miserable!"

Be sure to water the plant well the day before digging it up. You want the roots to have absorbed moisture to stay healthy during transition. On planting day, dig the hole for your plant the same depth as it was originally, but two to three times wider and leave edges rough, not slick and smooth. Water the hole, so the plant will have a moist base rather than dry soil that would absorb moisture from the plant.

Now, it is time to dig up the plant you want to move. Wet a large piece of cloth like burlap or an old T-shirt. Have it ready with

the container you will use to carry the plant to its new location. Do not just stick in a spade and start prying up the plant! Always dig all the way around the plant before lifting. I use a sharp shooter to go around the plant, leaving as much soil with the root ball as possible. Then, I use a round, pointed shovel to lift the plant. Slide the wet cloth under the root ball and pull up the sides to keep the root ball completely covered with the moist cloth and protected from air. Remember to never pick up a plant by its trunk or stem. Reach under the root ball and lift the plant from the hole into the carrying container.

Keep the plant wrapped while you re-assess your prepared hole. You may need to reshape the hole to accommodate the roots. If you have lost too much soil, build a little mound to support the roots of the plant. Place the plant the same depth that it was planted before, or a little higher, and then fill in with the crumbled soil from the hole. Stop after filling in a few inches of soil, tamp in the crumbled soil, and water. Repeat with a few more inches of soil, each time being sure to bring soil firmly to the root ball, so there are no air pockets. You may mix in compost with the top few inches of soil. Build a ring of soil at the top around the plant to hold water. Water it in, and mulch well.

Consider whether to stake or not to stake. Base your decision on the size of the bush or tree and the amount of wind in the area. Large trees may need staking, but only stake if necessary and then, for stronger development, leave a few inches of leeway for the tree to sway with the wind. Your plant will now settle in ready for spring growth. With your plants in their new, desired location, you can relax. Happy holidays!

Nature's Confusion

Christine Powell

Sometimes even the plants get confused! I was in my garden the other day just clearing up the now dead stalks of the coneflowers from the summer. The finches had already stripped them of seeds and I guess the neighborhood will all be treated to splashes of unplanned purple next spring. I decided to wander over to my hillside where I have a single raised bed behind a chain-link fence I am trying desperately to hide when I noticed a clump of *Narcissus* or Paperwhites putting on what can only be described as a very early display! These is not the only plants I have spotted blooming out of season. On one of the trails I found a Texas redbud in bloom after the recent brief rains. I am sure with the onset of these cold nights none of the plants will now be left confused over what season we are entering.



Name that Plant

What's in a Native-Plant Name?

Part VI—the Geologists Connection

Bill Ward

The man who is known as the Father of Texas Geology was among the first to make extensive collections of Texas flora. That was the young German geologist and naturalist Dr. Ferdinand Roemer, the subject of an earlier column in this series. His 1849 publication “Texas with Observations on its Natural History and Geology” included his descriptions of the Texas flora, and he botanized for a short time with Ferdinand Lindheimer of New Braunfels, the “Father of Texas Botany.” The botanical collection Roemer took back to Germany led to rapid publication of plant descriptions that preempted US publications being prepared on specimens collected by Lindheimer.

Another geologist-naturalist who made major contributions to early Texas botany was Samuel Botsford Buckley. He is the Buckley of Buckley's yucca (*Yucca constricta*) and Texas red oak (*Quercus buckleyi*), two common plants in this area. Samuel Buckley was born in 1809 in Torrey, New York. At Wesleyan University in Connecticut, he studied geology and mineralogy. After graduating, he made botanical collections in Virginia and Illinois. In 1839 he began a year's tenure as principal of an academy in Allenton, Alabama. After that, he traveled extensively through the South, discovering several new species of plants and one new genus.

On an expedition to Florida in 1843, Buckley discovered thirteen new species of mollusks. In 1858, he determined the height of several mountains in Tennessee and North Carolina. One of them is named Mount Buckley.

In 1860, when Texas had been a state for only fifteen years, Buckley was hired to be an assistant to Dr. Benjamin Franklin Shumard, the first head of the Texas

Geological Survey. Buckley was put in charge of the botanical department, and he also was to make geologic observations.

