



MG Wood Works

Wood County Master Gardeners

January/February 2011 Newsletter

President's Message

"The gardening season officially begins on January 1st, and ends on December 31." ~ Marie Huston

Happy New Year!

Welcome to an exciting 2011 as a Wood County Master Gardener. I hope each of you had a joyous Christmas and great New Year's holiday with family and friends. Thank you to the MGs and guests who attended our Christmas Social. We missed all of you who could not be there. The morning was filled with the awards presentation then good fellowship and a delicious brunch. Let's do it again this year.

What a successful 2010 for WCMG! Wood County is very fortunate to have such an amazing group focused on beautifying and educating our part of the world. Your hard work and dedication were recognized at the mock check presentation to the Commissioner's Court on Dec 10. You could see the gleam in Clint's eye when he stepped to the podium. We set yet another record-breaking year with 5165 volunteer hours translating to \$104,586.20. What an accomplishment! I stand up and cheer each and everyone one of you. Our members are exceptional and to be commended as we anticipate another year of great gardening ideas and opportunities. Let's make 2011 another fabulous year.

Congratulations to the 2010 WCMG association award recipients: Linda Avant, Master Gardener of the Year; Clyde and Fran McKinney, Project Leaders of the Year; Linda Avant, Innovator of the Year; Pam Riley, Community Outreach; Shirley Boles, Rookie of the Year; and Top Volunteer Hours, Pam Riley. Job well done!

"Winter is the time for comfort, for good food and warmth, for the touch of a friendly hand and for a talk beside the fire: it is the time for home." ~ Edith Sitwell

A new year brings a new Master Gardener Training Class which began Jan 5. Welcome class of 2011. Current members, do you need CEU's? Of course you do, it's a new year. Now is your best opportunity to acquire them for free. Just attend any class. It is that easy. At the same time you can meet and welcome the new trainees. The classes are held every Tuesday until graduation April 26. The class schedule is available on our website (wcmgtx.org).

We appreciate the service and contribution of our outgoing Treasurer, Peggy Rogers. Thank you for a fabulous 2 years. Karen has big shoes to fill!

Thank you to our outstanding leader and advisor, Clint Perkins. We look forward to another year.

Your 2011 officers are Connie Amsden, President; Jim Willis, Vice President; Shirley Boles, Secretary; and Karen Anderson, Treasurer. Karen changed hats. And only one new face!

Gardening Tip: January and February are transplanting and pruning months.

May your garden always flourish....And your weeds always wither.

Happy Gardening, Connie Amsden, President

"Winter is the season in which people try to keep the house as warm as it was in the summer, when they complained about the heat." ~Author Unknown



Happy Valentine's Day

2010 MG Officers

Connie Amsden—President
Jim Willis—Vice President
Karen Anderson—Secretary
Peggy Rogers—Treasurer



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Member Spotlight January & February 2011 ~ Ellen Atkins

AN OPTIONAL BIOGRAPHICAL GUIDE
THE JOURNEY TO A HORTICULTURAL LIFE -
TO BECOME A MASTER GARDENER

NAME: Ellen Atkins

LOCATION: Lake Fork-Emory, Rains County

FAMILY (OPTIONAL): Married: Michael, Oldest son, Brian, is an Anesthesiologist and is married to Kara and they are the parents of my two grandsons, Nolen (4) and Weston (12 weeks). They live in MI where my daughter-in-law loves to garden. Youngest son, Brad, is a student/whitewater raft guide and lives in WV. He enjoys gardening and we exchange plants when we see each other.

CURRENT EMPLOYMENT/RETIREMENT AND ANY BACKGROUND

YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE: I am a retired private school principal. As

principal, I wore many hats, not the least of those was heading up the spring clean-up campaign on the grounds of the school. This mostly consisted of weeding (lots of practice for a future MG), trimming shrubs and raking.

WHEN AND WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO JOIN THE MASTER GARDENERS: The only gardening I did as a child living in Dallas was the dreaded punishment of pulling weeds in my Mom's rose beds. So I learned at an early age that gardening was to be avoided if at all possible! Moving back to TX after 35 years in MI, I quickly realized that I did not know much about gardening in hot, dry climates. In MI, most of my gardening efforts consisted of purchasing ten or twelve hanging plants and placing them around the house and yard. Then winter would kill them and I'd repeat the process the next spring. But with retirement came the time to learn more about plants and how to keep them alive (hopefully). My 2009 New Year's resolution was to become a Master Gardener.

