

WILLIAMSON COUNTY

GARDENING

October 2019



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Cover:
Drought Tolerant Demo Garden
Photo by Sonia Schuetze, MG 2016



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

All Rise

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Rolling into October, at some point it has to get cooler, right? In last month's article I said I was hoping for cooler temperatures and some rain. I am jealous of some of you who were lucky to get a little rain. Needless to say, I forgot to get to the mailbox and pull the water bill out before my wife found it. Not sure a batch of brownies will help me this time.

This is your reminder about getting those hours logged into VMS. You have only this month to get everything logged before the deadline on the 31st.

The last board meeting covered a few new items of business. Treasurer Sandra Roberson discussed the need for the Project Leads to get their 2020 budgets submitted. The other item was the creation of the Demo Garden Relocation Committee led by Wayne Rhoden and Betty Jo Phillips. You can find complete minutes on our website under the Members area.

Tommy King

Congratulations to the New Master Gardeners from the 2018 Class

Carolyn Connolly

Steve Craig

Cheryl Cutliff

Amy Fenton

John Gardner

Colette Grier

Olympia Guyton

Monica Henry

Dale Hill

Phyllis Kamm

Nancy Knickerbocker-Penick

Victoria Lew

Kelly Linder

Christine Luchini

Barbara Ragaglia

Mandy Richardson

Julie Roccaforte

Jennifer Rosas

Liz Sheehan

Deborah Spanel

Mike Voss

Cecilia Weisberg

Names in **BOLD** completed their hours this past month.

From The Corner Office

by Kate Whitney

Williamson County AgriLife Horticultural Extension Agent

Howdy Master Gardeners!

I might be the only one around who is enjoying this warm fall weather, but I admit I've enjoyed some extra time at the pool. I am, however, certainly ready for some rain! I can't believe that this time last year we were experiencing one of the wettest Septembers I've ever seen.

Texas weather!

We have several events coming up in the next few months that I would like to highlight. First, we set dates for monthly "Lunch & Learn" events in October through December. We will be sharing information and eating the results of our vegetable variety trials in the demonstration garden. Join us for an hour of fun, good food, and interesting information. You can find a link to RSVP on the website calendar, and you can even get one hour of continuing education for attending: <https://williamson.agrilife.org/events/>. The teams coordinating the variety trials are really doing a great job, and I think you'll enjoy the chance to taste the fruit of their labor!

The next Master Gardener tour is coming up soon on Monday, October 21. We have a great program lined up at the Natural Gardener, along with a chance to walk around their fantastic nursery. Bring your lunch and enjoy a fun learning opportunity with your fellow Master Gardeners. You can count two hours of continuing education for this event. Please register at: <https://forms.gle/e8PfaRXGjZEETGw26>

Mark your calendars for Monday, November 18, for the first ever Williamson County Master Gardener Conference. You might have heard mention of this to be held on September 16, but we had to reschedule. I will send details out soon, but we plan to talk about the vision for 2020, offer educational break-out sessions, and work on Master Gardener project plans for the next year. We will try to have a little (or a lot!) of fun as we work on planning for the next year. And yes, you will get continuing education hours for attending!

Thank you for your support and help this fall! The Williamson County horticulture program is growing because of your dedication and service, and I appreciate each of you so much! Please stop by, call, or email if you have any questions or need anything.

Thanks,
Kate

Monthly Meeting Update

by Judy Williams, MG 2017, Programs Chairperson

Our next meeting will be Monday evening, October 14, featuring Robert Gonzalez, professional grower, who will speak on “Native Grasses in the Urban Landscape”. Robert is a great friend to the Williamson County Master Gardeners having taught many of us propagation and more while he was the grower at JOSS Growers. He will bring his encyclopedic horticultural knowledge to us along with his generous smile.

Just to refresh on the changes due to our new location:

1. The social time begins at 6:15 pm and will be held in the Training Room (Suite AG205) down the hall from the Meeting Room. If you haven't been to the building, there will be strategically-posted master gardeners providing directions.
2. All food and drink must be consumed in the Training Room because county rules prohibit food and drink in the auditorium.
3. Announcements and presentations will begin at 6:45 pm in the Meeting Room so that the speaker can begin at 7:00 pm.
4. The front doors of the building are where the flags are in the parking lot. They are locked based on the programming of the facility's computer system, so there will always be a master gardener posted at the front door to let everyone in just in case the computer locks it. Please try to arrive prior to 7:00 pm, but if you are a touch late there will be a phone number posted so you can call to get someone to come open the door.
5. Although there are a few changes because of the new building, there are more positives than negatives, particularly with plenty of space in a meeting room that holds 480 people.