Governor Sam Houston had been keeping a disapproving eye on Shumard and removed him in 1860. The governor then appointed Francis Moore, geologist from Houston, as State Geologist. Buckley was made First Assistant. Not long after Moore and Buckley set off in 1861 to document natural resources of the Llano area, Buckley was sent back to check on rumors that Shumard was campaigning to remain in his position as State Geologist. Those rumors proved true, but Buckley soon provided Sam Houston with testimony on Shumard's negligence in office, and Shumard left the state. Curiously enough, one of the plants Buckley discovered is Shumard oak (*Quercus shumardii*), which he named after his first boss at the Texas Geological Survey.



Above: *Quercus* is the ancient classical name for the European oaks. This species was named for Samuel B. Buckley, botanist and state geologist of Texas. Buckley oak leaves are similar to the Texas red oak, *Q. texana*, but the two species do not overlap in their distributions. This species should be considered a conservation concern. The largest known Buckley oak grows in Travis County, Texas.

Left: Buckley yucca has large clusters of white flowers held high above a clumping crown of narrow, graceful but thin leaves. It does not transplant well even in a young stage. It makes a dramatic statement or accent in the landscape.

Images courtesy LBJWC

During the Civil War, the Geologic Survey apparently was inactive, and the survey's collections were riffled and put in disarray. After Buckley was appointed State Geologist by Governor Throckmorton in 1866, he reorganized the collection. In 1874, Governor Coke appointed Buckley to the position of State Geologist for the second time. That same year, Buckley authored the "First Annual Report on Geological and Agricultural Survey of Texas," a comprehensive tome that included a considerable amount on vegetation of Texas. In this report, Buckley pleaded that a botanical and zoological department be added to the Survey, which he hoped could lead to a natural history museum for Texas. Buckley continued various endeavors in geology and natural history until his death in

Austin in 1884. Buckley accumulated a herbarium of about 6,000 species through his own collections and trades with other botanists in America and Europe. The herbarium was acquired by Ohio natural history professor Rebecca Mann Dean, who sold it to Washington University in St. Louis. Shortly thereafter, Buckley's herbarium was combined with that of the Missouri Botanical Garden, the same place most of Lindheimer's collections went.

Samuel B. Buckley was the first botanist to collect in Texas and then describe new species from his own collection. He published descriptions of over one hundred Texas plants, many taxa of which are recognized today.

"Bug" of the month

Our featured bug this month is the Multicolored Asian Lady Beetle (*Harmonia axyridis*). You may have noticed about this time last year that there were swarms of the little creatures on your porches and under the eaves of your home trying to get in to stay warm. I took the picture of one crawling on my arm about two weeks ago and knew it was a lady beetle but it looked different from the other ones in my backyard. For the most part, lady beetles are beneficial predators that consume aphids, scale insects, and many other pests that injure plants in our gardens, landscapes, and agricultural settings.

The multicolored Asian lady beetle is native to Asia, where it is an important predator that feeds on aphids and other soft-bodied insects that dwell in trees. In their native habitat, large aggregations of these lady beetles often hibernate (overwinter) in cracks and crevices within cliff faces. Unfortunately, in the United States where cliffs are not prevalent, they seek overwintering sites in and around buildings. During the past decade, the multicolored Asian lady beetle has emerged as a seasonal nuisance pest in many regions of our country. It was recognized in Ohio during October 1993, when some residents reported that thousands of lady beetles were congregating on homes and buildings, with many of these insects finding their way indoors. This species is sometimes called the Halloween lady beetle because some adults are a pumpkin yellow-orange color and large populations often occur in late October coinciding with Halloween festivities. The multicolored Asian lady beetle made its way into the United States through a number of accidental and planned releases. There are several reports that this species was accidentally brought on ships to various ports, notably New Orleans and Seattle. This lady beetle was also intentionally imported from Russia, Japan, Korea, and elsewhere in the Orient and released in the United States as part of a Federal effort to naturally control insect pests in trees. The name "multicolored" refers to the many different color forms of the adult lady beetles. Color variants found in the United States are different shades of yellow, orange, or red, either with or without black spots on the wing covers. Some have 19 black spots while others have faded spots that vary in number and size. On the white pronotum (top covering of middle body part), many have several spots that fuse into a regular to irregularly-shaped "M."

Many times when you purchase lady beetles from stores you are getting these that have been imported and captured in California to sell here in the South and as soon as you release them they leave. If you want to attract the native and imported lady beetles plant some Mexican Butterfly weed which usually attracts aphids and you will be able to keep them happy and full.