CHILDHOOD PLANT EXPERIENCES WITH GARDENS (OR NOT): Mentioned above

GARDEN MENTORS: I'm told my mother-in-law was a great gardener. Personally, I never saw too much evidence of that.

CURRENT GARDEN INTERESTS/GOALS/DREAMS: I am an optimist; I believe you don't have to have a fully grown plant to put into the ground. I like to plant small plants because I enjoy watching them grow. I find it challenging to buy one and divide it into many. A goal I have is to be successful at composting. My last effort took a mere five years to complete the process. I need a lot of compost and I need it to finish in less time, but so far, it's been really s-l-o-w!

FAVORITE GARDEN/ARBORETUM/LOCATION: I have not visited many gardens/arboretums in TX yet, so my favorite arboretum is the Meijer Gardens in Grand Rapids, MI.

FAVORITE PLANTS/SHRUBS/TREES: I've recently become interested in Japanese Maples. I generally like plants with big showy blossoms; I figure if I'm going to go to the trouble of planting, feeding, watering, weeding, etc., then the least I deserve is a great big colorful bloom.

LEAST FAVORITE PLANTS/SHRUBS/TREES: I have threatened my azaleas with extermination if they don't shape up-quick! (My husband delights in pointing out how green the leaves are on azaleas at the nursery.)

FAVORITE BENEFICIAL CRITTERS: Rat snake...eat all those field mice. Oh, you probably meant an insect. Well, you just can't beat a lady beetle. They're always so busy waddling up and down leaves looking for something tasty. I'd love to be able to watch a tricogramma wasp in action.

OTHER: Possibly the greatest thing about Master Gardeners is the many new friends one makes!

Clint Perkins Gardening Corner

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Poinsettias, the Christmas Plant

The best selling plant during the Holiday season is the poinsettia. The poinsettia (*Euphorbia pulcherrima*) is a member of the spurge family. The plants in this family ooze a milky sap. The plant was introduced to the United States by Joel Roberts Poinsett. He was our first United States Ambassador to Mexico. Mr. Poinsett sent some of these plants to his home in Greenville, South Carolina in 1825, and the beautiful plant that we enjoy during the holiday season bears his name. Texas is one of 36 states that produce poinsettias. Americans spend more than 200 million dollars a year on these wonderful plants. Poinsettias come in different colors, with red being the most popular.

In nature, poinsettias are a perennial flowering shrub that can grow up to ten feet tall.

The showy part of the poinsettia are not flowers, they are actually colored bracts (modified leaves). These flowers (Cyathia) of the poinsettia are located in the center of the colorful bracts. Contrary to popular belief, poinsettias are not poisonous. So, do not be scared of them.



Poinsettias continued next page . . .

Dear Master Gardener,

"Wood Works" is all out of submissions for the Members Spotlight section. Tell your own story in prose or follow the outline as Ellen Atkins did this month on the prior page. This is how we get to know one another. E-mail your submission along with a reasonably recent photograph to terrellaronspeer@peoplescom.net. See you in the news ~ ed.

Tips For Caring For A Poinsettia

After selection is made, make sure you minimize exposure to low temperatures to keep from damaging the bracts and leaves. Keep your poinsettias away from cold drafts, or huge temperature fluctuations. Ideally, they require daytime temperatures of 60-70 degrees Fahrenheit and nighttime temperatures need to be no lower than 55 degrees Fahrenheit. High temperatures will shorten a plants life. Check the soil daily for moisture. Only water when the soil is dry. Poke your finger into the soil, and if moisture is not felt about an inch down into the container, then it is time to water. Water the plant thoroughly and allow excess moisture to drain. If you intend to keep the plant past the holiday season, apply a houseplant fertilizer once a month.



Clint Perkins

Extension programs serve people of all ages regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, religion, disability or national origin. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating.

