

# Williamson County Master Gardener Journal

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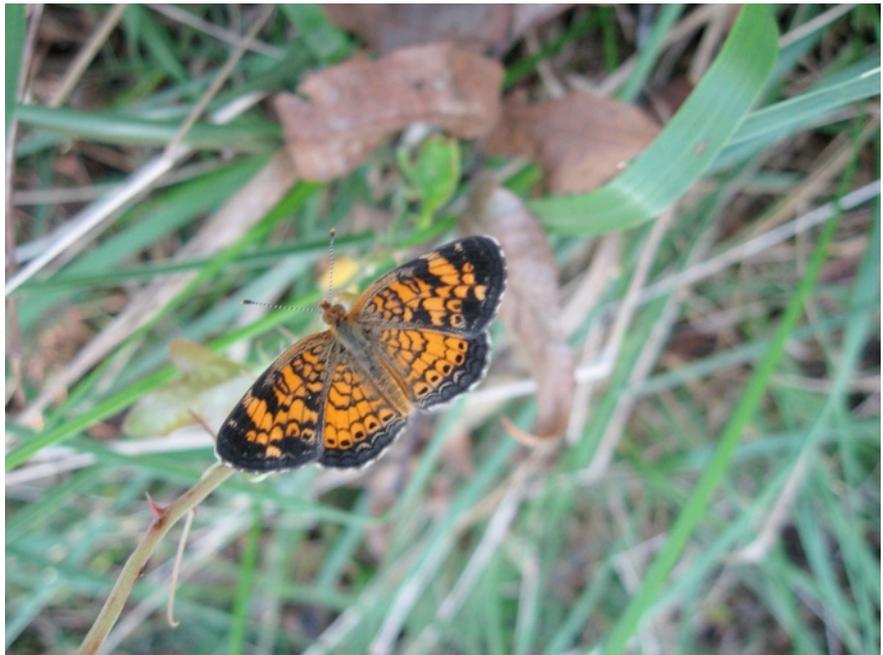
**QUOTE OF THE MONTH**



Master Gardeners at a County Park

## Berry Springs Volunteer Projects Duffy Banfield

Berry Springs Park and Preserve (at 1801 County Road 152, north-east of the I-35 interchange with Toll 130), is a wonderful retreat for all ages... you can wander the hike and bike trails, meander through the almost 300 acres of rolling farmland, enjoy a picnic lunch amidst the abundance of pecan and oak trees, and relax and enjoy the tranquil beauty of the flowing waters of Berry Springs. If you enjoy fishing, take your fishing tackle and cast your dreams of catching “the big one.” Fishing at Berry Springs is catch-and-release only.



The park has tent camping, and as a side note to camping, the restrooms are the cleanest I have ever seen in a public park. The resident Park Manager, Susan Blackledge, is a natural-born reminder to us all of how important it is to preserve the lands that are given to us so graciously for pure enjoyment. Her goals for Berry Springs Park and Preserve make me proud to know her and to have worked with her on several Master Gardener projects.



Many of us from the 2007 Inaugural Master Gardener Class of Williamson County have participated in these projects. The projects were all so different. We started out with a manicure of the park flower-beds.

Wayne Rhoden headed up the group that spent a Saturday morning “sprucing up” the beautiful landscape that Wayne designed. Our next

project was volunteering at the annual Archaeological Festival. We had a great turnout!!! The Master Gardener students were in charge of helping with lunch, feeding everyone a free hot dog with all the trimmings.

A few weeks later, we moved on to another project—harvesting wildflower seeds. Several of us gathered many different kinds of seeds for a future planting. Following this seed gathering event, we harvested the seed.

We spent many hours separating the seeds from the stems and preparing them to be sowed in the one-acre wildflower area located on the grounds by the bird-watching area.

