

WILLIAMSON COUNTY

GARDENING

July 2019



TEXAS
MASTER  GARDENER
TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

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Cover:
Demo Garden Wildflower Patch

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

Hello Master Gardeners,

Recently, I received a few questions about our monthly board meetings. The Williamson County MG monthly board meeting is open to any members who would like to attend. The agenda typically includes updates from all the group leaders and discussions on several subjects that affect our association. Discussions vary and can include a change to a process, updates to current rules or just general information. Some discussions can lead to a formal board vote and eventual change to the Standing Rules. Other discussions may cover more informal topics like a venue change, project changes or general updates that do not require a formal vote. Many topics are discussed, and discussion alone does not mean that a change is coming. The Board may need more time to discuss a topic and take a formal vote if required. Any change or update to any policy or procedure will be made public in an official announcement to all of the members by email.

Tommy King
President

A Trip to Longwood Gardens

by Jim Williams, MG 2017



2019 INTERNATIONAL MASTER GARDENER CONFERENCE

By Jim & Judy Williams, MG 2017

We're back! The 2019 International Master Gardener Conference was held in King of Prussia, PA (Philadelphia) from June 16 – 21. It was a busy week and we are still laying low and resting three days later. The Philadelphia area is home to many spectacular gardens, and we were able to attend workshops in a few of them. The conference sessions were all excellent with talks from popular garden book authors, cutting-edge university researchers and lots of quality interactions with master gardeners from all over the country. Our interest began when Lori Dixon talked about her experience at the Portland, OR conference in 2017. She was right; it was worth the time and effort. Over the next few newsletters we will let you know what we learned and why you should save the date for the upcoming conferences in Norfolk, VA, September 12-18, 2021, and Overland Park, KS, June 18-22, 2023.

One of the many highlights of the week was a keynote address by Dr. David Gibby. Dr. Gibby was the extension agent in Washington state who began the master gardener program. I have met a lot of good people in my life, but this gentleman really left a tremendous impression on all of us. What an outstanding, humorous, and humble individual. We felt good that he is the father of master gardening. He gave us a detailed chronology of the development of the program, which entailed many doors slammed in his face along the way. "But there is always a back door if you look for it."

The son of a Mormon bishop, he lived a life of service as his father would volunteer him for everything. As a child, most of his neighbors had gardens and the elderly ones sometimes had difficulty. His father would tell him who needed help digging, planting, harvesting, etc., and it was his job to round up some friends to go help out. So, when he was overwhelmed with calls for advice and problems at the Extension office, it was only natural for him to think of volunteers. After two to three years of sneaking through back doors, the program began and was a huge success from the beginning. All his university bosses, who once stood in his way, were so impressed they started claiming it was their idea in the first place.

The emphasis of his presentation, as well as the focus of the entire conference, was that, as master gardeners, our purpose is to serve our communities as volunteer teachers. The Ohio State contingent was proud of their motto: "We are Leaders, Not Weeders". We all know the pleasure of gardening and landscaping, but many of our neighbors are intimidated by horticulture. Mistakes can be expensive and ugly. It's safer just to keep a simple, boring lawn with

a handful of generic bushes. But they miss out on the enjoyment and beauty of an intimate garden space. Master gardeners, functioning at the direction of our Extension Agent, are the knights in shining armor, bringing our experience and knowledge to help with their gardening anxieties.

Dr. Gibby told the story of a man with a lawn problem in a new neighborhood. Everyone's yard was struggling in the dirt the developer seeded their lawns on. He gave him a simple program for soil improvement and that was that. Five years later he ran into this gentleman, whom he didn't recognize, who thanked him profusely. The man told him that the advice not only helped him, but all his neighbors asked him what he did and followed the guidance. The man said, "I used to drive up my driveway and say, 'I love my yard' but now I turn down my street and think 'I love my neighborhood'".

Whether we are researching and answering clients' questions at the Help Desk, giving tours to visitors in the demo gardens, teaching at Green Thumbs Up or Hands on in the Garden, participating in demo garden trials, working on the newsletter or giving friendly advice to a neighbor, we serve our communities by bringing beauty to the environment around us for everyone to enjoy. We are fortunate that Texas AgriLife Extension Service has given us so much education and support to become master gardener volunteers, affording us the pleasure to serve our community as teachers and horticultural ambassadors. As master gardeners, all our volunteer hours lead to positive improvements around us. What is better than that?