Bulletin Board - Jim Willis

Our program on January 20th will be a trip to Fairhaven's Vineyard near Hawkins to hear a talk by the owner, R. L. Winters. We will begin as usual with our meeting at the Ag office at 9:00 and leave from there about 10:00 to drive to the vineyards which is about 20 miles away, just west of Hawkins. There will be more information later but you should visit their website at www.fairhavensvineyard.com to learn more about the vineyard and winery operations there.



R. L. Winters

Our February program has not been confirmed yet but will probably be a talk on the care of landscape trees. Earlier this year, Sally Houk suggested a program such as this that would cover the care of trees in stressed situation such as drought, windstorms, and snow. The tentative speaker is Steve Houser of the Dallas County Master Gardeners Speaker Bureau.

Correction! Oops. Wood Works apologizes for referring to Jim Willis as Tim Willis. Jim has no twin brother named Tim and all credit given to Tim Willis rightfully belongs to Jim Willis.

Out & About - January and February 2011

by Linda Timmons

January/February 2011

Everything is good in it's season. There's not much gardening we can do in the winter so celebrate the time off. Sit by the fire with your hot chocolate and your seed catalogues and dream. Start planning for the next growing season by reviewing past years successes and failures. If you haven't started a gardening journal, resolve to do it this year.



Master Gardener training classes start January 4th. Classes will be held **at the Extension office** but will be **starting at 8:30AM** instead of 9AM. The planned class schedule is posted on the WCMGTX.org web site in the "About Us" section. Plan to take advantage of this opportunity to get your CEUs early and to meet the 2011 class of MG trainees.

January 5th there will be a **pesticide recertification short course** offered at the **Golden Community Center**. **Registration starts at 8AM.** Classes are from 8:30-3PM. **Cost is \$20** and includes lunch. Topics to be covered are Pesticides: the Label, Laws and Regs, & Record Keeping; Tree Diseases and Mature Tree Care; IPM for the Garden; and Pesticides for the Garden and Product Update. Sign up for this course by January 3rd by calling the Extension Office at (903) 763-2924.

The **Smith County Spring Landscape and Garden Conference** will be held **February 12th** at the **Tyler Rose Garden Center**. The schedule hasn't been posted yet, but when it is there will be a link available on the "Events" page of our web site.

Dear Master Gardeners,

Linda is right; winter gardening is for the birds. But winter harvesting is great, but you need to plant in the fall. Some herbs are frost tolerant and can be harvested here all winter. Cilantro is one of these. Add to soup, rice and meat dishes. Also cruciferous vegetables grow well in winter. These include cabbages, Brussels sprouts (fairy cabbages if you are under 8), cauliflower and broccoli. Broccoli will continue to put out small crowns even after the main one has been harvested. Also, it is time to think about planting potatoes. ~ ed.

What do you call a stolen yam?

Humorous Mishaps.....by Lynn AronSpeer



And the Winner is: As Yet Undecided ...

It all began when I decided out of desperation to give my husband two citrus trees to bolster the meager number of gifts I had been able to conjure. I am not an inspired gift-giver and as Christmas crept closer, I seriously began to panic. About December 10th I hit the internet, convinced my timing was fine. How long can it take to ship a couple of tiny trees, after all? Well, 'after all' was the key phrase: most on-line nurseries could not ship into Texas and the Texas ones I located did not have any citrus ready in December. I weaseled out totally and made up gift certificates for a lime (required for *my* favorite beverage) and the other was to be a Meyer's lemon tree. (I rationalized Meyer's were sweetish and would suit *his* penchant for Planters Punch.)

Surprisingly, the certificates were a great hit. Next, I expected an ordeal of locating the trees. This happened still in the dead of winter and easily thanks to my ingenious husband's expertise with the phone book of all things! The tree farm was very helpful and assured us there was enough fertilizer in the pots for nine months. All we had to do was watch and wait for the bounty. But because our cats were not content to merely watch and wait as well, my clever hubby filled the pot tops with the small pine cones always scattered about our yard. This worked well as a feline discouragement tool.

The new tree babies took up residence in our family room for the remainder of the cold season and my attentive husband would roll them out onto an adjacent patio for sunny hours until the weather warmed enough to leave them out continuously. Then he came up with the brilliant idea of planting them, still in their pots, into the ground for the warm weather with the idea of pulling the pots just before frost so the trees could once again winter indoors.