The Red Spider Lilly and the Schoolhouse Lily

by Alice Stultz, MG 1996

Red Spider Lily and Oxblood Lily (AKA Schoolhouse Lily) are wonderful garden surprises as they pop up in early fall with little or no warning. These are two of my favorite bulbs that just seem to appear after a long hot summer in Central Texas. They are like surprise bouquets year after year just before we get into fall in Texas.

The Red Spider Lily (*Lycoris radiata*) is in the Amaryllis family and can be planted in late summer in a shallow hole with the neck of the bulb slightly above or at ground level. Their showy flowers pop up out of the ground, often without leaf growth warning. The leaves appear early or late but last longer than the flowers and not particularly at the same time as the flower, which lasts about two weeks. This bulb with spidery appearance prefers



Figure 1. Spider lily that I have moved to four different houses in Texas



Figure 2. Oxyblood Lily or Schoolhouse Lily in the Drought Tolerant Garden with Four Nerve Daisy, photo by Viki Strauss

sun to partial shade (see figure 1).¹

Central Texas is perfect for this bulb as it likes to be placed in well-

drained, enriched soil that is more on the dry side and left alone. Do not move it around in the garden. It will continue reappearing as autumn nears and will disappear as inconspicuously as it arrived. The spider lily or lilies in our landscape are near the sedum that blooms a rusty color in the fall.

The Oxblood Lily or Schoolhouse Lily (*Rhodophiala bifida*) looks more like a weaker petalled amaryllis (see figure 2). I looked them up on the Southern Bulbs website and they are out of them for now. They claim the lilies are primarily found in older neighborhoods in Central Texas and that they are usually “proud” to carry them. They are originally from Argentina but were brought

¹ “Learn how to plant, grow and care for lovely Spider Lilies” from Gardenia, Creating Gardens website.

to Central Texas by German immigrants. They will naturalize almost anywhere but prefer partial shade to sun and the planting depth is three times the size of the bulb. Unlike the Spider Lilies, these produce leaves that mark their spot for the lovely bloom which is close in color to the Spider Lily. The blooms appear with fall rains.² Perhaps that is why they have not appeared in my garden this year, as I have not been able to water very much since July and we have had very few rain sprinkles. They did bloom in our drought tolerant garden.

Lately I have heard a lot of Texas gardeners-long time residents or recently calling themselves Texans-complain about the long summer heat. As long as we have little surprises in the garden, I can tolerate the heat and the cloudless days. These two bulbs have similar timing with both blooming in late summer to early fall. The Red Spider Lily blooms regardless of rain and the Oxblood Lily or Schoolhouse Lily is inspired to bloom with a fall rain. We can win either way with both of these in our gardens with their lovely erect showiness.³

² Southernbulbs.com website

³ Welch Dr. William C., "Spider Lilies (*Lycoris radiata*), Oxblood Lilies (*Rhodophiala bifida*) and Rain Lilies (*Zephyranthes spp*)", Texas AgriLife Extension Service, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas, September 2009.

SLATE OF OFFICERS FOR 2020

The Nominating Committee has developed a slate of officers for 2020. All nominees have agreed to serve:

President - Val Black

Vice President - Loyce Engle

Secretary - Alice Stultz

Treasurer - Sandra Roberson

Any additional nominations from the floor will be accepted at the October monthly meeting. If there are no additional nominations at the October monthly meeting, then the slate shall be approved by acclamation at the October monthly meeting. If any positions on the slate are contested, then the individuals running for those positions will be elected at the November monthly meeting by written secret ballot.

From Garden to Table

by Radhika Baliga, MG 2015

After months of anticipation, MG Betty Jo Phillips harvested her first round of sweet potatoes at the Demo Garden last week. To celebrate the harvest, we have two sweet potato-themed recipes from MG Teresa Wilts.

The first recipe is for sweet potato-peanut butter-oatmeal cookies. This is a great recipe to make when you have leftover steamed or roasted sweet potatoes in the fridge. The cookies are gluten-free and vegan if you use certified gluten-free oats and vegan brown sugar. To make it peanut and tree-nut free, you might try sunflower butter (I haven't actually attempted it myself).

The second recipe is a creamy, lemony pasta with sweet potato greens. It's a versatile recipe that works with a wide variety of greens. Make it now if you have any warm season greens in your garden or keep it in your back pocket and make it when your cool season greens really start to flourish.

