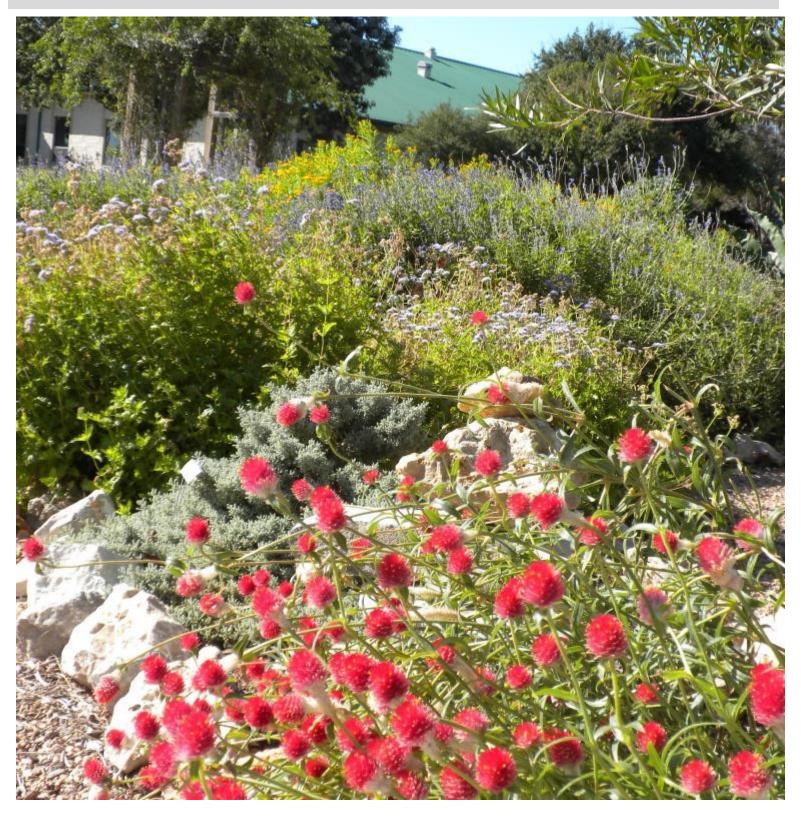
Williamson County Master Gardeners Association

WILLIAMSON COUNTY



November 2019



In This Issue...

3 President's Message by MG Tommy King
4 Monthly Meeting Update by MG Judy Williams
5 What Is Really Drought Tolerant? by MG Alice Stultz
7 Fall Planted Strawberries by MG Rick Halle
8 Southern Pea Trial by MG Sonia Schuetze
10 From Garden to Table by MG Radhika Baliga
13 Congratulations New Master Gardeners
14 The Drought Tolerant Demo Garden by MG Alice Stultz
16 Winola's Gardening Tips by MG Winola VanArtsdalen
18 WCMGA Events
19 See You Next Month



Cover: Drought Tolerant Demo Garden

Photo by Jim Williams, MG 2017



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



Contact Us

Extension Office:

512-943-3300

100 Wilco Way,

Suite AG201

Georgetown, TX 78626



Texas A&M AgriLife Extension provides equal opportunities in its programs and employment to all persons, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

All Rise

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The anxiously awaited fall weather has finally arrived, and what a difference the cooler temperatures can make in a person's outlook on the garden. Working through some of the tired garden and flower beds definitely improves their appearance. The leaves on the cedar elms and Texas Red Oaks are starting to drop, so it won't be long before they are piling up in the yards. You know what that means, right? Time to get that compost bin, cage or pile started in the yard. So many times I'm asked how to compost if there is not enough space for a big compost bin. Start small and use whatever space you have. You can compost in trash cans, just make sure you have plenty of drilled holes for drainage. You can also start a compost just by piling leaves up in the corner of the yard. Nothing compares to homemade compost. The bagged retail stuff just doesn't compare. What do you have to lose in trying to make compost at home? Start that compost pile; you'll be glad you did next spring.

Tommy King

A TRIP TO THE NATURAL GARDENER



Monthly Meeting Update

by Judy Williams, MG 2017, Programs Chairperson

Our next meeting will be Monday evening, November 11th. Colleen Dieter will present on "Common Tree Mistakes". Colleen is an ISA certified arborist and owner of Red Wheelbarrow Landscaping in Austin. You may remember her from previous presentations as well as appearances on Central Texas Gardener. She always brings fresh common sense ideas to landscaping and horticultural issues. Look forward to seeing you there.