Wayne Rhoden
Entomologist Specialist

A Master Gardeners Field Trip Community Gardens

Janell Crego

My parents were big gardeners, canners, and seed savers. This was the result of living through the great depression, I believe. They had a big backyard garden as long as they were able. After that, members of their church and farmers around their small town would call them to “come and get it” when there was excess produce. I can remember opening my mother’s freezer and seeing there was not enough room to insert an empty envelope.

My 3-year-old son stayed with them a lot and helped shell peas and beans. Once we caught him saving almonds out of Hersey bars. He said he was going to plant a Hersey tree (with wrapper and all, I suppose). During this time, I was a farmer’s wife but Del Monte was fine with me. However, we had a fruit orchard with peaches, apples & grapes. My parents would show up on my doorstep when the fruit was ripe, bringing flour, sugar, foil pie plates and foil. We would make pies and fill the freezer. This did not excite me too much; however, the pies were very good the next winter. The sort of community that my parents enjoyed can be had today.

Who remembers Victory Gardens?

Victory gardens were started during WWII to help with the war effort. Many food items were not available in the grocery stores at that time because of the war. Therefore, people had victory gardens in order to have fresh vegetables. Later, there was also a public television program called *The Victory Garden*. This concept was used at Callaway Gardens in Georgia and some of the Victory Garden segments were filmed at that location. For those who had the

space, their victory garden was in their back yard. Urban dwellers with no space to garden used a vacant lot or empty field.

Is this concept applicable today?

Today many apartment or townhouse dwellers, plus those with houses on smaller lots, have no place for a garden. The buzz word being used for victory gardens today is “community garden,” any garden gardened by a group of people. I believe this is still applicable today. Gardening is satisfying, especially, if you can eat the results. Children love to garden and should be taught where vegetables come from. They are more likely to eat vegetables if they have grown or helped grow them. Gardening is great exercise and vegetables are healthful. These gardens also prevent two undesirable situations associated with modern life: social isolation and the likelihood of crime and vandalism. It’s a win/win situation.

American Community Garden Association

There’s even an American Community Garden Association (ACGA) to help you get started. This organization was founded in 1979. It is made up of volunteers, professionals, and supporters that would like to increase a sense of community by promoting community gardening and greening in the United States and Canada. The ACGA promotes vegetable as well as ornamental gardening. They are governed by a Board with members from various regions of the

US. Your group can



join ACGS and have your garden listed in their database.

A basic membership to ACGA is \$30 and includes a one year subscription to Organic Gardening Magazine. ACGA also has regional training workshops that can be designed to fit your garden’s needs, an annual, quarterly, and monthly publication, an ACGA website, an annual conference, mentoring, voting privileges and 10% discounts from Peaceful Valley Farm & Garden Supply, located in (where else but) California.

Starting a community Garden

A community garden is easy to start and you don’t have to reinvent the wheel, as there is an ACGA fact sheet that shows options for starting a community garden or a kid’s community garden. ACGA has developed a series of tip sheets that tell what you need to do and suggestions on how to do it. It also has a number of resources available such as articles, videos, funding opportunities, publications and research to help you start a community garden. There are a number of tips on the ACGA website and elsewhere on the internet, for example:

www.communitygarden.org; www.mindspring.com/~communitygardens/; www.aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/Kinder/commun.html; www.mrsc.org/Subjects/Parks/comgarden.aspx



Book Review:

Brush & Weeds of Texas Rangeland

By: Charles R. Hart, Barron S. Rector, C. Wayne Hanselka, Robert K. Lyons, Allan McGinty



This book serves at least two audiences. The primarily targeted readership are the managers of the 70% of the total land area of Texas that is devoted to rangeland or permanent pasture. These 111 million acres provide most of the state's forage for livestock, habitat for wildlife, watershed, and recreational open space. Unfortunately, about 87% of that area is infested with various unwanted brush and weed species. The managers must control these if they are not to interfere with the desirable plants that provide much of the value of the land for pasture, conservation, hunting, and recreation. For some years, managers have relied on Extension Publication B-1466, an annual guide for the use of herbicides to control brush and weeds. However, that guide is useless unless the users can correctly identify the species that are creating their problems. They will otherwise find themselves clearing out beneficial species and actually fostering the spread of the noxious invasives. The answer to this problem is *Brush & Weeds of Texas Rangelands*, a field guide to identifying the plants that B-1466 gives instructions to control.