Congratulations to the New Master Gardeners from the 2018 Class

Steve Craig

Kelly Linder

Cheryl Cutliff

Christine Luchini

Amy Fenton

Jennifer Rosas

John Gardner

Liz Sheehan

Colette Grier

Deborah Spanel

Dale Hill

Mike Voss

Phyllis Kamm

Cecilia Weisberg

Nancy Knickerbocker-Penick

Rebecca Wright

Victoria Lew

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

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, July 8, featuring John Swan of Wicked Bee Apiary, who will speak on “The Importance of Bees”.

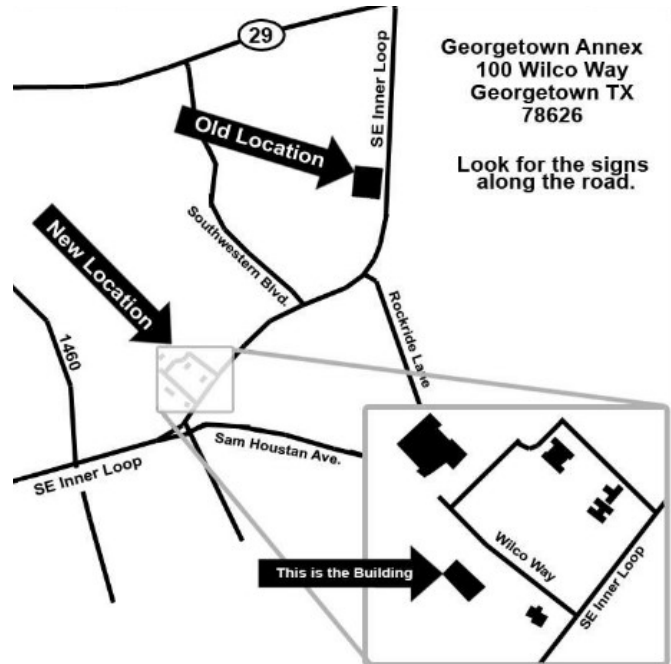
Just to refresh on the changes due to our new location:

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 (see photo on next page). 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 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, FM1460. 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

Treating Fire Ants

by Sonia Schuetze, MG 2016

As with many gardens, fire ants are pests in the Williamson County Master Gardeners Demonstration Gardens. While attending an education class at a local nursery, we learned about a product using cold-pressed neem oil and decided to try it in the demo gardens. A small experiment was conducted last fall using either neem oil with the active ingredient azadirachtin, or orange oil with the active ingredient D-limonene or a combination of both. The results were encouraging for both products, although the orange oil caused the grass area being treated to burn while the neem oil did not damage the turf. Because we were interested in treating for fire ants in the growing areas, it was decided to try the neem oil-only method of treatment for the 2019 growing season.



Jake Farnum, Bugwood.org



Jake Farnum, Bugwood.org

Briefly, neem tree seed oil has been used for hundreds of years as a natural pesticide and is currently used in toothpaste, cosmetics, pet shampoos, and other products. Neem components are already found in over 100 insecticides and are used on many different types of crops. The neem oil is extracted by pressing neem tree seeds. This oil is then separated via an alcohol process, which result in oils containing two active ingredients used in insect control: azadirachtin and clarified neem oil. Neem oil products with azadirachtin as the active ingredient affect insects as a growth regulator, antifeedant, and repellent that works through ingestion. The other component that separates from the alcohol treatment is a clarified hydrophobic extract of neem oil that is often referred to as “neem oil” and works by suffocating on contact. In our experiment, neem oil refers to the neem oil containing the active ingredient azadirachtin.

The experiment was started in April 2019 to see how well the neem oil works in treating fire ants in and around the vegetable demo garden area. The product used was Neem Pro Emulsified manufactured by Neem Pro. Neem Pro Emulsified is made from cold pressed neem oil containing the main ingredient azadirachtin (3,000 ppm). The product was donated by the Neem Pro company for use in this project.

The following method was used when treating the fire ant mounds:

- Mark the location with a numbered flag.
- Shake the Neem Pro Emulsified container prior to use.
- Mix $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the neem oil for every two gallons of water and use immediately.
- Pour the mix slowly on the ant mound to minimize run-off.