Sweet Potato-Peanut Butter-Oatmeal Cookies

by Teresa Wilts

makes 12 cookies

Ingredients

- 1 cup oats, divided (gluten-free oats, if required)
- 1/3 cup brown sugar (vegan brown sugar, if required)
- 1/3 cup sweet potato puree
- 1/2 cup peanut butter
- 2 Tbsp applesauce
- 1 heaping Tbsp peanuts, raw (optional)
- scant 1/4 tsp salt (omit if peanut butter is salted)

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350F.
2. In the bowl of a food processor, process 1/3 cup oats until ground into a flour. Add in the brown sugar, sweet potato puree, and salt (if using) and process until smooth.

3. Pour this mixture into a separate bowl and add in remaining oats, peanut butter, applesauce, and peanuts. Mix all the ingredients together until a dough is formed.
4. Roll dough into 12 balls and place onto a nonstick cookie sheet. Press down the dough balls with the back of a fork.
5. Bake cookies for 7-8 minutes. Remove from the oven when the bottoms of the cookies are golden brown. Cookies should seem underdone. Allow to cool and then enjoy!

Pasta with Lemon and Sweet Potato Greens

by Teresa Wilts

This pasta features the bright flavor of lemon teamed up with garlic and greens.

Substitute arugula, kale, spinach, Swiss chard, New Zealand spinach, beet greens or collards for the sweet potato leaves.

Serves 4

Ingredients

- 3 cups penne pasta
- 1 Tbsp butter
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 cup ricotta cheese, or cream cheese (low fat or no fat)
- ¼ cup Parmesan cheese, grated
- 1 tsp grated lemon zest
- 2 Tbsp lemon juice
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ tsp pepper
- 5 cups sweet potato leaves (about 5 oz)
- ½ cup diced sweet red pepper

Directions

1. In large saucepan of boiling, salted water, cook pasta until tender but firm, about 10 minutes. Reserve 1/2 cup cooking liquid, drain pasta and set aside.

2. In same saucepan, melt butter over medium heat; fry garlic until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add reserved cooking liquid, ricotta or cream cheese, 1/2 of the Parmesan cheese, lemon zest and juice, salt and pepper, bring to simmer.

3. Roll sweet potato leaves together and slice thinly. Add sweet potato leaves and red pepper; stir until greens are wilted, about 2 minutes. Return pasta to pot and toss to coat. Sprinkle with remaining Parmesan cheese.



The Rose Garden: Fall Review

by Alice Stultz, MG 1996

Master Gardeners have been busy in the Rose Garden trimming, weeding and trying to weed out pesky Texas native grape vines that have taken over the climbing rose bed. Although Earth-Kind® roses are easier and more carefree than most roses, we want the plants to look their best and not snag visitors when viewing and smelling our rose garden. Each week we begin where we left off and so in the long run, we have dead headed and trimmed every rose at least once every six weeks.

Phyllis Kamm is rooting cuttings of the Mutabilis which is getting very old and woody. She has worked with a trainee when others couldn't be in the garden. Jim and Judy Williams and Rusty Dean have been invaluable with hours pruning and occasional heavier jobs. Marci Echols, the Tea Rose expert,



Photo by Sonia Schuetze



Alice, Olympia, Sharon & Debbie taking a break for a garden photo

we are thankful for everyone's talent in the garden. It has indeed been a trial with little rain and days exceeding 100 degrees the past three months. Next up will be mulching when it is cooler.

trained Sharon Hedrick and Alice Stultz on proper trimming of the Georgetown tea in our garden. Melanie Wortham, Mandy Richardson, Debbie McGahey and Lora Green have also trimmed on workdays. Olympia Guyton, with the help of all, has diligently tackled the climbing roses which were being overpowered by our native grape vine. We have enjoyed watching and avoiding the female mockingbird sitting on a nest of two eggs. The Rose Garden has been an educational experience for all participants. The irrigation, kept up by Dale Hill and Steve Craig, has been a blessing and



Debbie, Sharon and Alice spot Olympia near the bird's nest. Photo by Sonia Schuetze

Winola's Timely Tips for October

by Winola VanArtsdalen, MG 2007

Average First Frost Date: November 18

Invigorated by cooler weather, gardeners approach fall tasks with glee!

If preparing new beds, start with a soil test and start early. It is best to not only provide good drainage and nutrients with compost, but do this early so that microorganisms can be working to have soil ready to provide nutrients when you plant. Actually, five weeks early is recommended, but it is difficult for excited gardeners to hold back that long before planting.

If you are only needing to invigorate an existing bed, rake back mulch, add a couple of inches of compost, stir in, and then plant and cover with mulch.

Fall is clean-up time. Dig weeds and remove unwanted leaves and twigs. Some insects like twig girdlers overwinter and are ready to attack next spring.

Be aware of fire danger. Keep highly flammable materials away from house including bushes, grasses, and overhanging tree branches.