The second audience is composed of Texas naturalists who want to identify the species they encounter in their trips through open country. There are any number of guides to wildflowers and useful plants, but not to the "rogues gallery" of species that lie on the spectrum from useless to harmful. This easy-to-carry book describes 95 commonly-encountered species, listed in alphabetical order by common name. This list includes not only the primary "weeds," but also some useful plants that might be confused with them. Each plant gets a two-page spread in a uniform format. On the left page is a description of the plant, focusing on identifying features and whether it is useful forage for livestock or wildlife, its range, and its normal habitat. On the right page are color photographs of the plant and its distinguishing

features (often including flowers and fruit). Following the plant descriptions are lists of the plants found in each of the state's ten regions and an index that includes the scientific and alternative popular names.

The descriptions are basic, as is to be expected considering the primary audience, but they are very lucid and serviceable. The photographs are very clear and well-selected. This book could be a valuable addition to any naturalist's library and should be nearly indispensable for anyone charged with the management of rangeland, pastures, or similar areas.

Order your copy from the Texas AgriLife Extension Bookstore (<http://agrilifebookstore.org>) or call 888-900-2577 toll free. The cost is \$25.00 + shipping and tax.

A really useful tool!**Christine Powell**

I don't know about you, but I think I am safe in saying that most of us have a favorite tool in the garden. I actually have two. One I use nearly every time I garden and the other is for special occasions. The first is a small pick axe I use every time I plant anything. No spade for me, just the pick axe!

My other special tool arrived last Christmas (along with a Can-of-Worms composter)—I'm not your normal wife, no gold earrings here. I had had my eye on the bright orange tool for some considerable time but like most things in our house I have to convince my husband that they are really needed. This is usually achieved quickly and easily by making him do the job himself until he has had enough. After volunteering at an invasive species pulling, clean-up, and native planting at Blunn Creek Preserve in Austin in 2007, I just knew I had to have one. Later in the year I was able to borrow the tool from a friend in South Austin for a weekend but it was still not enough. I had to have one of my very own. Luckily, Dale (the afore-mentioned husband) realized this was not just a passing fancy; I meant business. With this in mind, the tool was ordered and I waited expectantly.

After arriving in two boxes and the simple assembly of drifting the two pivot pins into place, and snapping in four E-clips to secure them, I was up and running. I had a Weed Wrench! It has jaws to grasp weeds, shrubs, and even small trees, and a long handle that acts as a lever. Just place the jaws around the stem or trunk of the doomed vegetation and pull the lever. Even large deeply-rooted plants come right out of the ground. I have learned the hard way to brace myself, since it is easy to flip over backwards when the plant comes shooting up. I could hardly live without my wonderful tool.

For more information go to <http://www.weedwrench.com/>



Treats from the Master Garden

“Favorites” from the Class of 2008

The class of 2008 wanted to share some of their favorite recipes with all the WCMG. The snacks this year were all really fresh and healthy showing off what a wonderful range of produce that can be found locally. So maybe take a moment over this holiday period to try something that we all enjoyed during the Fall class. I've included some lighter moments of the classes to be enjoyed too!

Salmon Spread

- 1 16 oz. can salmon (red)
- 1 8 oz. package cream cheese (I use reduced fat, but not fat-free.)
- 1 T. lemon juice
- 1 T. grated onion (or a little more)
- 2 t. prepared horseradish
- 1/8 t. cayenne pepper
- 1/4 t. liquid smoke (do not omit)
- dash of Worcestershire sauce
- 1/2 c. chopped pecans, toasted
- 3 T. minced fresh parsley

Drain salmon, remove skin and bones, flake. Soften cream cheese and beat until fluffy. Blend in lemon juice, onion, horseradish, salt, Worcestershire, cayenne, and liquid smoke. When thoroughly blended, stir in salmon. Combine pecans and parsley on waxed paper. Shape salmon mixture into ball and roll in pecans and parsley to cover.

note: Pecans and parsley can be mixed into the salmon mixture. It doesn't look as pretty, but it tastes better. (from Southern Living)

Corn Dip

- 2 cans whole kernel corn, drained
- 1 can mexi corn, drained
- 2 small cans chopped green chilies, drained
- 1 jalapeno (discard seeds & ribs), chopped (or to taste)
- 1 bunch green onions, chopped
- dash of sugar (optional)
- 12 oz. cheddar cheese, grated (I use 2% sharp cheddar, or 2% extra sharp if I can find it.)