Each treatment and retreatment used one application mix of the entire two-gallon water plus $\frac{1}{4}$ cup neem oil. Only this method of fire ant treatment was used in and around the growing beds and rows to check the effectiveness of the treatment.



As of June 4th, 40 total areas were treated. Of these 40 areas, 12 areas were retreated. The overall effectiveness in treating for fire ants was 70%, with a retreatment (RT) rate of 30%. The RT rate within the rows (31.3%) compared to the bed areas (31.8%) seems comparable until the bed construction is looked at in detail. The bed structure made of wood, cinder block, or plastic make the fire ant mounds harder to treat. This is especially true in the cinder block bed. In the cinder block bed, seven areas were treated and five areas were retreated resulting in a RT of rate of 71.4%. Because the actual fire ant mound was not visible in most cases and was located below or between the cinder blocks, treating for the fire ants in this bed was especially difficult. Other beds also have structures that sometimes masked where the fire ant mound was located. In the row areas where there were no barriers, the fire ant mounds were easier to locate and treat. The retreatments may have been necessary because the original ant mounds were deep or spread out underground and one mix application may not have been sufficient. In all areas that were retreated (except the cinder block bed), the fire ant mounds were not as large as the original treatment areas or only a few scout ants with no mounds were found.

To date, the neem oil mix appears to be effective in treating the fire ants in the demo gardens. The plan is to continue to treat for fire ants in and near the planting areas with the neem oil mixture for the remainder of the warm growing season for further evaluation.

Progression of Flower Displays in a Summer Garden

by Alice Stultz, MG 1996



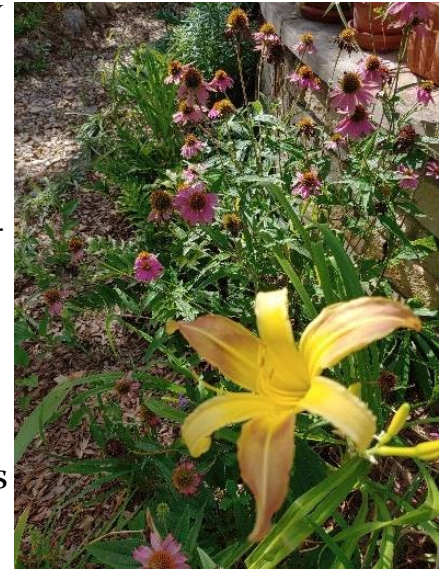
Recently a friend walked through my garden to tell me where I should plant the fig trees she had grown for me. Her comment was that she had nothing blooming after the bluebonnets went to seed in her garden.

By staging the plants in the yard, I try to have year-round blooms.

Pink Echinacea (Coneflower) blooms are in abundance in June and July and they reseed all over the place.

They have bloomed concurrently with yellow daylilies for about two weeks and the show was splendid. Now the Henry Duel-

berg salvia is a nice backdrop for the pink blooms.



Artichoke seeds planted several years ago finally bloomed. We ate three artichokes dipped in garlic butter in early June, but



the blooms are so spectacular that we opted for viewing them. They already have offshoots that we can divide in the fall. The stink bugs like to camp out among the purple flower parts unfortunately.

The Blue Agapanthus (African Lily) has just begun to peek past the greenery of the sedum (Autumn Joy variety), daylilies (in the genus *Hemerocallis*) and blue mistflower (*Conoclinium coelestinum*). It is magnificent. Our border collie pup has relocated the bulbs, so they are not as abundant as two years



ago but still a joy when they appear. These are special to me as my mother carried them as her wedding bouquet, and they are from South Africa originally. I spent a year in South Africa with a family whose mother impressed me with the botanical names of the flowers. The Agapanthus is a refreshing site on a day in the high 90's.

The yellow and orange-red blossoms of the Pride of Barbados (*Caesalpinia pulcherrima*) will soon take over and be the show-stopper in the flower beds. Other plants that will continue to bloom most of the summer and into the fall are roses, Katy Ruellia, Society Garlic, honeysuckles, white or fragrant mistflower, blue mistflower, liriopse with its purple spires, Jerusalem sage, *Salvia greggii*, and herbs such as Mexican mint marigold. There is always a bloom somewhere in the garden, and that is an easy challenge in Central Texas.