Well, he watched the forecast diligently for frost and when the warning finally came, he hauled the trees, still in their pots and still covered with pinecones, out of the ground and back into the family room before dark. After dinner, we retired to watch TV in another room and did not check on the trees until the next morning.

After breakfast, my guy called me over to the windowed corner where the trees had passed the night. Around the lime tree was a mysterious ring of 'dirt' and the pine cones, which had topped the pot were nowhere in sight. The man of the house masterfully rooted about in the pot and discovered the pinecones had mysteriously sunk below the surface soil. Meanwhile the ring of 'dirt' around the afflicted pot was losing form and scattering – ants! Ants had swarmed through the soil making it so uniformly fine that they had actually sunk the pinecones. Ants were also biting my honey – and these were fire ants!



Lime in its natural habitat

Internet investigation revealed these pests were supposedly introduced into an Alabama port in the 1930's via infested soil that had been used as ballast. Also noted was a preference for citrus trees! A two-pronged application of pesticide followed by boiling water was suggested. However, we could not subject the trees to the latter so they were doused solely but thoroughly with the pesticide, *Amdro*. The trees are still thriving and have just been brought in for their second wintering but under our watchful eye.

Gin and tonic, anyone?

~~~ Recipe Section ~~~

Submitted by: Terrell AronSpeer

Subject: Chupacobbler*

1 stick unsalted butter
 1 cup sugar
 1 cup Bisquick
 1 cup whole milk
 1 tsp vanilla
 2 cup orbital fruit
 (apple, pear, or peach)
 2 cup berries
 (ras, black or dew)
 2 cup tropical fruit
 (banana, Mango or pineapple)
 Pinch nutmeg
 Pinch cardamom

In truth any cobbler recipe will do; this just happens to be my favorite. The dish is named for the legendary Chupacabra* reportedly seen in Mexico and the American Southwest. What makes a cobbler a Chupacobbler is the mixing of three fruits. One must be an orb, like apples, peaches, or pears. The second must be a berry. Strawberries might work but more heavily seeded berries are best, like blackberries or our own fresh dewberries. Finally, you will need a tropical fruit. Mango is my favorite, bananas do not hold up that well and pineapple may be too acidic. Also the addition of nutmeg and cardamom provides a different flavor. It is the point of the Chupacobbler to be a little different. At least one fruit should be canned; you will want to include the broth. Do not over-mix the fruits. Each bite should be different from the last.

Melt butter in a baking dish. In a bowl, mix the sugar and flour. Then mix in the milk and vanilla. Pour half of this flour mixture over the melted butter. Coarsely combine fruits and gently add to baking dish over flour mixture. Top with remaining flour mixture. Sprinkle sugar and cinnamon on top. Add a pinch of nutmeg and/or cardamom for a different taste.

*The Chupacabra can be seen roaming the dirt back roads of Mexico and the American Southwest. It is described as having long fangs and claws with a dog like head, the slinky body and walk of a cat and nearly hairless skin similar to that of a reptile. (Notice the three animals combined is like the three fruits combines above.) It is rumored that the Chupacabra attacks livestock, especially goats and sucks the blood and sometimes the organs out of them. Chupacabra's are most often seen on dark moonless nights by witnesses who have had at least three margaritas. There's that number three again. ~ ed.

2011 Texas Master Gardener Conference

April 27-29, 2011
 at the Somervell County Expo Center
 in beautiful Glen Rose, Texas!
 co-hosted by
 Somervell County Master Gardeners
 and Lake Granbury Master Gardeners

Check out our web site: <http://2011tmgconference.org/>.

Plant of the Month: January/February 2011: Heirloom Potato

By: Sylvia Johnson, MG



Kingdom: Plantae
(unranked): Angiosperms
(unranked): Eudicots
(unranked): Asterids

Family: Solanaceae
Genus: Solanum
Species: *S. tuberosum*
Binomial name *Solanum tuberosum*

Order: Solanales

Varieties recommended by Texas A&M for Texas:

Irish: - Norland Red: LaSoda White – Kennebec Finger - Russian Banana