Remember that fall is prime time to plant bushes and trees. Divide and replant overgrown spring and summer blooming perennials to establish over winter. Do not divide and replant cold sensitive plants like lantana now.

Replace water-hungry plants with beds of drought tolerant plants for less work and more wild-life enjoyment!

Prepare for cold. If you plan to buy a material cover, buy it before stores run low on stock when cold weather hits! If you plan a frame to hold cover, best build it now to be ready.

Cameras in the Demo Gardens

Photos by Sonia Schuetze, MG 2016



The Tool Shed

The Bug Blaster

by Jim Williams, MG 2017

“Jim, there’s aphids on the crowder peas!” I’ve been hearing that a lot for the past couple of months in the demo garden. For some reason it’s the crowder peas that seemed to take the brunt of the attack by, you guessed it, cowpea aphids. They are not the cute little green peach aphids or the colorful milkweed aphids. These are big, wrinkly, grey-brown ugly things and, boy, do they multiply fast. My general approach is not to eliminate all the aphids, just control them and lower the population. After all, I want a few aphids around for the beneficial lady beetles and lacewings to snack on. If I get rid of them all the good guys will move to neighboring yards and may never come back.

The problem is that the aphid population will usually grow before the beneficial bugs ramp up their numbers. First come the aphids. Next the plant sends out chemical signals as the aphid population continues to increase (as I nervously watch). Next the lady beetles hear the cry for help and arrive to feed on a few aphids. With all the aphids around, the lady beetles lay eggs but take a few days to hatch into starving larvae that really do a number on the aphids. All the while I watch anxiously. I could have had it over and done if I just sprayed them down with insecticidal soap. But, if I did this, the beneficial bugs would not have been attracted to the area and reproduced. So, to relieve my anxiety, I discovered The Bug Blaster™, which helps to easily keep the aphid numbers down while awaiting the arrival of the beneficials.



The Bug Blaster™ is a nozzle that fits on the end of a watering wand and sprays water in a 360-degree flat pattern. The force dislodges insects from the leaves and stems without damaging the plant. Once the aphids are on the ground, they can’t survive. They can move about a leaf but have very poor mobility in the soil where they quickly succumb to the new surroundings. The blaster may not get all of them but, hopefully, the beneficial bugs will be able to handle any remaining ones. If the aphids reproduce rapidly, like the cowpea aphids did, you will need to repeat daily for a few days or follow the

spray with an application of insecticidal soap. However, when the temperatures are over 95°, we must be careful of the soap--so it's best to go with the daily use of the Bug Blaster. Remember: the water blast and the horticultural soap do not kill the aphid eggs so both treatments need to be repeated two to three times to get the new hatchlings. I've also had good results against scale crawlers, whitefly and mites.

So, aphids beware! We are out to get you. I have found this little tool to be very helpful around my yard as well as the demo gardens. Caution: it's deadly for bugs but fun to use.



SAVE THE DATE

MG Social—Wine and Cheese Night

Friday, October 4, 7:00 to 9:00 pm

Details, directions and sign up on VMS

Fall Tour to The Natural Gardener

Monday, October 21, 9:30 am to afternoon

Details and sign up link on VMS

WCMGA Annual Membership Conference

Monday, November 18, 9:00 am to 3:00 pm

Georgetown Annex, 100 Wilco Way

WCMGA EVENTS

October 7

WCMGA Board Meeting

AgriLife Training Room, AG205

100 Wilco Way

1:00 to 3:00 pm

All members are welcome to attend.

October 8

Green Thumbs Up Gardening Series: Round Rock

Round Rock Public Library

6:30 to 7:30 pm

“Shrubs: Selection, Planting & Maintenance”

with Brenda McIndoo

October 10

Green Thumbs Up Gardening Series: Cedar Park

Cedar Park Public Library

7:00 to 8:00 pm

“Shrubs: Selection, Planting & Maintenance”

with Brenda McIndoo

October 11

Lunch & Learn—All About Peas

AgriLife Training Room, AG205

100 Wilco Way

12 noon to 1:30 pm

October 14

WCMGA Monthly Membership Meeting

Georgetown Annex Auditorium

100 Wilco Way

6:00 to 8:00 pm

“Native Grasses in the Urban Landscape ”

with Robert Gonzalez, professional grower

October 21

WCMGA Fall Tour

The Natural Gardener

Old Bee Caves Rd

9:30 am to afternoon

“Soil & Amendments” with Neil Schmidt

“Butterfly Garden Maintenance” with Heather Kendall

October 26

Hands On In The Garden

Old Training Room, 3151 SE Inner Loop

9:00 to 11:00 am

“Seeds” with Stephanie Facey



**See You Next Month
After I Get These Shelled**