- 1 c. sour cream (I use reduced fat, but not fat-free)
- 1 c. mayonnaise (I use reduced fat, but not fat-free.)

ground black pepper to taste

Combine all ingredients.

This is best prepared the day prior to serving and refrigerated over night.

Serve with chips. (Fritos Scoops are best!)





BYERLY'S WILD RICE SOUP

- 6 tbsp. butter
- 1 tbsp. onion, minced
- ½ c. flour
- 3 c. chicken broth
- 2 c. wild rice, cooked
- ½ tsp. salt
- 1 c. Half & Half
- 2 tbsp. dry sherry (optional)
- Snipped parsley or chives

Melt butter in saucepan, saute' onion until tender. Blend in flour; gradually stir in broth. Cook, stirring constantly, until mixture comes to a boil. Boil and stir one minute. Stir in rice and salt, simmer about 5 minutes. Blend in Half & Half and sherry, heat to serving temperature.

VARIATION: Add 1/3 cup minced ham, 1/3 cup finely shredded carrot and 3 tablespoons chopped slivered almonds with rice and salt.

Judy's Rosemary Cookies

- 1 stick of butter, softened
- ½ cup vegetable oil
- ½ cup of sugar
- ½ cup powdered sugar
- 1 large egg
- ½ teaspoon Vanilla
- 2 cups flour
- ½ teaspoon cream of tartar
- ½ teaspoon baking soda

- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 heaping T. finely ground fresh rosemary leaves

Heat oven to 350 degrees. Cream the butter with the oil and sugars. Add the egg and vanilla and mix well. Mix dry ingredients and stir into the butter mixture. Add rosemary and mix well. Chill dough. Put tablespoon-sized balls of dough onto a greased cookie sheet. Bake for 12 to 15 minutes (from the local Newspaper).



President's Column

Achievements Wayne Rhoden



It has finally gotten to be December. This has been a long year, or so it seems. Looking back, we did a lot of training during the year. Starting in June, we hosted the Junior Master Gardener Specialist training for the state and trained 30 master gardeners to be JMG Specialists. In July, we presented three different programs for Texas Disposal Systems/Gardenville on soils, water conservation, and native plants. Also in July, we hosted 17 teachers from Williamson County to train them as JMG/Master Gardeners so they could start JMG programs in their schools. Our fall master gardener class started on August 12 and has now completed. In October, we held the first Texas Master Gardener Specialist-Vegetable Gardening training in the state. This is an ambitious program for a Master Gardener Association which has only been in existence for a year and a half. You should all be very proud of this accomplishment. I see our association continuing to grow and expanding more and more as more certified master gardeners join the association. The Junior Master Gardener program is starting to come together as the teachers get their first semester under their belts and can concentrate on starting programs for the students. My thanks to all the executive committee and board members, many who have had to assume multiple roles to lead us through this first year. We are looking forward to seeing our certified members take on a leadership role to relieve the load from some of the other members. Have a great holiday season and be safe. See you at the Awards/Christmas party on the 8th!

Wayne

Submissions?

If you would like to contribute to the *Williamson County Master Gardeners Journal* please send your articles, item, and photographs to Christine Powell at xtinepowell@verizon.net by the 25th of the month. Remember to include captions and attribution details. The Editor is grateful to all those who have submitted items in the past and would like to thank those who would like to send things in the future. Thank you!



"New Frontiers" in horticulture and gardening

March 22-26, 2009

The Las Vegas International Master Gardener Conference will address issues that gardeners everywhere face -- water conservation, proper plant selection, soil enrichment, pest control -- while also presenting new concepts in environmental stewardship and "green" technologies. Since what is old has become new again, we will also explore historical and traditional plants and methods.



Williamson County Master Gardener Association Officers for 2008

Officers:

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| Nancy Moore, Treasurer: | nancy3610@att.net | (512) 215-9697 |
| Jeanne Barker, Secretary: | jubarker@yahoo.com | (512) 608-1296 |

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| Membership/Volunteer Opportunities: | John Papich | texasjayp@yahoo.com | (512) 863-4098 |
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Monthly Meetings

Williamson County Master Gardeners hold monthly meetings at the Williamson County Extension Office, 3151 SE Innerloop Road, Suite A, Georgetown on the second Monday of each month at 6:00pm. Master Gardeners and the public are welcome to attend.