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

- 1. The <u>social time</u> 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.





What Is Really Drought Tolerant In The Garden

by Alice Stultz, MG 1996

The past two summers have been a trial for me in my own garden. We ran out of outside watering capabilities last year in July, but some rain appeared on the horizon later in the summer and plants and the grass mix did not suffer too much permanent damage. However, the summer of 2019 was brutal with about one half an inch of rain total in 1/10 inch increments from July to the present. In late September, we finally arrived at the top of the list for the "well man" to drop the sucker rod 149 more feet in our outside watering well. Now we have water but are cautiously using it. In a "normal" year, we do not water from October to late February. But we need to try to revive a few trees and shrubs before winter arrives this year. Driving around in Williamson County one can see who has kept up their own normal water usage on lawns and who has been conservative or had little water to use.

Cenizo, Texas Sage and Senisa are all names we commonly use for the plant mentioned in the song "Deep in the Heart of Texas". They do bloom when the humidity gets high or the soil is damp. Then, when they put out their showy purple blooms one gives a sigh of relief that it rained or will rain in Texas.

The white blooming silver leafed Cenizo was released by Benny Simpson in 1982. Silver leafed plants usually need less water



than green leafed plants and it does very well in my very dry

landscaping. I did not plant these two varieties of sage. The purple sage is a native and both like to be in high alkaline, very dry soil. They bloomed in our yard after a 1/10 inch rain in late August.

The Turk's cap (Malvaviscus arboreus var. 'Drummondii') is happily alive and blooming with little water. It blooms best in sun to partial shade. Turk's cap is a magnet for hummingbirds and butterflies. It needs little care but looks best the following year when cut to the ground in late winter.

White blooming Cenizo



Purple sage, Leucophyllum frutescens

Scrophulariaceae

November 2019

Katie Ruellia is holding up in our hot and dry days. The deer seem to eat or "play" with the flowers, but they continue to try to bloom and manage throughout the summer. They make a nice border plant and as the seeds are naturally dispersed come up between rock walkways.



Katie Ruellia

The bulbs, tubers and rhizomes with underground storage systems have fared well thus far. The wild onions from Onion Creek south of Austin and the tiny grape hyacinths look unaffected by lack of water. The green leaves on many



Turk's cap

bulbs were brown by August. The society garlic looks almost dead. When watering a very dry live oak tree for 30 minutes every few days in late August, the garlic nearby perked up and put out lovely purple blooms. I hoped since garlic is a bulb, it had not entirely died but I was not sure. The Spider Lilies and Oxblood lilies were delayed in blooming by a month. Daylily tubers lost leaves but with small increments of water have put on green shoots. The iris rhizomes do not mind being dry after

blooming but their leaves look ratty and unattractive.

All gardeners have plant successes and failures. Oftentimes plants thrive without much help from us. Weather and rain can vary through no fault of the gardener. Mistakes in the garden are learning processes. Optimism is important so that one does not get too discouraged if the well runs dry, the storms take out trees or a shade plant gets too much sun because a nearby tree was trimmed. With increasing populations in Williamson County, high water usage is increasing here and "drought tolerant" is probably going

to be a key characteristic of many of our successful

Society garlic returning with green leaves after watering

plantings if we practice water conservation. These hot, dry conditions this past summer and into fall were truly testing for gardeners.

IN THE DEMO GARDENS Fall Planted Strawberries by Rick Halle, MG 2017

Here, in the land of endless 100 degree summer days, we have to grow our strawberries as annuals planted in the fall. We selected three strawberry varieties to trial in three different bed types. The varieties are Chandler, Camarosa, and Albion. We then chose to use the following bed structures: (1) a long narrow garden row, (2) a raised bed, and (3) a short wide row.

To begin preparations for the arrival of our strawberry plants, we amended all three beds with sulfur (to reduce the pH), organic fertilizers, and lots of compost. All three beds were amended in the same way, but each has slightly different soil structure. The plants want moist but well-drained soil and plenty of nitrogen. The hope is to grow a strong plant through the winter so when warm March showers arrive, we can support lots of flowers. Lots of flowers hopefully mean lots of



luscious berries.

Our first batch of two hundred bare root strawberry plants were shipped by a California grower on October 14th and arrived on October 16th. The plants were bagged in lots of 100 in a cardboard box. Kate stored them overnight in the refrigerator. The next morning we

laid out the planting pattern in the beds, with an equal number of each strawberry variety in each type of bed.