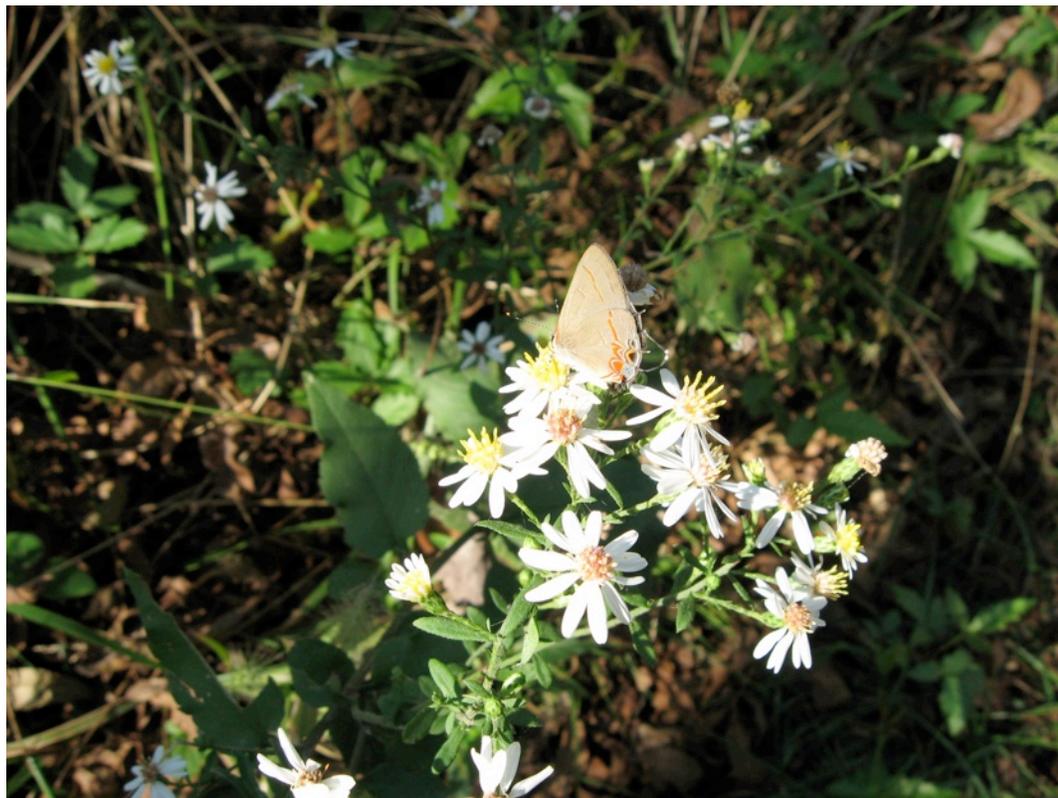
Our most recent volunteer project was to actually plant the seeds. The Master Gardener interns, Master Gardeners, and several other volunteers gathered on



the 15th of December and with our rakes and very muddy shoes, braved the cold north wind and planted the entire acre with seeds that we had gathered along with a Texas-Oklahoma mix that was purchased by Williamson County Parks and Recreation Department. We were finished in about 3 hours, and sev-



eral of us stayed to trim the plants in the landscaped beds that had been damaged by the recent cold weather.



Berry Springs Park and Preserve is a sight to see. And I know that this spring, we will all enjoy the fruits of our labors as the wildflowers emerge and create a spectacular sight in so many different colors, varieties and sizes. The park is a habitat to many plant species and animals, all in a very natural setting. There is so much history here and it is a great way to spend time enjoying the great outdoors.

## Native Substitutes for Invasive Plants

**Alternatives****Christine Powell**

I arrived in Central Texas from England—via the Middle Eastern desert—some seventeen years ago. I have the need to garden in my blood. I come from a gardening background, as my father was a professional gardener all his life, and I have always tried to create a garden where ever I have lived. Sadly, when I arrived here I felt the need to try and recreate a typical English garden—an idea obviously doomed to failure. It took several years to realize that, even though Texas is cooler than my Middle Eastern home, it still is a lot different to England.

Having lost my way, I turned a full 180° and centered my hopes on exotics. The garden was becoming a real mishmash of styles and plants and was extremely unfulfilling. There was something missing. Something major. And then I got it. Just where was all this varied wildlife Texas was supposed to have?

It certainly wasn't hanging around my yard. Just after I got married and moved to our hillside property near the river in Georgetown, I asked my husband, "Where are all the birds?" I had grown up in England with a dawn chorus outside my window 365 days a year. Texas seemed mighty quiet. My husband told me that there were very few birds in this part of the State. He was right to a certain degree. We didn't have many birds... not because there are not any, but because we didn't have the right plants for them. I guess I had never considered just what plants wildlife needed.

With this in mind, I set about planting for them—the English way. I wanted a little piece of home so badly, but the native wildlife still didn't move in. The exotics didn't help either. Finally, the time came for me to do a little research and I discovered a whole new world: native plants.

Many plants that flourish here, and even feed the wildlife, are not necessarily right for here. The whole landscape—not just mine—is full of invasive species. Although many of them are touted at nurseries as "adaptive," they can actually become toxic to our environments. For example, a lovely plant that most of us have in our gardens is the colorful *Nandina domestica*, Nandina, (right) or Heavenly Bamboo. This picturesque plant has it all. It is a member of the Berberidaceae, or Barberry, family native to Eastern Asia, from the Himalayas east to Japan. The great small shrub provides small but pretty spring flowers, much needed color in fall through to spring, along with bright red berries. It must be good for the birds, right?



Wrong.

Birds do indeed eat the large clusters of berries, but they spread the seeds far into native woodlands. Since *Nandina* is extremely disease resistant and has no native insect pests, it spreads prolifically and out-competes native plants for sunlight and water. In the long run, diversity is significantly reduced and the birds end up with less food, not more. The custodians of the preserve areas in Central Texas spend much of their lives trying to control the spread of *Nandina* and other invasive species. It is not easy to remove either. Small plants can be pulled by hand, while larger specimens may need more muscle power. A weed wrench works, as does a rope and tow hook! Some resprouting will occur if parts of the roots are left in the ground but the saplings soon die off if consistently clipped.