POE-TAY-TOE or POE-TAH-TOE. Pomfrits, di patates, 马铃薯, or 'taters. It doesn't matter what you call them, the tuber we know as the potato has been cultivated for over 7,000 years. The original plant can be traced back to the Americas. They were cultivated by natives in Central Planes of North American to the Andes Mountains, South America. Native potatoes have heavily pigmented flesh and skin. These native tuber varieties are what we call heirloom potatoes today. There are over **400** varieties of heirloom potatoes and they vary in taste and color. Heirloom potatoes have more pronounced flavors from buttery to sweet to one with an earthy mushroom flavor. Heirloom "seed potatoes" always grow true to the parent plant. This is not so with engineered commercial "seed potatoes". Due to the vast popularity of chain restaurants world wide and the expectations of shoppers for "ideal looking" potatoes, commercial growers have almost all gone to a limited few "engineered" potato varieties. This limited crop scope may lead to wide spread crop failure if a blight should occur. Every U.S. citizen eats about 140 pounds of potatoes a year, including about 17 pounds of chips. The home gardener can avoid this mistake by growing many varieties at one time, especially if using the vertical method. So plant a few different heirloom potatoes this spring and enjoy the difference that home grown heirloom potatoes give your diet. Talk to your local nursery to get heirloom seed potatoes or order from you favorite catalog this winter for delivery in February.

Sun: Full sun for at least 6 hours. But not hot summer sun. Potatoes require the cool temperatures that are found in the spring and fall of 55-65 degrees max.

Soil: Loose with plenty of organic matter. Plant in rows, hills, containers or stacks. You will need to have "extra" soil available to cover the tubers continuously as they grow. Some gardeners plant in vertical vessels that can be stacked, like old tires, and keep covering the stems of the plant forcing it to keep growing up and thus making more room for the tubers to grow deeper at each level. This results in many more tubers per plant. A fertilizer of 15-15-15 will help ensure a good crop. PH of 6.0 to 6.5

Seed: Potatoes are not grown from a real seed pod. Potatoes should be grown from cuttings from certified seed potatoes whether heirloom or commercial. Using your leftover potatoes is an invitation for diseased or inferior plants with weak stems. Chitting is the process of encouraging seed potatoes to sprout before they are planted. In a temp of around 40 degrees F., arrange your seeds in trays. In a few weeks sturdy green short shoots will establish. You then cut these “sprouted” potato starts into pieces leaving at least two chits per piece. Chittings also allows you to discard inferior starts before planting. Chitting gives potatoes a head start at the beginning of the growing season, while conditions outside are still cold and frosty. East Texas planting time should be between February 15 and March 15 for spring crops.

Water: Keep moist but not wet. Tubers will rot if over watered. Tubers may also have brown voids in the center if over watered. If under watered the tubers will not develop and growth will be stunted and the potato will taste bland. If growing in a “stacked” system be sure the water gets to the bottom.

Flowers and Leaves: **Warning: The leaves, flowers, and stems of this plant are poisonous if consumed. Do not eat!** The Flower color varies and can be white, pink, red, blue, or purple. Cross pollination provided mostly by insects but can self-fertilize.

Tuber: The edible part of the plant is not a root vegetable or in fact a root at all. This tuber is the plant’s method of storing food which consists mainly of starch. The actual tuber must be kept covered with soil while growing. If left for sunlight to shine upon them the tuber skin will turn **Green**. This **Green** means that the potato has produced extra chlorophyll and solanine. Solanine is a substance that is toxic if consumed in great quantities. For safety sake it is best to discard **Green** potatoes. An additional incentive to discard Green potatoes is they taste bitter.

Harvesting: Harvest your potatoes when the tops die and turn brown to get the largest tubers. Potatoes will take anywhere from 13 weeks to 5 months to mature depending on variety. If you grow the flowering varieties harvest anytime after the blooms fall. Also you may gently search under the plant with your fingers to harvest small potatoes while the tops still feed and the tubers left will continue to grow. This lengthens the season for eating fresh potatoes!

Storage: Store potatoes at room temperature out of the light in burlap or paper bags. Do not store in a refrigerator; the starch turns to sugar resulting in a flavorless product. Do not store potatoes with onions; this will produce a gas that quickly ripens both. Do not prewash potatoes; this will encourage rot. Newly harvested potatoes are generally cured to thicken the skin. Let the tubers lay on a flat surface with good air circulation for several days to dry and toughen the skin thus increasing the storage time.