We then added some earthworm castings and watered the planting hole while the appropriate number of plants was soaking in a bucket of diluted seaweed solution (only about 15 minutes). The plants were placed in the hole, roots spread out, with the crown set just above the soil line. Finally, we mulched the beds with pine needles

and watered them.

Hopefully we can keep the plants happy until spring.





IN THE DEMO GARDENS Southern Pea Trial

by Sonia Schuetze, MG 2016

Cowpeas are commonly known as southern peas or field peas and are grown, harvested and eaten worldwide. Traditionally, southern peas are harvested and eaten fresh when the peas are full of moisture. There are many different types of Cowpeas (Blackeye, Pink Eye, Purple Hull, Cream and Crowder). For the Southern Pea Trial conducted at the Williamson County Master Gardeners Association (WCMGA) Demo Gardens, the following varieties of Southern Peas were chosen: Zipper Cream Pea, Texas Cream 40, Lady Cream Pea, Top Pick Brown Crowder, CT Dimpled Brown Crowder and the Mississippi Purple Brown Crowder. The trial started on June 11th and concluded on October 1st.

The soil test performed in April showed that all N, P, K levels were good and no amendments were needed. The pH level of the soil test was 7.6 (hand measured pH was 8). The only supplement added to the soil was worm castings prior to planting. The seeds were planted directly into the ground 3"- 4" apart and a depth of 0.5"-1" in two rows. All pea varieties were planted between June 11 and July 26 within the temperature range of 84-88°F(day)/62-74°F (night). The rows were initially set-up with drip irrigation and watered three times a week for 60 minutes each day. The water was increased to four times a week on August 9th due to increased requirements of another crop on the same water zone but changed back to three days per week on September 20. The rows were fenced to deter animals and no fertilizer or amendments were added after planting. The self-pollinating pea plants are pollinated by insect and wind.

When the plants first started to emerge, some of the rows showed shriveled leaves, a condition most likely caused by thrips. This was especially true in the row with the CT Dimpled Brown Crowder, as this row was sparser. Rust fungus was seen in four of the six rows of the plants and was treated with Copper Fungicide. Some of the pests encountered during the trial were aphids, rodents, stinkbugs, and leafhoppers. Aphids and rodents were an issue on three of the rows. The aphids were treated by water spray and/or insecticidal soap as necessary. Rat boxes were successful in minimizing the rat presence in the rows. There were also a number of stinkbugs or leaf-footed bugs that were removed by vacuum or by hand.

Peas were harvested when plump and easy to shell. Southern peas are picked before they are too light and dry. The Zipper Cream had the greatest yield at 68.3 pounds and was very easy to shell. All the Cream type peas had rodent and rust issues. For the Crowder type, Top Pick Brown Crowder had the highest yield at 12.3 pounds. Aphids were the biggest issue with the Crowder peas. The Mississippi Purple Brown Crowder had the most aphid infestation, which probably affected the yield. All of the Brown Crowder peas were easy to shell. The pods are perishable so they were kept in a cool environment and processed quickly.

Some observations and considerations learned from this trial are:

- Rust caused by poor air circulation may be minimized by planting single rows in lieu of double rows. Also, do not plant pea rows next to each other.
- To deter aphids, plant peas with plants such as marigold or mint.
- In checking the trial plants often, pest issues were identified and resolved quickly.
- Put on a water zone with plants requiring less water.
- Harvesting two days per week (demo garden work days) sometimes resulted in dry peas.

In conclusion, the Zipper Cream Peas and the Texas Cream 40 Peas performed the best despite the rust issues with the plants. These two pea varieties were also very easy to shell. The Brown Crowder Peas generally did not perform well in this trial. The combined total of all peas harvested through October 1st was 152 pounds.

Variety	Plant Date	Maturity	Yield (pounds)	Issues
Zipper Cream	6/11/19	59 days *(67)	68.3	Rust, rodents, stinkbugs
TX Cream 40	7/19/19	53 days *(65)	35.9	Rust, rodents, stinkbugs
Lady Cream	6/21/19	63 days *(70)	22.8	Rust, rodents, stinkbugs
Top Pick Brown	7/26/19	53 days *(50-57)	12.3	Aphids, rust, stinkbugs
CT Dimpled Brown Crowder	7/26/19	60 days *(65-70)	6.8	Sparse thrips, aphids, stink- bugs
MS Purple Brown Crowder	7/26/19	60 days *(65)	5.5	Aphids

Summary Table

* Days to maturity from the seed company

From Garden to Table

by Radhika Baliga, MG 2015

This month we have three delicious recipes from October's Southern Peas Lunch and Learn event. If you're feeling ambitious, make all the recipes at once and enjoy a fabulous three-course meal of peas!