There are some amazing native plants now available that look just as good as *Nandina*, provide valuable shelter for wildlife, support diversity, are great food sources for birds and insects, and are virtually maintenance free once established. These include *Agarita*, Evergreen Sumac, Texas Persimmon, Yaupon, Red Buckeye, Dwarf Palmetto, Elbow Bush, and Possumhaw, just to name a few.

## Why Not Try One of These!

One of my favorites alternatives is the **Agarita**, *Mahonia trifoliolata*. Although it has thorns, those just save it from deer. It is attractive and adored by songbirds that love its berries. Small mammals and quail use the plant for shelter and the flowers are a good nectar source. The lustrous red fruit, a pea-sized berry, is used in jelly-making and for wine. The roots were used by the early pioneers for yellow dye. *Agarita*'s early spring flowers are fragrant and yellow, forming clusters of blooms that later become the berries in May to July. The evergreen gray-green to blue-gray trifoliate holly-like foliage has needle-sharp tips which are interesting, making it one of the most deer-resistant plants on the market! *Agarita* is a perennial shrub with rigid spreading branches, which can occasionally reach eight feet and form thickets, yet it is perfect in many landscape areas. It is happy in sun to part shade, hillsides, woods, rocky slopes, cliff thickets, and open woods. Particularly good in limestone soils like the Hill Country, it can take both dry and moist conditions.

*Mahonia trifoliolata* (*Agarita*) is a native alternative for *Nandina domestica*, *Nandina*, or Heavenly Bamboo and *Pyracantha coccinea* (scarlet firethorn).





**Evergreen Sumac**, *Rhus virens*, is a perennial shrub or small tree with spreading branches that is perfect for the Central Texas landscape.

Sometimes reaching 8-12 ft. in height, it is not a true evergreen; although the leaves remain green through the winter, they are dropped to be replaced within a week with a new crop. The shiny “evergreen” pinnate foliage is tinged with pink in early spring and maroon after frost. Leaves are alternate 2–5 1/2 inches long with 5–9 fleshy leaflets on stiff stems. The 5-petaled inconspicuous greenish or white flowers grow in clusters 1–2 inches long at the end of stout branches on the female plants only. When the drupe fruit matures in mid-September it is red, broader than long, and covered with fine hair. Originally found on dry rocky hillsides gullies, bluffs, slopes and banks in the Edwards Plateau and Trans-Pecos, Evergreen Sumac is happy in the sun to part shade and a wide variety of dry soils. Its habit makes it perfect for a thick hedge or screen but it can be grown as a tree if desired. The aromatic blooms, ornamental fruits and conspicuous leaf color changes make it an interesting addition to the landscape. Generally insect and disease-free, moderately deer resistant, it is also drought-tolerant and very low maintenance once established. Birds and other animals feed on the fruit while the flowers are a nectar source for adult butterflies. The berries, when soaked, can even be used to make a tart, tasty tea high in vitamin C.

*Rhus virens* (Evergreen sumac) is a native alternative for *Nandina domestica*, (Nandina, or Heavenly Bamboo), *Ligustrum japonicum* (Japanese privet), and *Pyracantha coccinea* (scarlet firethorn).

Another attractive small single or multi-trunked deciduous tree, usually 12-36 feet tall with a stunning hard wood trunk and bark formation is the **Texas Persimmon**, *Diospyros texana*. This very underused tree is great in small spaces as the beautiful trunk and branches set it apart. The light gray

## INTRODUCTION TO INVASIVE SPECIES

**What is an invasive species?** An invasive species is non-native to the ecosystem in consideration and causes or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health.

Sometimes you will see invasive species referred to as exotic, alien, or nonindigenous species. The problem with these names is that they only refer to the nonnative part of the definition above. Many exotic or alien species do not cause harm to our economy, our environment, or our health. In fact, the vast majority of “introduced” species do not survive and only about 15% of those that do go on to become “invasive” or harmful.

An invasive species grows/ reproduces and spreads rapidly, establishes over large areas, and persists. Species that become invasive succeed due to favorable environmental conditions and lack of natural predators, competitors and diseases that normally regulate their populations.

