

WILLIAMSON COUNTY GARDENING

June 2019



TEXAS
MASTER  GARDENER
TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

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Cover:
WCMGA Veggie 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

How important is water for gardening? I was reminded of how important water is with all things gardening this past week. Now don't stop reading this article and email me explaining how as Master Gardeners we all know how important water is to the garden. I'm not talking about water for plants, I'm talking water for you as a gardener. The idea for this month's article came to me after a visit to the ER with my teenage son, who had passed out in school. (He is okay!) He wasn't running outside or doing anything strenuous, just sitting in his classroom. It was after 3 hours and a ton of tests (looking forward to that bill, it should compost nicely); they determined he was dehydrated. The ER doctor told us that they see more dehydration issues this time of year than in the hotter summer months. This time of year, we are busy trying to get everything established before the heat starts up. The heat is already starting though. Do we only consider 90 degrees and higher the point when it's too hot outside or are you only thinking of your to-do list? June will be here before you know it. Whether it's a nice 70, a warm 80 or a blazing 90 or higher, we all have that gauge of where the ideal temperature is to work in the garden. My advice to you is: when you water your plants, water yourself. Your favorite beverage holder is the first and most important tool you need to take into the garden. Take your favorite gardening gloves and write "Got Water?" on the back of them, just as a reminder. Hang a sign by your gardening tools that says the same thing. Just remember to stay hydrated out there in the garden!

Tommy King



Monthly Meeting Update

Judy Williams, MG 2017
Programs Chairperson

Our AgriLife meeting space at the new Williamson County Georgetown Annex worked out very well last month. It was nice to have so much room. Our next meeting will be Monday evening, June 10, featuring Tim Cole from Austin Reptile who will bring his snakes along with a wealth of practical and myth-busting information .

Based on last month's experience, a few changes have been made:

1. The social time begins at 6:00 pm and will be held in the Training Room (Suite 205) 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 presentations 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.



Congratulations to the New Master Gardeners from the 2018 Class

Steve Craig

Cheryl Cutliff

Amy Fenton

John Gardner

Colette Grier

Dale Hill

Phyllis Kamm

Nancy Knickerbocker-Penick

Victoria Lew

Kelly Linder

Christine Luchini

Jennifer Rosas

Liz Sheehan

Deborah Spanel

Mike Voss

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



The AgriLife Extension Office has Moved

Our offices have moved to the new county building, the Georgetown Annex, at 100 Wilco Way, Suite AG201. It is still off SE Inner Loop but now closer to Leander Road, 1460. It is the gray-brown two story brick building and the offices are located on the second floor.



ALERTALERT..... ALERT

NEW LOCATION FOR OUR MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETING

We will be having our monthly meetings at our new location in the Williamson County Georgetown Annex; see map and photo above. If you haven't been there yet, the entrance is where the flags are. Just inside the front doors, take the stairs or elevator to the second floor where the auditorium will be right in front of you. County policy is for no food or drink in the auditorium so our snacks and social time will be in the new AgriLife training room at the end of the hallway. There will be signs and master gardeners to direct you. Remember, you have to finish your snack and drink before you return to the auditorium. Until we get used to the setup, there may be a few glitches discovered and adjustments to be made. Looking forward to seeing you there.

IN THE DEMO GARDENS

New Vegetable Trials

by Judy Ebaugh, MG 2018

Under the direction of Kate Whitney, WCMG will be conducting new research trials to update *the Vegetable Variety Recommendation Guide for Williamson County*.

Why?

The main mission of TAMU AgriLife Extension is research and teaching. Presently, varieties in the most recent guide are becoming difficult to find as new and improved varieties are being developed. We want to know: What is out there? Will it grow in our area? Does it have disease/pest resistance? How much will it produce? Will it be tasty?

When?

The first trials will begin in July with a fall planting of tomatoes and, in August, winter squash. Asian greens and strawberry trails will begin in October, followed by lettuce and spinach in November. Spring planting trials are planned, but will be developed in the future.

How?

Guidelines for Conducting Extension Vegetable Trials EHT-031 9/13, by J.G. Masabni and Frank J. Dainello, will be used to determine varieties, the number of replications, plot size, the number of harvests, and data to record. This article will be on our website soon. We will also use greater signage to be more informative to garden visitors.

A 12-month crop rotation plan has been developed so that all team members can stay fully informed on what is coming up. As time moves on, we hope to expand the trials to include vegetables representing a wider variety of cultural interest.

As always, pests will create a challenge; therefore, an integrated pest management plan will be developed. The Agrilife Extension IPM approach will be used in the following order of priority:

1. use of plants with genetic resistance to pests and disease;
2. use of biological control;
3. use of environmental and cultural control; and
4. chemical control as a last resort.