Let's start with MG Jim Williams' peas hummus. Jim uses Zipper Cream peas in his version. This hummus has a lovely balance of flavors and the parsley really makes it pop. Jim says one of the keys to getting the right texture is to process the peas in the food processor for a full three minutes (no, that's not a typo). It's definitely worth the time though. I could eat this hummus by the spoonful.

Then we have MG Judy Williams' vegetarian recipe for stewed Southern peas. The recipe is simple and it really brings out the flavor of the peas. If you're used to peas cooked with ham hocks, why not change it up a bit and try this version flavored with thyme and bay leaves?

And for dessert we have MG Sonia Schuetze's blueberry and lemon, white bean bundt cake. If you're dubious about peas in a cake recipe, don't be. Sonia pulled out all the stops and tweaked this recipe so it's absolutely perfect. Anyone who's tasted this cake has loved it.

Fresh Green Pea Hummus

By Jim Williams

Ingredients

1-1/3 cups cooked, fresh green peas (room temperature or slightly warm)
½ cup tahini
½ cup chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped or microplaned
¾ tsp kosher salt
¼ cup warm water
2 Tbsp fresh lemon juice
2 Tbsp extra-virgin olive oil (optional)

Directions

1. Process green peas in a food processor for three minutes. You will have to stop it a few times to scrape the sides and smooth out the ball of peas that forms. Add a little water if it's thick.

2. Add the tahini and process for another minute. The mix may form a ball again, just break it up with a spoon and drizzle in a little bit of water.

3. Add parsley, garlic, and salt and process to mix.

4. Mix the water and lemon juice together and slowly pour into the mix with the processor running. Mix well.

5. Pour olive oil over the hummus when serving. (NOTE: some like to add the olive oil to the mix at step #3 which is fine but leaving the oil out of the processing steps keeps the mix light and fluffy.)

Fresh Peas – Veggie Style By Judy Williams

Ingredients

16 ounces of fresh southern peas
¹/₂ cup water or broth
2 bay leaves
6 sprigs of fresh thyme tied together with string
1 tsp fresh ground black pepper
¹/₂ to 1 tsp salt

Directions

1. Wash peas and place in large pot with water, bay leaves, thyme and pepper.

2. Bring to a boil with the lid off.

3. Cover and reduce to a simmer for five minutes when it boils, stirring gently a couple of times.

4. Uncover, drain, remove thyme and bay leaves.

5. Add salt to taste and serve.

Blueberry and Lemon, White Bean Bundt Cake By Sonia Schuetze

Ingredients For the Cake: Juice of 3 lemons Zest of 3 lemons 3 cups all purpose flour, plus extra for flouring bundt pan and coating the berries

1 tsp baking powder
1 tsp baking soda
1/4 tsp salt
1/2 pound dried lady cream peas, cooked and drained
1/2 cup unsalted butter, softened, plus extra for greasing the bundt pan
1 cup powdered sugar
2 cup granulated sugar
2 large eggs
1 cup buttermilk
1 tsp vanilla extract
1-1/4 cups blueberries

For the Icing:

1 cup powdered sugar
 1 tsp milk
 1 Tbsp lemon juice
 Zest of 1 lemon

Directions For the Cake:

- 1. Heat oven to 350 degrees
- 2. Zest and juice 3 lemons.
- 3. Grease and flour bundt pan. Set aside.
- 4. Whisk together flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt.
- 5. Puree the lady cream peas using a food processor or blender.

6. Cream butter, powdered sugar, and granulated sugar lightly until fluffy in the bowl of an electric stand mixer fitted with a whisk attachment. Slowly add bean puree. Beat on medium speed until butter and beans are well incorporated, about 3-4 minutes.

7. Add eggs to stand mixer one at a time, beating for 1 minute each.

8. Slow mixer to low speed, and add half of the dry ingredients. Beat until almost all are incorporated. Add buttermilk and vanilla extract. Beat until incorporated. Add remaining dry ingredients.