**How did invasive species get here?** Plants and animals have been moving from one place to another for many millennia. These movements have been relatively slow, allowing for life forms to adapt to changes in habitat and species interactions. Humans have



bark is smooth and thin; on some trunks it peels in rectangular flakes that expose a pinkish layer beneath. Usually found on rocky open woodland slopes and in arroyos, the Texas Persimmon is happy in most dry soil types and extremely drought- and disease-resistant. Leaves are obovate, small (up to 2 inches long) and leathery. The urn shaped flowers are pretty, small and whitish and arranged singly or in small clusters among the new leaves. Both the male and female on separate plants appearing in March and April. The female trees produce fleshy black berries that appear from late July into September and can be up to an inch in diameter. These edible sweet black persimmons, which taste much like stewed prunes, will stain the teeth, lips, and hands. This makes them a useful natural dye. The immature fruits are strongly astringent. The heartwood, which can only be found in very large trunks, is black like that of the related Ebony (*Diospyros ebenum*) while the sapwood is clear yellow. One of the great advantages to the Texas Persimmon—as if more are needed—is its value to wildlife. The fruits attract birds (and deer) and it is the prized food for the peccary. Nectar-seeking insects, including butterflies, are attracted to it, and it is the larval host for the Gray Hairstreak (right) and Henrys Elfin butterflies.

*Diospyros texana* (Texas persimmon) is a native alternative for *Nandina domestica*, Nandina, or Heavenly Bamboo, and *Elaeagnus angustifolia* (Russian olive).

**Yaupon holly**, *Ilex vomitoria*, is a picturesque upright single- or multi-trunked shrub or small tree growing 12-25 ft high. The tiny white flowers, which appear in April and May, prove to be a favorite with insects. Female plants produce prodigious amounts of bright red

always been agents of dispersal for plants and animals either accidentally or intentionally. However, as humans began exploring the planet on a larger scale, rates of introductions of species to new areas accelerated. Now with our global economy and advanced technologies, these rates have reached a level never before seen in ecological history.

**How did invasive species reach the Southwest?** For more than 2,000 years, Native Americans moved plants and animals all over the Southwest. Starting in the 1500's, the number of new exotic species as well as the speed at which they moved increased. The Spanish brought exotic agricultural crops and domestic animals from other parts of the world to the Southwest during the Spanish conquest. The new species introduced to the Southwest between 1500 and 1900 were accompanied by changes in physical conditions in the landscape that accelerated the naturalization of these exotics. At the same time, native species were declining. Dams



persistent berries much loved by the Northern Mockingbird (amongst others). The pale gray bark is marked with white patches. The ornamental twigs with their shiny, simple, dark evergreen leaves and numerous red berries are favorite Christmas decoration. The tree can be grown as an ornamental or trimmed into a hedge. The leaves contain caffeine and American Indians used them to prepare a tea to induce vomiting and as a laxative. Tribes from the interior traveled to the coast in large numbers each spring to partake of this tonic. Frequently found in low woods, hammocks, and sandy pinelands in east and south central Texas it is happy with poor drainage and can cope with most soil types. Preferring part shade, it has a low water use but likes a moist soil. The Yaupon is a very versatile plant, moderately deer resistant, and readily available. However, nursery plants are typically female (fruiting) and are propagated by cuttings. You must have both a male and female plant to have berries. The male must be the same species as the female and bloom at the same time. Although slow growing and tending to be thick and twiggy, careful pruning creates an elegantly-shaped plant. It is a good late winter source of food for many bird species and fruit-eating mammals. The tree is also a perfect nesting site for many small birds and a larval host for the Henrys Elfin butterfly.



*Ilex vomitoria* (Yaupon) is a native alternative for *Nandina domestica* (Nandina, or Heavenly Bamboo), *Ligustrum japonicum* (Japanese privet), *Phyllostachys aurea* (golden bamboo), and *Pyracantha coccinea* (scarlet firethorn).

and grazing significantly contributed to the spread of exotic species. The arrival of the railroad resulted in another increase in invasive species.

With the development of roads, airlines, and global commerce, species can now travel from one corner of the world to the Southwest in a matter of hours.

#### **What is an introduction?**

When a species ends up in a new ecosystem, it is considered “introduced.” Species do naturally change their ranges slowly over time, but it is not these “natural” events that we are concerned with. Most of the introductions that result in invasive species are human caused. In some cases, we deliberately introduce species. Examples of this include garden ornamentals, range forage plants for cattle, animals and insects used to control other organisms (particularly in agriculture), and plants used for erosion control and habitat enhancement for wildlife. Other species are introduced accidentally on imported nursery stock, fruits, and vegetables, in ship ballast waters, on vehicles, in packing materials and shipping containers, through human-built canals, and through human travel.

**How does a species become invasive?** It is not enough for a species to be able to exist in its new environment, although a close match between environmental con-



Red Buckeye, *Aesculus pavia*, is a handsome shrub or small tree in the Horsechestnut family. Showy spikelike clusters of deep red funnel-shaped flowers, impressive at 6-10 inches long, suggest firecrackers. The individual flowers are 1-1 1/2 inches long and appear from March to May. Hummingbirds are attracted to

these showy blooms. The leaves—made up of 5 leaflets joined at a central point on a stem as long as the leaf—are fine-toothed, glossy, dark green above and whitish beneath. It is normal for this plant to drop its leaves at the end of the summer before most other plants. For that reason, find a place where it will be highly visible in early spring but less noticeable after it has lost its leaves. Pioneers made soap from the gummy roots, home remedies from the bitter bark, and a black dye from the wood. The brownish seeds and young shoots are poisonous to humans. American Indians threw powdered seeds and crushed branches of this and other buckeyes into pools of water to stupefy fish, which then rose to the surface and were easily caught. Common in woods, along streams in thickets, and on rocky hills in East and Central Texas, the Buckeye grows best in a moist well-drained sandy soil and is moderately resistant to deer.