What will we do with the results?

As the results of each crop are obtained, you will be the first to know! When all of the data is complete, the results will be shared through educational publications, news articles, social media, and in-person educational programs such as: Lunch and Learns, Hands On in the Garden, field days, community events and anything else we can think of!

Getting Involved

We would love to have all who want to join the Demo Veggie Garden team for the Tuesday and Friday morning workdays. The usual tasks of bed preparation, weeding, and planting continue. With the addition of the trials, there will be additional research needs for monitoring, measuring and recording plant growth and productivity. This will be a great learning opportunity for all of us. See you in the gardens. We will keep you posted on how it's all coming along.



The Weeds I Enjoy in My Garden

by Alice Stultz, MG 1996

I realize a weed is a plant out of place in one's garden. Google defines a weed as a "wild plant growing where it is not wanted and in competition with cultivated plants".¹ There are certain "weeds" that I move from the field in the yard to my flower beds. For example, Plains Yellow or Four Nerve Daisy (*Tetranneuris scaposa*)² is a perennial yellow composite that becomes a prominent perennial in my flower bed. I love it for its persistent yellow flowers in drought or rainy times. Dairy farmers probably don't like it as it turns the milk of dairy cows bitter. Plains Bitterweed is another name from its odor and taste. I once returned several glasses of milk at a cafeteria because I thought the milk sour. No, it was explained to me, the cows got into the bitterweed again.



Prairie Spiderwort (*Tradescantia occidentalis*) is an upright early morning blooming flower that has spidery leaflike bracts.³ The plant is very invasive and although some years I try to dig the entire plant out, roots seem to break off and begin again the next year, or maybe I drop seeds too when pulling them out. I can stand them until late May when the plant is waning, and others are vying for space and light.

The Erect Dayflower (*Commelina erecta*)⁴ follows which is in the Spiderwort family. It seems to look pretty a bit later into June. Both are difficult to permanently remove by weeding. This year the Baby Blue-Eyes (*Nama hispidum*)⁵ did



not get weeded out. I waited to see what they would become and they were dainty and filled the bed until the poppies died out and the daylilies began blooming. They were a sweet little carpet of blue and I will leave them to do their thing next year. I am sure plenty of seeds dropped when I weeded them mid-May.



¹Google

²Bowers, Nora and Rick and Stan Tekiela, *Wildflowers of Texas –Field Guide*, Adventure Publications, Cambridge, Minnesota, 2009, pp.262-263

³Ajilvsgi, Geyata, *Wildflowers of Texas*, Shearer Publishing, Fredericksburg, TX, 2003, pp.404-405.

⁴Ibid, pp. 401-102.

⁵Ibid, pp. 432-433.

The Showy Primrose (*Oenothera speciosa*)⁶, in the Evening Primrose Family, (Onagraceae), has been a part of the springtime show in our garden for the past 40 years and we have carried those seeds in soil unintentionally. Commonly called buttercups because if one puts ones' nose on the bloom, the pollen ends up on the tip of the nose. It is also called Evening Primrose. If the caterpillars do not eat them by the end of the season, we usually weed-eat them when they have gone to seed. They always return as we rarely dig out their root colony.



Other weeds in the lawn and yard that we just leave alone until their show is over are the poppies, the dewberries and the Frog Fruit (*Lippia nodiflora* in the Vervain family).⁷ The Frog Fruit spreads fast to areas where grass is weak and sort of takes over.

I will spend the rest of the summer pulling it off of pathways and from engulfing plants I want to nurture. If there is a bare spot in the yard, the frog fruit is an ideal plant. One can pull it up, mow over it and run on it over and over and it will be happy.



Sometimes it is better to just enjoy some of these natives that will blow in by the wind or planted by the birds. All of the above flowers have a place here in Central Texas gardens if we graciously accept their presence and for me, to enjoy them and their heartiness.

⁶Ibid, pp. 346-347.

⁷Ibid, pp. 124-125.



Winola's Timely Tips for June

by Winola VanArtsdalen, MG 2007

Avoid wounds on oak trees February through June when beetles that carry the oak wilt fungus are most active!

Clip, "deadhead," old blooms and seedheads. Keep trimming plants going to seed that you do not want to return and save seeds from those you do want to give away or start in a new location. Choose your best specimens when collecting seed.

Some perennials and woody shrubs like *Salvia greggii* and skeleton-leaf goldeneye need more than just spring pruning or will look not just natural, but messy.