9. Turn off the mixer and remove the bowl. Use a spatula to fold together and make sure the wet and dry ingredients are well mixed.

10. Add lemon zest and juice to batter and combine.

11. Toss the berries in a small amount of flour in a small bowl. Add berries to batter and com-

12

bine.

12. Pour batter into bundt pan and bake for approximately 35 minutes (use a toothpick to test for doneness).

13. Remove cake from oven and cool for 15 minutes in pan. Remove cake from pan and allow to cool on cooling rack.

For the Icing:

1. Combine 1 cup powdered sugar, 1 tsp milk, 1 Tbsp lemon juice, and zest of 1 lemon, and mix well.

- 2. Drizzle over cooled cake.
- 3. Slice the cake and enjoy.

Congratulations to the New Master Gardeners from the 2018 Class

Carolyn Connolly Victoria Lew **Steve Craig** Kelly Linder **Cheryl Cutliff** Christine Luchini Barbara Ragaglia Paul Denton Mandy Richardson **Amy Fenton** Julie Roccaforte John Gardner Jennifer Rosas Colette Grier Liz Sheehan Olympia Guyton **Deborah Spanel** Monica Henry Susan Stone Dale Hill Mike Voss Phyllis Kamm Nancy Knickerbocker-Penick Cecilia Weisberg

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

The Drought Tolerant Demo Garden

by Alice Stultz, MG 1996

The Drought Tolerant Garden is at a lovely stage right now. If it has not been on your garden visitation list, go there and enjoy a stroll through the pathways and see what is blossoming and proliferating there.

There are four dedicated women who work tirelessly or rather maybe they do get tired, but they enjoy working in this garden. They are Viki Strauss, Jody Beach, Della Owen and Dorothy Bentzin.



Viki Strauss was in the Williamson County Master Gardener class of 2012. Many years ago, when her family lived in Seattle, Washington, she first heard about Master Gardeners. She knew then that when she retired she wanted to become a Master Gardener. Her daughter said that Viki has created lovely gardens in every home they have lived in. Viki said, "One of my favorite drought tolerant plants is Turk's cap. It grows in shade and sun. It is beautiful all summer in the garden which is in full sun. I also grow this plant in my shade garden at home. It is also very beautiful though it looks very different. In full sun, the plant grows about three feet and has prolific blossoms. In the shade, it can grow over six feet with large deep green leaves. It isn't as a prolific a bloomer in the shade."

Viki Strauss on her porch garden

Jody Beach works at Joss Nursery and has been a

Master Gardener since 2012 also. She has enjoyed getting to know fellow MGs from all over our area that garden. She has been co-chair of the Drought Tolerant garden for several years. She said, "I enjoy demonstrating to the public a garden that can be beautiful while conserving one of our most valuable resourceswater. Xeriscape doesn't have to mean just rocks and cactus! We all know gardening in Texas is a full contact sport. My best advice for gardeners is to go nativeplanting plants that want to grow here is so much easier that struggling with something that doesn't."



Where's Jodie? Camouflaged in her lovely drought tolerant garden.

Williamson County Master Gardeners Association

Della Owen is also another hard-working Master Gardener. When not in the Drought Tolerant Garden you will find Della in the kitchen to coordinate the refreshments for meetings and the MG classes. She became a Master Gardener in 2011 in Bexar County, transferring her membership to Williamson County when she moved to Hutto. Having fully retired, she enjoys working in the Drought Tolerant Garden. She said, "I love the variety of plants we have there, as well as all the colors. Some of my favorites are the red Turk's Cap and the red verbena. I



have enjoyed gardening since I was a kid and would rather work in the yard than do housework. Given the choice I'll pick mowing over vacuuming. Being a Master Gardener gives me the opportunity to talk with friends and neighbors and share what I have learned as well as learning new things myself. In my new yard in Liberty Hill I have started planting a few of this and a few of that, that way if something doesn't work out, I don't have large bare spots at any one time. I'm also learning about gardening a small backyard."



Dorothy Bentzin is another one of the planners and volunteer worker in the Drought Tolerant Garden. Dorothy began gardening at the age of 4 with her mother and grandmother in Abilene, TX. This was the beginning of a lifelong passion. Dorothy became a Master Gardener in 2000 in Phoenix and taught gardening to children and adults at two nurseries, speaking and serving on the MG Advisory Board. In 2015 she moved to Austin and retrained in Williamson County. She decided to focus on Drought Tolerant plants and has been a part of that team since 2016. She said, "We are very proud of the demo garden here in Williamson County. Personal favorites are the Fall Asters, Gulf Coast Muhly, Rock Rose and all the Milkweeds. Achieving our Butterfly Certification is a particular source of pride."