*Aesculus pavia* (Red buckeye) is a native alternative for *Nandina domestica*, (Nandina, or Heavenly Bamboo), *Acer ginnala* (Amur maple), and *Vitex agnus-castus* (lilac chastetree).

The evergreen perennial **Dwarf Palmetto**, *Sabal minor*, is a common fan-shaped palm that is a small shrub 5-10 ft. tall, occasionally reaching tree

conditions in the species' home environment and the environment to which it is introduced is fundamental to its survival there. Beyond this, the organism must be able to establish a viable and growing population. To do so, the new species must be capable of out competing and/or displacing native organisms. Lack of natural controls in the new environment is also a factor in the establishment of invasive species. Without the diseases, parasites, and predators that regulated the invader's population in its homeland, it can spread rapidly.

Native species may also lack adaptations that allow them to resist competition from or predation by invasive species. If the invasion (particularly with plant species) is coupled with other disturbances to the new ecosystem (e.g., earth moving, plowing, fire, livestock grazing, changes to surface and groundwater hydrology), native populations may be weakened from the start and the ecosystem rendered more susceptible to an invasion.

**Why do we care?** Invasive species are a form of biological pollution. Invasive species decrease biodiversity by threatening the survival of native plants and animals. They interfere with ecosystem function by changing important processes like fire, nutrient flow, and flooding. Invasive species hybridize with native species resulting

size in Texas. An extremely exotic-looking plant, it does well in sun, part sun and shade. Palmetto is usually stemless, the grey-green leaves rising from an underground stock and spreading as much as 4 feet wide. Leaf blades are longer than the leaf stalks fan shaped as much as 4 feet wide dissected the narrow segments notched at the tip. White blooms in May and June are followed by blue-black drupe fruit about 1/2 inch wide in long clusters. The plant forms a trunk when grown in standing water. There are more than 2500 plants in the palm family worldwide but only about a dozen are native to the United States. The Dwarf Palmetto is found in lowlands, swamps, river terraces, and floodplains from coastal East Texas to Corpus Christi and inland to the Edwards Plateau. It is another deer-resistant plant for the area. Preferring a moist soil, it will tolerate poor drainage and the soil can be of a varied type. The Palmetto will lend interest and is a good accent plant for a damp shaded place. Provided with plenty of water during establishment, it will become quite hardy through droughts will turn the tips of the leaves brown. It is the most cold-tolerant of all the Sabals. In winter it provides nesting sites, cover, and shelter for birds. Birds and mammals love the fruit, while insects enjoy the nectar. It is a really interesting plant that brings that tropical look to the garden.



*Sabal minor* (Dwarf Palmetto) is a native alternative to *Nandina domestica* (Nandina, or Heavenly Bamboo).

**Elbow Bush**, *Forestiera pubescens* var. *pubescens*, is also known as the Desert Olive, Downy Forestiera, just plain Forestiera, and the Stretchberry. It is a multi-branched perennial, deciduous shrub 4–12 ft. tall with smooth gray

in negative genetic impacts. As renowned biologist E. O. Wilson states, “On a global basis...the two great destroyers of biodiversity are, first, habitat destruction and second, invasion by exotic species.”

Invasive species also have economic consequences and can endanger human health. Invasive species contaminate agricultural seed crops and reduce their value, pose health threats to livestock, and necessitate costly repairs to harvesting machinery. Invasive insects can harm crop plants and reduce their productivity, contaminate harvest surpluses, and act as vectors of disease among livestock or in human populations. Invasive species can also destroy electrical equipment, homes, and buildings. Control of these organisms chemically, biologically, and mechanically exacts great expenditures of time and money in addition to the losses mentioned above. In the United States alone, these expenses may total many tens of billion dollars (the latest National Geographic article on Invaders estimates the cost at \$140 billion) annually.

#### **What can you do to stop the spread of invasive species?**

1. Volunteer - You have already taken the first step to help stop the spread. Becoming a volunteer in the Invaders of Texas program is a great way to help invasive plant managers and eradica-

bark, arched branches, spiny branchlets, and light gray-green leaves. The yellow flowers are inconspicuous but fragrant, and appear from February to April. Tiny blue-black berry fruits occur in clusters on the female plants. This is a thicket-forming deciduous shrub that is drought-tolerant. It is well-suited for use as a spreading background plant or ground cover where grass will not grow. Elbow Bush, so named because the twigs and branches form “elbows,” is widely adaptable and found in a wide variety of environments in the natural landscape. It is an easy-going plant that tolerates dry or moist poor soils in the sun or shade. The flowers are an early nectar source for bees, butterflies, and other insects while the berries are eaten by several species of birds and small mammals. Hairstreak butterflies use it as a larval host. Elbow Bush is commonly used to produce a thicket and will provide valuable browsing. Propagation is easy, as the elbow bush roots easily from softwood and semi-hardwood cuttings; transplanting is also easy because of shallow, easily-dug roots.