The heat of summer is upon us! Keep a watchful eye for watering to be sure you are watering deeply, less often. Shallow, frequent watering will develop a shallow root system that will weaken plants in their battle to survive summer heat.

Mulch 3" to retain moisture while suppressing weeds.

If you choose to use foliar seaweed solution as rescue treatment in heat of summer, be sure to spray early in morning or in early evening when sunlight is not hitting leaves.

Turf:

Dig weeds early before they grow bigger and stronger!

Watch for pest and disease problems. To check for grubs, use sharpshooter to remove one square foot. Only treat if 4-5 grubs are present.

Keep mower blades sharp. Do not cut more than 1/3 of leaf blade at a time.

Do not aerate your lawn during a drought, as it will cause undue stress to the root zone. Do not spread compost in hot weather as it could burn turf.

Keep sprinkler system or water hoses well maintained and follow the rules of your water department. Water deeply to depth of 6-9" to encourage deep root growth. Divide into cycles to avoid run-off, meaning half or less at one time and watering again a little later.

Whether you water with handheld or a sprinkler system, check using moisture sensor or screwdriver to be sure you are reaching depth of roots.

From Garden to Table

by Radhika Baliga, MG 2015

I hope your garden is bursting with vegetables and fruits this month because we have three great recipes to share.

First up is Teresa Wilts' Tomato and Peach Salsa. If you've been a regular demo garden volunteer, there's a good chance you've tasted this salsa at break time in the summer. Teresa brings us jars of this salsa to snack on with tortilla chips and it's amazing. You might try pairing this salsa with grilled chicken, pork, shrimp or fish. Or maybe pour some salsa over a block of cream cheese and enjoy it with crackers. If you're looking for another great tomato recipe from Teresa, try her tomato pie from the July/August 2017 newsletter.

The second recipe is Martha Baddour's Tomato Tart. Martha and I have been talking about this recipe since last summer! Just browse the ingredients and you'll see exactly why the recipe is a homerun. It has garden tomatoes, puff pastry, bacon, and cheese. And since puff pastry often comes in packages of two, I imagine you'll be making this tart at least twice this season. I love the tomato, bacon, and gruyere flavor trio that Martha has put together here and I'm feeling inspired to try it in other dishes. How about a tomato, bacon and gruyere grilled cheese? Or perhaps a tomato, bacon, and gruyere omelet?

And lastly we have my recipe for 4-S Green Beans. I call it 4-S because the dish is sweet, smoky, spicy and salty.

Enjoy!

Teresa Wilts' Peach Salsa

Original recipe makes 1 gallon

Ingredients

20 tomatoes, chopped
6 onions, finely chopped
5 fresh peaches - peeled, pitted and chopped
5 pears - peeled, cored and chopped
1 green bell pepper, finely chopped
1 red bell pepper, finely chopped
4 cups white sugar
1 cup distilled white vinegar



2 tablespoons salt

4 tablespoons pickling spice, wrapped in cheesecloth

Directions

1. In a large saucepan, bring to a boil the tomatoes, onions, peaches, pears, green bell pepper, red bell pepper, sugar, vinegar and salt. Reduce heat. Place the pickling spice into the mixture. Stirring frequently, simmer 1 1/2 hours, or until volume is reduced by half.
2. Discard spice bag. Transfer the mixture to sterile containers.
3. Store in the refrigerator until use.

Martha Baddour's Tomato Tart with Bacon and Gruyere

Several years ago when I had a bumper crop of tomatoes and it was crazy hot outside, I wanted a light dinner. I came across this recipe and it has been a favorite ever since. It's best made with fresh garden tomatoes but it's also good with store bought tomatoes.

Ingredients

1 sheet of puff pastry, thawed according to box instructions

1 1/2 cups shredded gruyere cheese

4 slices cooked crisp bacon, crumbled

3 thinly sliced small tomatoes—drain on paper towels to remove excess liquid

2 teaspoons finely chopped fresh thyme leaves

1/2 teaspoon kosher salt

freshly ground black pepper

1 egg

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper or a silicone baking liner.
2. On a lightly floured surface, roll the puff pastry into a 10" x 14" rectangle. Transfer to the lined baking sheet.



Unbaked Tomato Tart



Baked Tomato Tart

3. Sprinkle the cheese on the puff pastry, leaving a 2-inch border around the edges. Sprinkle on the bacon, then line the tomato slices down over the cheese and bacon. Top with thyme leaves, salt, and pepper.
4. Fold the long ends of the pastry slightly over the filling, then the short ends, pinching to seal. Cut vents in the pastry edges.
5. Beat the egg slightly with a splash of water, then brush over pastry edges.
6. Bake in preheated oven until golden brown, about 30 minutes.
7. Cut into slices and enjoy!