Medicinal Uses: Eating a medium sized potato gives your body almost 50% of its daily recommended amount of Vitamin C, 20% of the potassium and 10% of vitamin B6.

Potatoes also contain trace amounts of thiamin, riboflavin, folate, niacin, iron, zinc, magnesium, and phosphorus. Did you know you can survive eating only potatoes and onions? Steaming and baking are the best cooking methods to preserve the nutrition value. Contrary to popular belief, all the vitamins are in the flesh not the skin. Newer potatoes offer the best source of nutrition; another reason to grow your own. Raw potato juice is an effective antacid. A poultice of raw potato helps to relieve sunburn, stop inflammation and swelling, and diminish bruising.

Commercial Uses: Potato starch is used to produce paper, glue, baby diapers and lipstick. The starch is used in the production of “Eco-plastics” like plates, forks and clothes hangers that degrade in landfills or compost beds unlike the same products based on petroleum. Pharmaceuticals use this starch for filler in pills. Potato alcohol is used to make Vodka and was used to fuel the V2 Rockets. It took 30 tons of potatoes to fuel one rocket! Texas is expanding its research in biomass production to make electricity and biofuel using potatoes as a base crop.

Junior Master Gardeners



Broccoli Blasters



The Broccoli Blasters are a level 1 Junior Master Gardener Affiliate from Quitman.

The Quitman Broccoli Blasters made pinecone, peanut butter, seed feeders and placed them along the nature trail at the Arboretum.

Then they made Christmas silk flower pens for family, teachers, and etc.

Linda Avant

The Gardens at the Quitman Library

*Contributed by Becky Watts, Quitman Library Gardens POC,
WCMG*

Becky and Jerry Watts.



My Mother's Garden

*Her heart is like her garden,
Old-fashioned, quaint and sweet,
With here a wealth of blossoms,
And there a still retreat.
Sweet violets are hiding,
We know as we pass by,
And lilies, pure as angel thoughts,
Are opening somewhere nigh.*

*Forget-me-nots there linger,
To full perfection brought,
And there bloom purple pansies
In many a tender thought.
There love's own roses blossom,
As from enchanted ground,
And lavish perfume exquisite
The whole glad year around.*

*And in that quiet garden-
The garden of her heart-
Songbirds are always singing
Their songs of cheer apart.
And from it floats forever,
O'ercoming sin and strife,
Sweet as the breath of roses blown,
The fragrance of her life.*

Alice E. Allen

Wishing you and yours a happy holiday season ...

Becky & Jerry Watts



- Wildscape
Billie Wilder

Well, another year is passing on our Master Gardener projects with so much with which to be proud. The volunteers at the Mineola Preserve project have worked hard and long to maintain our area, with really good results. We have all been challenged with the dilemma of enough hands to do the work needed, but all have persevered with our goals achieved.

As support for our hard work, we have many visitors to the Preserve who have praised our garden area both during the summer and the fall with all the changes occurring during the seasons. Many of you have had the opportunity to work at the Preserve or visit and enjoy our area.



Fall Colors at the Nature Preserve

With 2011 approaching, we plan to compost and plant wild flower seeds in our wildflower area to be enjoyed next year. Also, we will be constructing a rain water collection system for educational purposes for 2011, and hopefully, for our watering use at the Preserve. All areas of the Wood County Master Gardeners have so much talent to be tapped, which is an ongoing challenge for all of us involved in various projects. We all appreciate each and every person who has helped at the Preserve and look forward to next year.

Wood Works thanks Joan Morgan, who is temporarily filling in for Billie, for this submission.



RAINDROPS TO MAKE BIG SPLASH

The Raindrops are a level II Junior Master Gardener Affiliate from Yantis. The Raindrops finished making Christmas silk flower pens and Reindeer Candy Canes for the Yantis administration, teachers, and staff for a community service project. For a Raindrops slide show . . .

Linda Avant

Click the link - <http://picasaweb.google.com/lissie65/YantisJMG2010Raindrops?>

Book Review:

Animal, Vegetable, Miracle by Barbara Kingsolver