*Forestiera pubescens* var. *pubescens* (Elbow bush or Stretchberry) is a native alternative for *Nandina domestica*, (Nandina, or Heavenly Bamboo), *Caragana arborescens* (Siberian peashrub), *Ligustrum amurense* (Amur privet), *Ligustrum japonicum* (Japanese privet), *Ligustrum lucidum* (glossy privet), *Ligustrum obtusifolium* (border privet), *Ligustrum ovalifolium* (California privet), *Ligustrum sinense* (Chinese privet), and *Ligustrum vulgare* (European privet).

**Possumhaw**, *Ilex deciduas*, is a perennial member of the holly family and is sometimes called Deciduous Holly or Winterberry. It forms a small deciduous tree or shrub from 15-30 ft. tall with pale gray twiggy horizontal

tion groups to successfully prevent and control invasions. You are also preparing yourself to be an educator of others in our community and beyond. You may also want to join an eradication program in our area.

2. Educate yourself and others - You will learn the basics of invasive species threats and issues during your citizen scientist training. There are many other sources of information available to you on the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center website.

Take this opportunity to expand your knowledge and share it with your family, friends, and others in the community. If you come upon information sources that you think would benefit other volunteers, please let us know so we can share that information. We are relying on you as a citizen scientist to not only collect scientific data, but to actively participate in our invasive species community awareness campaign.

Do not be a vehicle of dispersion - Most invasive species are introduced accidentally. Learn how to prevent carrying invasive species on your boats, cars, bicycles, motorcycles, and socks and hiking boots.

Garden Wisely - Avoid plants that self seed and show up outside of your garden. Do not use weedy volunteers from parks and aban-

branches. Glossy, simple oval toothed leaves—green above and paler below—remain dark green through autumn, finally turning yellow. Inconspicuous white flowers in March to May precede clusters of persistent red berries on female trees, which provide winter color. Possumhaw is conspicuous in winter with its many small red or orange berries along leafless slender gray twigs. Naturally found in low wet woods, coastal plains, and river bottoms, and preferring a moist sandy loam or clay soil with sun to part shade, this would be a perfect plant near a pond. This is a great understory tree whose fruits make it a beautiful ornamental accent tree or shrub. The canopy provides safe nesting sites for small birds, while the conspicuous flowers attract nectar insects. The berries of this and related species attract songbirds, game birds, and small mammals such as opossums and raccoons.

*Ilex decidua* (Possumhaw) is a native alternative for *Nandina domestica* (Nandina, or Heavenly Bamboo), *Lonicera maackii* (Amur honeysuckle), *Lonicera morrowii* (Morrow's honeysuckle), *Lonicera tatarica* (Tatarian honeysuckle) and *Lonicera xylosteum* (dwarf honeysuckle).

done lots. Most non-native species are okay; the invasive species are the ones to avoid. However, planting a native species garden can be very rewarding. There are many resources to help with creating low-maintenance and colorful native plant gardens that attract birds and wildlife.

This sidebar comes from the *Invaders of Texas Citizen Scientist Program* of the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center.



## TREE TALK WINTER WALK

*Tree Talk Winter Walk: Get Wild & Woody Saturday, January 26, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.*

The Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower annual Tree Talk Winter Walk is a perfect time to explore the beauty and benefits of native trees and shrubs. Get tips on landscape design and tree maintenance and learn about individual tree and shrub species with walks and talks led by staff and local tree experts. Choose from bold and beautiful trees and shrubs at the plant sale. Be a part of Central Texas history and honor Mrs. Johnson by purchasing your own tree grown from seeds collected from the LBJ Ranch. Special tree activities, habitat hikes and more for children. Admission free.

Treats from the Master Garden

## Time for a Texas Tour of German Food

Margaret Seals

After the holidays, all the newspaper food articles and food magazines seem to scream “diet, diet, diet!” It appears to be chiseled in stone that Americans overeat during the Christmas Season, grazing from one over-laden buffet to the next, and need “diet” repentance from New Year’s Day until Valentine’s Day. But, what about us “careful eaters?” What about those of us who still weight the same (or maybe slightly less) than we did on Thanksgiving? It is time someone stood up for the thin, waistline-stable folks who are still actually hungry after six weeks of non-stop parties. Hence you will not find the word “diet” in any of the following recipes. In fact, get ready for some rib-sticking, cold weather delights from our German ancestors who settled Central Texas.