Notes

Substitute bacon with 4 ounces chopped pancetta, cooked until crisp.

Substitute gruyere with Swiss cheese. You want a cheese that has a nutty flavor.

Radhika Baliga's 4-S Green Beans

Ingredients

- 1 tbsp butter
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 cup chopped red onion
- 1 tbsp minced garlic
- 1 tsp sweet smoked paprika
- 1/4 tsp red pepper flakes
- 2 tsp brown sugar
- 1 tbsp tamari, soy sauce, or coconut aminos
- 12 oz trimmed green beans, cut into 1.5" long pieces
- 1/2 cup water
- salt to taste



Directions

1. Heat a large skillet over medium high heat. Add the butter and olive oil. Once butter is melted, add the red onion and saute until translucent.
2. Stir in the garlic, smoked paprika, red pepper flakes, and brown sugar and cook for and an-

other minute.

3. Add green beans and tamari to the skillet and toss everything to combine.
4. Gently pour in 1/2 cup water and cover the skillet. Increase the heat to bring the water to a boil, then reduce the heat and let the beans gently simmer.
5. Cook the green beans until they reach the desired doneness (5-20min). Check the skillet every few minutes and stir the beans occasionally. If the liquid evaporates before the beans are done, add more water.
6. Once the green beans are cooked, remove the lid and increase the heat to evaporate any additional liquid. You want just enough sauce to coat the beans nicely.
7. Taste the beans for seasoning, adding more tamari, salt, sugar, red pepper flakes, or paprika as needed.
8. Serve warm and enjoy.



Oleander Aphids

by Wizzie Brown

Travis County AgriLife Extension Program Specialist—IPM / Entomology

Oleander aphids are also known as milkweed aphids and in Central Texas can often be seen on tropical milkweed. The wingless adult and nymph aphids are bright yellow in color with black appendages while winged adults are black and yellow with dark wings.

The females of the oleander aphid are parthenogenetic and viviparous which means that they do not require to mate before producing offspring and that they give birth to live young instead of laying eggs. Both adult and nymphs cluster together along stems and on the underside of the foliage while they feed. Winged aphids are produced when there is overcrowding on the plant or if the plant is in decline. The winged aphids allow a new population to move to different host plants.



Oleander aphids have piercing-sucking mouthparts which they use to suck up phloem from the host plant. Aphids are honeydew-producers and excrete a sticky, sweet substance that can lead to secondary problems such as sooty mold, ants protecting aphids from predators and parasites, or stickiness on areas or objects under or surrounding infested plants.

Non-chemical methods to reduce populations of oleander aphids include pruning off heavily infested parts of the plant or removing aphids with a strong stream of water. Various biological control methods that occur naturally can be observed if you know what to look for. Both ladybug and hover fly larvae feed on aphids. There are also small, parasitic wasps that lay their eggs inside of aphids. When the wasp larva hatches from the egg, it consumes the aphid from the inside. Aphids that have been parasitized appear as puffed up, dark colored aphids, called aphid mummies. When looking at pesticide options, you can try insecticidal soaps or horticultural oils.



For more information or help with identification, contact Wizzie Brown, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Program Specialist at 512.854.9600. Check out my blog at www.urban-ipm.blogspot.com

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WCMGA EVENTS

June 2

WCMGA Board Meeting

AgriLife Training Room, 100 Wilco Way, AG201 Georgetown Annex Auditorium

1:00 to 3:00 pm

All members are welcome to attend.

June 6

Green Thumbs Up Gardening Series: Round Rock

Round Rock Public Library

6:30 to 7:30 pm

“Irrigation—The Key to Successful Gardening”
with Walt Black

June 8

Canning Basics Workshop

Williamson Co. Extension Training Room

100 Wilco Way

9:00 am to 2:00 pm

Taught by Chelsea Stevens, FCH Extension Agent

June 10

WCMGA Monthly Membership Meeting

Georgetown Annex Auditorium

100 Wilco Way

6:00 to 8:00 pm

“Native Snakes of Central Texas”

with Tim Cole,

Austin Reptile Service

June 13

Green Thumbs Up Gardening Series: Cedar Park

Cedar Park Public Library

7:00 to 8:00 pm

“Irrigation—The Key to Successful Gardening”
with Walt Black

June 29

Hands On In The Garden

Old Training Room, 3151 SE Inner Loop

9:00 to 11:00 am

“What Can I Do with My Herbs?”

with Jane LaComette



**So Long,
We'll Be Back Next
Month
When We're Ripe**