Gardening Friends Caught In the Act



Winola's Timely Tips for July

by Winola VanArtsdalen, MG 2007

Summer arrives with a blast of heat! You must keep watch over your plantings, especially those planted this spring with little time to become established, to be sure mulching and deep watering helps them survive.

Bedding plants of fall bloomers can be planted now, but they will require careful watch and watering. Prune lightly summer bloomers, i.e., aster, Mexican mint marigold, Copper Canyon daisy, Mexican bush sage all summer, but stop by end of July as all these plants set buds in August.

A foliar spray of seaweed, formula o-o-1, before sunup or after sundown, helps plants survive stress. You can also use fish emulsion as a fertilizer, but be aware that this will attract animals such as raccoons.

Shear back groundcovers that look ragged or have diseased foliage. Be sure to rake away any diseased foliage, water well, and then you may want to feed with seaweed to help their recovery. Ferns and cast iron plants will need some brown edges trimmed.

Remember to save seed from favorite perennials, as they may not reseed if bed is covered with mulch, as it should be.

If you see that some of your plantings are having trouble surviving our blazing hot summer, plan to replace them this fall with Texas Superstar plants (texassuperstar.com).

Trees:

You can trim oaks now, but remember to paint all wounds any size, any time, immediately!

If you have some areas shaded by trees where plants are not getting enough light, consider "limbing up," and having more overhead branches trimmed to allow light below.

Where you can reach, trimming dead blooms from crape myrtles will help them rebloom, but

is not necessary.

Avoid “volcano mulching” where mulch is piled up around trees. Mulch around tree trunks should not touch tree trunk but be spread out into area under dripline. That ridge at outside edge of mulch covered area should, at time of planting, be at edge of where original container was so that water is directed to roots. As tree matures, the ridge should be pulled out further away from trunk as roots grow.

Turf:

Keep sprinkler system or water hoses well maintained and follow the rules of your water department. Check to be sure water is being applied where it is needed (not on sidewalks, driveways, or streets.) If water runs off the landscape faster than it can be absorbed, water in cycles, meaning for shorter periods of time.

Check using moisture sensor or screwdriver to be sure you are reaching depth of roots. This is true for flowerpots, beds, turf and trees.

Keep mower blades sharp. Do not cut more than 1/3 of the 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 or fertilize in hot weather as it could burn turf.

For the health of you and your landscape!

Take a morning stroll through your landscape to watch for insects and other pests. Take the least invasive approach, remembering that in a healthy landscape, usually hand picking, a hard water spray on both top and bottom of leaves, or using insecticidal soaps and oils can be effective. If problem persists, take photos to send the County Extension Office Help Desk and/or take a sample in a zip-top bag for correct identification.

Remember to take care of the gardener by working in the shade, wearing a sun hat, and drinking plenty of water. Avoid that urge to “work until the job is done!” You are not always aware when you have had too much heat!

From Garden to Table

by Radhika Baliga, MG 2015

Let's kick off the heat with a jalapeño popper recipe from Val Black. Val brought a tray of these poppers to an MG Social Event in 2016. If you recall making the tree dangles at Jodie Beach's house, you might remember having tasted these poppers at the potluck lunch. They are so easy to prepare and are extremely flavorful. I love the recipe with jalapeños as written, but it's also good with other peppers like banana peppers if you prefer less spice. And I'd definitely recommend gilding the lily by adding the "optional" grated cheddar cheese.

Then, to cool off, try Lynn Harper's (Mike's wife's) refreshing stained glass watermelon recipe. It's a gorgeous fruited gelatin formed in a watermelon rind shell. When Mike brings stained glass watermelon to the demo garden at break time, I absolutely cannot resist. I always eat one, if not two, wedges. It's sure to be a showstopper at your next potluck.

Jalapeño Poppers

By Val Black

Great easy appetizer for get togethers and parties!

Ingredients

8 oz cream cheese

10 jalapeño peppers

8 oz bulk sausage (such as Owens)

Parmesan cheese



Directions

Heat oven to 350 degrees F. Line a cookie sheet with aluminum foil.

Take jalapeños and slice lengthwise, remove stems and all seeds.

Cook sausage until brown in a skillet. Remove from heat and mix in an 8 oz bar of cream cheese. Fill each jalapeño half with the sausage mixture and place on cookie sheet.

Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes or until slightly brown.

Remove from oven and sprinkle lightly with parmesan cheese.