These four dedicated Williamson County Master Gardeners are dedicated and proud of their accomplishments in the Drought Tolerant Garden. The garden is definitely filled in and at an autumn peak right now. The newest addition to the garden is to the east on a rise in elevation so it drains well when we get rain. Stop by soon to see what these ladies have accomplished.

November 2019

Winola's Timely Tips for November

by Winola VanArtsdalen, MG 2007

Average First Frost Date: November 18

Paint all wounds on oak trees susceptible to oak wilt any size, any time, immediately.

Time to seriously get ready for winter. If planning to replace any turf areas with drought tolerant plants, get a soil test, remove grass/weeds, mix in compost and any expanded shale or granite sand as needed for drainage, and cover with mulch. Let your natural helpers, millions of little microorganisms, do their work to have soil ready for planting next spring.

If you lived further north now, you would already have "battened down the hatches" and readied to spend the winter planning and taking care of tools. With our wonderful, extended growing season the rules change. You hopefully have divided most cold-hardy spring/summer blooming perennials and have them in place, but you can still move now, just have protecting material, not plastic, ready to cover if we have a serious freeze. Plants not cold hardy like esperanza, pride of Barbados and lantana need to be planted in spring with a chance for roots to grow through summer before experiencing even our mild winters.

Replenish mulch for winter but be sure it is not against the stems of plants. This includes trees!

Plant herbs now: cilantro, dill, fennel, parsley, and all perennial herbs such as chives and oregano, but not basil. Spring flowering bulbs can go into the ground now.

This is prime time for planting woody ornaments: shrubs, trees and woody vines. Planted now, their roots will be strong and ready for next summer's heat! Any time you transplant, roots need to be hydrated. Water the hole where it will be planted and the plant the night before. If transplanting shrubs, dig generous circular area around the bush, place a tarp or other heavy fabric under and slide rootball on to it. Keep covered as much as possible while dragging to new area and reset the plant at same depth in its new home. Firm the soil around the roots and water in well.

Do have cover ready for a hard freeze. As you have probably learned by experience, when the cold blast hits, stores will run out of cover. Plan now to be ready!

Time to clean up all those leaves! Do not waste those nutrients going to landfill! Mow several times to make smaller bits and return them to your lawn. Use them to protect less cold-hardy

perennials. Make them into compost for your own use or donate them to a community garden.

Cut back on watering turf, but water everything well before a freeze.

If you move some plants inside for winter, help them through transition by spritzing with water.

Clean and oil tools before putting them away and enjoy this time to look for new ideas and plan!



WCMGA EVENTS

November 4

WCMGA Board Meeting AgriLife Training Room, AG205 100 Wilco Way 1:00 to 3:00 pm All members are welcome to attend.

November 7

Green Thumbs Up Gardening Series: Round Rock Round Rock Public Library 6:30 to 7:30 pm "Tree Selection, Planting & Pruning" with Wayne Rhoden & Garry Bowman

November 8

Lunch & Learn—All About Tomatoes Old Training Room, 3151 SE Inner Loop 12 noon to 1:00 pm

November 11

WCMGA Monthly Membership Meeting Georgetown Annex Auditorium 100 Wilco Way 6:00 to 8:00 pm "Common Tree Mistakes" with Colleon Di

"Common Tree Mistakes" with Colleen Dieter, ISA certified arborist and owner of Red Wheelbarrow Landscaping

November 14

Green Thumbs Up Gardening Series: Cedar Park Cedar Park Public Library 7:00 to 8:00 pm "Tree Selection, Planting & Pruning" with Wayne Rhoden & Garry Bowman

November 18

WCMGA Annual Membership Conference Georgetown Annex, 100 Wilco Way 9:00 am to 3:00 pm

November 23 Hands On In The Garden Old Training Room, 3151 SE Inner Loop 9:00 to 11:00 am "Composting at Home" with Tommy King

December 5 2019 WCMGA Awards Banquet Georgetown Country Club 6:00 pm until ? Williamson County Master Gardeners Association

See You Next Month I think it's still alive!