From New Braunfels to Pflugerville, from Schulenburg to Fredricksburg, here are recipes from Grosmutter’s files, favorites still being enjoyed in those places especially when the “weather outside is frightful.” The first group comes from a wonderful authentic German food cookbook that I bought in 1968 in New Braunfels, The Comal County Extension Homemakers Cookbook. The ladies who contributed to this cookbook raided their own hand-me-down files from their beloved Omas for these recipes, and they are comfort food supreme, in the German tradition.

### Grosmutter’s Wiener Schnitzel

Joan Yanda/Canyon Lake

6 slices of veal or steak, cut ½ inch and pounded paper thin

2 egg yolks, beaten with salt and pepper added to taste

1 C. bread crumbs (approximately)

Dip slices into flour, the egg yolks and finally, crumbs. Fry in butter on each side until golden brown. Serve immediately.

### Gefuelteer Krautkopl (Filled Cabbage Head)

Lee Barker/Canyon Lake

(Requires topping with your favorite white or cheese sauce)

1 lb. pork sausage

1 lb. ground beef

2 med onions, chopped

1 C. dry breadcrumbs

2 Eggs

Salt and Pepper to taste

Start at the core of the cabbage head and hollow out the center, leaving about an inch of outside leaves to form a cup. Parboil the leaves that have been removed from the inside in salted water until tender. Drain and chop the cabbage finely. Set aside.

Slowly fry pork sausage and drain grease. Add ground beef and onions, cooking slowly another 5-10 minutes.

Mix chopped cabbage, breadcrumbs, meat and eggs together. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Fill cabbage head with this mixture.

Place head on a large piece of heavy foil, bringing ends up to seal at top.

Bake at 350 degrees for 2 hours in a large baking pan. At about 1 ½ hours, or 30 minutes before done, open foil and allow juices to run into pan. While cabbage is cooking last 30 minutes, prepare your favorite white sauce or cheese sauce.

To serve, cut cabbage into wedges. Pour some sauce over each wedge, and add a spoonful of the brown pan juices over the sauce.

From *The German Cookbook, A Complete Guide to Mastering Authentic German Cooking* by Mimi Sheraton, Random House, 1965, here are a couple of variations on the cabbage “stuffing” suitable for vegetarians:

### **Rice Filling**

1 C rice

2 T butter

1 small onion, minced

2 C vegetable stock or water

1 T parsley, minced

Sauté onion in butter until soft, add rice and stir well. Bring stock to a boil and add rice and onions. Reduce heat and cover. Cook for 20-40 minutes until rice is tender.

Use in stuffed cabbage recipe above in place of the meat mixture, following other recipe directions.

### **Cheese Filling**

1 C Breadcrumbs

1 C grated Parmesan Cheese

1-2 T minced parsley

1-2 T minced chives

6 T sour cream or 1 egg beaten into ½ C milk

Salt to taste

Combine breadcrumbs, cheese, parsley and chives. Moisten to desired consistency by adding and mixing in 1 T sour cream or egg/milk mixture at a time. Stuffing should be moist enough to pack together lightly, but not too wet. Season with salt to taste.

Use in stuffed cabbage recipe above in place of the meat mixture, following other recipe directions.

Of course, it wouldn't be a complete German food table without this favorite:

### **Hot German Potato Salad**

Hilda Moellering/Mission Valley

(Hilda notes that this recipe is for half of the original recipe she inherited from her Grandmother! Oma must have been feeding half of Comal County!)

7 lbs of boiled potatoes, salted to taste

2 ½ C bacon, cut into small pieces

¾ C water

½ lb chopped onions

Black pepper to taste

½ C flour

1 C apple cider vinegar

½ C sugar

Fry bacon until crisp; remove from grease. Add chopped onions to the grease, and fry until brown. Add flour, and stir well until smooth. Add rest of ingredients and stir until smooth. Toss potatoes and bacon together. Pour dressing over potatoes and serve while hot.

Now for those of you who like to bake, here is a recipe from Cynthia Collins Pedregon who owns that wonderful Peach Tree Tea Room over in Fredericksburg. It is from her book, *The Peach Tree Tea Room Cookbook*, Wimmer, 1990.

### **German Beer Rye Bread**

(Makes two large loaves)

1 ¾ C German Beer, room temperature

½ C warmed molasses

2 T active dry yeast, dissolved in ¼ C warm water

2 t. salt

3 C unsifted, medium rye flour

3 C unsifted, unbleached white flour

1 T caraway seeds

Oil

Cornmeal

Melted butter

In a large bowl, combine the beer and the molasses. Add the dissolved yeast.

Add the rest of the ingredients, except the oil, cornmeal and butter. Blend well, using a wooden spoon. (You can also do this step in a food processor using a dough blade.)

Turn dough onto a floured board. Knead about 7 minutes, using more unbleached flour as necessary to keep dough from sticking.

Place the dough in a bowl that has been coated with oil. Brush the top of the dough with oil also. Cover and let rise in a warm place until doubled, about 1 hour.