Animal, Vegetable, Miracle is a chronological journal of the author's family and their "eat local, eat seasonal" project. The Kingsolvers sell their house in thirsty Tucson and make the cross-country drive to their 'summer farm' in Western Virginia. There, they begin the process of transitioning from the non-seasonal food grid of big-chain grocery stores to the terraced beds of their 40-acre farm. They'd spent many summers there, building and nurturing a well-composted vegetable garden, mature fruit trees, and a variety of berries. This time, instead of heading back to sunny Tucson when the first snow arrives, they stay on, eating only what they've preserved and frozen, or what they can buy or trade for in local produce.



Being an enthusiastic gardener, bread baker and 'slow-down' advocate myself, I enjoyed the descriptive narratives of farm life, with its arduous hours spent weeding, canning and freezing in high season. I admire young Lily for starting and staying with her organic egg and chicken business. And who could forget the memorable turkey-breeding experience that highlighted several hot-topic issues. Reading through the seasons with Kingsolver and her family brought back memories of the gardens *everyone* had in their backyard (along with clotheslines and compost piles). Eating what you've planted, nurtured, and harvested is just not the same as buying it flown-in from Honduras. As an omnivore, I also appreciated the inclusion of the fall processing of chickens and turkeys for the freezer.

For those of us old enough to remember the giddy anticipation of each new volume in the Foxfire series, the mechanics of the family-farm project are familiar. What was new were the narratives on the commercialized food-delivery-machine we depend on, concentrated animal feeding operations, genetic engineering, biodiversity, societal disinterest and detachment from food production, organic trends, and the growing popularity of farmers' markets (just to name a few). These 'essays' sound a bit like diatribes, but they're generally on-mark and do make an impression on the reader. After reading the book, I see that Kingsolver is dedicated to educating and promoting change in perspectives and spending habits for food. Her book, Animal, Vegetable, Miracle certainly does that.

Reviewed by Becky Watts

BOOK REVIEW: Tell us gentle readers. Should this become a new section in "Wood Works"? Please e-mail the editor at: [terrellaronspeer@peoplescom.net]



Friends of the Arboretum

By Pam Riley

The Wood County Master Gardeners had their last meeting for 2010 at the Stinson House located in the Gov. Hogg Park Arboretum & Botanical Gardens. There was a short business meeting followed by presentation of awards and then on to the brunch prepared by the Master Gardeners.

From the Arboretum and all our wonderful volunteers...Merry Christmas and a wonderful and prosperous New Year.



Wisdom from the Seat of a Tractor

If you get to thinkin' you're a person of some influence, try orderin' somebody else's dog around .

~*~

Timing has a lot to do with the outcome of a rain dance.

~*~

A bumble bee is considerably faster than a John Deere tractor.

If you have acquired some wisdom over the years, why not share it with us here at "Wood Works." E-mail us at: terrellaronspeer@peoplescom.net

SERENITY CORNER

Eileen Bartlett



“And you would accept the seasons of your heart just as you have always accepted that seasons pass over your fields and you would watch with serenity through the winters of your grief.”



Khalil Gibran

Wood County Master Gardeners

January 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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2	3	4 Wood Co. Master Gardener Training. 8:30 AM at the Extension Office	5 Pesticide Recert. Golden Community Center 8 AM See Out & About for details	6	7	8
9	10	11 WCMG Training. 8:30 AM at the Extension Office	12	13	14	15
16	17	18 WCMG Training. 8:30 AM at the Extension Office	19	20 Wood Co. Master Gardener Meeting. 9 AM at the Extension Office Fairhaven Vineyard	21	22
23	24	25 WCMG Training. 8:30 AM at the Extension Office	26	27	28	29
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Wood County Master Gardeners

February 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 WCMG Training. 8:30 AM at the Extension Office	2	3	4	5
6	7	8 WCMG Training. 8:30 AM at the Extension Office	9	10	11	12 Spring Landscape and Garden Conference. Tyler Rose Garden Center
13	14	15 WCMG Train. 8:30 AM Ext Off. Fruit & Vegetable Conf. T R G C*	16	17 WCMG Meeting. 9 AM Ext Off.	18	19
20	21	22 WCMG Training. 8:30 AM at the Extension Office	23	24	25	26
27	28	* TRGC = Tyler Rose Garden Center				