Optional: add grated cheddar cheese, bacon, or green onions prior to baking.

Enjoy!!!

Stained Glass Watermelon

By Lynn Harper

Ingredients

1 small seedless watermelon (one size up from personal size)

1 large box of your favorite flavor Jello (watermelon works well)

3 envelopes of Knox gelatin

Water or ginger ale

Various fruits of your choice

Directions

Cut watermelon in half. Hollow out watermelon meat with a melon baller or score the meat with a knife and scoop it out with a large spoon. Set aside the melon shells to make the stained glass dessert; reserve the watermelon meat for another use.

In a bowl, combine large box of Jello (I use watermelon flavor) and 1 ½ cups of boiling water. In a separate bowl, sprinkle the Knox gelatin over ½ to ¾ cups cool water and let soften. Add to Jello mix. Mix until everything is dissolved. Add 1 ¾ cups of water or ginger ale and mix well. Put in refrigerator and let thicken just a bit.



Add chopped fresh fruit, including some watermelon, berries, kiwi, etc., to the gelatin. Don't add too much fruit since you need the gelatin to hold everything together.

Slice a small flat area off the bottom of each side of melon so it will sit flat. Put on a sheet pan and pour gelatin mixture into melon shell(s). You might find that you only have enough fruit and gelatin mixture to fill one of the shells; it just depends on the size of the melon and the amount of fruit added. Put the filled shell(s) in the refrigerator to set up. It actually doesn't take a long time with the extra gelatin.

When ready to serve, use a knife that has been dipped in hot water to get a crisp cut.

Fall Webworms

by Wizzie Brown

Travis County AgriLife Extension Program Specialist—IPM / Entomology

Webworms can be found on a variety trees and are most well-known for the webbing they create on the tips of branches. Webworms are caterpillars, or larvae, of a moth. Caterpillars cause damage by feeding on foliage contained inside their protective webbing.

There are 2-4 generations of webworms that occur each year. The first generation appears April- May and the last generation occurs in the late fall. The last generation is the most damaging generation, which provides these creatures with the name fall webworm.



Webworm larvae are about an inch long when fully grown. They are pale green to yellow with tufts of long hairs projecting from their body. While these are fuzzy caterpillars, they do not sting. Most people notice webbing that webworms create on the tips of branches. Webworms feed within the webbing and use it as protection from predators. When the caterpillars run out of foliage to feed on, they expand the web to encompass new leaves.

To manage webworms, the size and accessibility of the tree needs to be considered. Egg masses can be pruned from trees before they hatch in early spring. Egg masses are on the undersides of leaves and are covered with hairs. Small webs can also be pruned from the tree when they begin to form in the spring.

Larger webs can be knocked out of the tree or opened with a stick or jet of water which allows predators inside the web to feed on caterpillars. Do NOT use fire to burn the web from trees! This causes more damage to the tree than if the caterpillars continued to feed.

Insecticides are also available for webworm management. Look for active ingredients such as *Bacillus thuringiensis* var. *kurstaki* (this product specifically targets caterpillars), spinosad, azadirachtin, or pyrethrins. Webs need to be opened before treatment with a pesticide so that pesticide gets inside the web where caterpillars are located.

Please note that webbing will remain in trees even after caterpillars are dead. Webbing needs to be removed by you or a strong weather event.

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

July 1

WCMGA Board Meeting
AgriLife Training Room, 100 Wilco Way, AG201
1:00 to 3:00 pm
All members are welcome to attend.

July 8

WCMGA Monthly Membership Meeting
Georgetown Annex Auditorium
100 Wilco Way
6:00 to 8:00 pm
“The Importance of Bees”
with John Swan, Wicked Bee Apiary

July 9

Green Thumbs Up Gardening Series: Round Rock
Round Rock Public Library
6:30 to 7:30 pm
“Tree Problems”
with Wayne Rhoden & Gary Bowman

July 11

Green Thumbs Up Gardening Series: Cedar Park
Cedar Park Public Library
7:00 to 8:00 pm
“Tree Problems”
with Wayne Rhoden & Gary Bowman

July 27

Hands On In The Garden
Old Training Room, 3151 SE Inner Loop
9:00 to 11:00 am
“Roses”
with Wayne Rhoden



See You Next Month,
I'll be here baking cookies.