Punch dough down, and turn onto a floured board. Shape into two oval loaves, and place on a greased cookie sheet that has been sprinkled with cornmeal. Cover and let rise until doubled, about 30 to 45 minutes.

Brush tops of loaves with melted butter. Using a serrated knife, make shallow diagonal slashes on top of the loaves.

Bake in a pre-heated 400-degree oven for 30 minutes until done.

And for dessert, here is a cake recipe from an old friend whose Mother was a Pfluger. Serve this cake “Mit Schlag” (with whipped cream).

### **Oatmeal Cake**

(Prepare a 9” by 13” by 2” baking pan, greasing and flouring)

Preheat oven to 325 degrees

1 C uncooked oatmeal

¼ C butter

1 ¼ C boiling water

Pour boiling water over oatmeal and butter, and let stand for 30 minutes. Then add:

1 C white granulated sugar

1 C light brown sugar

2 eggs, beaten

Sift the following dry ingredients together, and add to the wet mixture:

1 1/3 C unbleached white flour

¼ t nutmeg

1 t cinnamon

½ t salt

1 ¼ t baking soda

Mix all ingredients well, and pour into prepared baking pan. Bake at 325 degrees for 30 to 35 minutes.

### **Icing for Oatmeal Cake**

¼ C Butter

½ C white granulated sugar

1 ¼ t vanilla

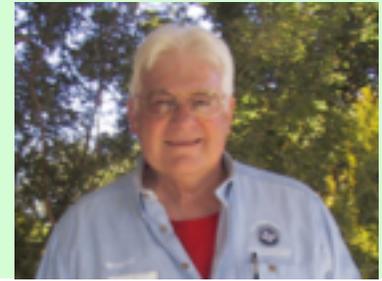
1 C chopped pecans

Soften butter and add sugar. Add vanilla and pecans. When cake is done, spread icing on cake and place under a broiler until it bubbles on top. Watch carefully so that it does not burn.

Hope you enjoy these authentic German recipes, and will spread your table generously during the cold weather for all those you love.

President's Column

**Happy New Year**  
**Wayne Rhoden**



Greetings, fellow master gardeners. I trust that everyone had a wonderful holiday season and you are ready to start out this year with great volunteer commitment. I have been very happy with the volunteer activity of our new interns and certified members and the enthusiasm you have shown to work in the greenhouse, at Berry Springs Park and Preserve, and in the Junior Master Gardener Program. Speaking of the Junior Master Gardener Program, did you know that we will be hosting the only JMG Specialist training in the country this year? It is true. In June we will have folks from all over the country coming to Georgetown to attend the specialist training. We have volunteers already planning the event with Neil Cochran heading up the project. I am sure there will plenty of opportunities to help with the program around June when this happens. The greenhouse volunteers have been busy with the propagation of various plant materials and have been having a great time sharing information with each other and eating Teresa's cookies. Neil has been teaching propagation at the horticulture club at GISD which was our commitment to them when they agreed to let us use the greenhouse that had been sitting idle for several years. The students are excited to be able to have a hands-on propagation class and learn firsthand how to grow plants from seeds, by division, and using cuttings from mother plants. If you have not been a part of this, I urge you to come out and join in the fun. We have not scheduled a class for this year but are talking about it and trying to come up with the best time to make it happen. Keep in touch on the web site and through the newsletter to see what is going on with our association. You can check out the state web site by visiting [www.texasmastergardeners.com](http://www.texasmastergardeners.com) to see newsletters from all over the state. Check there to see the new Texas Master Gardener Association officers who will be serving for the next couple of years. Happy gardening.

Wayne

**June 11-14, 2008 - Junior Master Gardener Specialist Training**



Williamson County Extension  
 Williamson County Master Gardeners

**A Date to Remember**

Please save the date of June 11-14,08. Junior Master Gardener Specialty Training will be held at the Williamson County Extension Office in Georgetown, Texas. Costs are being calculated and an application will be available soon.

Contact: Neil Cochran JMG Coordinator Williamson County

**Photo Credits**

Pages 1-3 — Wayne Rhoden; Pages 4 — Chris Evans, River to River CWMA, Bugwood.org; Page 5-12 — Agarita: Wasowski, Sally and Andy; Sumac: Loughmiller, Campbell and Lynn; Yua-pon: Marcus, Joseph A.; Red Buckeye: Northington, David K.; Sabal: Marcus, Joseph A.; Elbow bush: Lytle, Melody; Possumpaw: Marcus, Joseph A.; Page 15 — Margaret Seals

# Williamson County Master Gardener Association Officers for 2007

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## Quote of the Month

**"Thank heaven for winter, when we can sit quietly and ease our aching knees and backs, with time to peruse seed lists, read, visit friends, write letters, and dream of yet more perfect gardens."**

*H. Lincoln Foster and Laura Louise Foster, Cuttings from a Rock Garden, 1990.*