

MG Wood Works



March—April 2012

This year's conference
subjects were inspired
by the victory gardens



**FREE AT THE
MINEOLA CIVIC CENTER**

SATURDAY MARCH 10

8:30-Noon

**SPEAKER ON VEGETABLE GARDENING
AND SPEAKERS ON FOOD PRESERVATION**

**DOOR PRIZES, RAFFLE TICKETS,
REFRESHMENTS**



Wood County Master Gardeners hold Educational Program for the Public



2012 MG Officers

Peggy Rogers	President
Marti McAree	Vice President
Joan Morgan	Treasurer
Karen Anderson	Secretary

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Vision

To be the premier 21st Century outreach and
continuing education organization in Texas
responding to the needs of the people.

Edited by:
Sylvia Johnson

Mission

To improve the lives of people, business and
communities across Texas and Beyond through
high quality, relevant Education

President's Corner

Scatter seeds of happiness!

Peggy Rogers



All Aboard! Here we go now!

Spring is "March'ing right in. The daffodils, narcissus, forsythia and many others have burst into bloom. Come on April showers!

You may need to think about working in your gardens slowly so you won't over exert those muscles that you didn't use during the winter. I don't know about you, but once I get started working outside, I lose all track of time and sometimes overdo. Did you plant a shrub or tree or prepare a bed during February? We are going to have to put more muscle into it as we move into March. I'm already behind with improving my garden beds! I've promised myself to find a way to stop and smell the roses but not yet, I just keep finding work in the garden that I must get done.

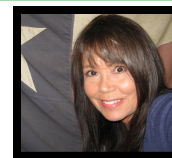
2012 Intern class is off to a great start with great speakers. In April, these Interns will graduate and they are on their way to becoming certified Texas Master Gardener's. Congratulations! Remember you can get your CEUs in by attending class.

Spring Conference is upon us. Thank you, Committee & Members for doing a great job of planning this affair. This group must have taken on the "I think I Can, I Think I Can, I Knew I Could" attitude of "The Little Engine That Could" children's book.

Thank you one and all for volunteering to ride on the project train cars! Projects are showing your hard work.

VP's Corner

By: Marti McAree



March Speaker:

Linda Timmons has been a Wood County Master Gardener since 2003. She loves to experiment by growing a variety of plants. Linda even envisioned having at least one of every plant that would grow in East Texas. Linda, Tim and her collection of plants live and thrive on 3 acres between Mineola and Golden. Linda will discuss the *Landscape Design Study Courses* offered as a joint project of the Texas Garden Clubs, Inc. and Texas AgriLife Extension Service. In September 2011, she completed the full series of 4 courses.

Another passion of Linda's is what she calls "The Collector's Garden". Linda says "I'll bet I'm not the only one that just can't resist buying one of those pretty, neat, fun, and new plants. I want to offer a little advice on how to have a landscape that looks pulled together but can still accommodate the impulse purchase(s)."



Photo submitted by: Linda

APRIL SPEAKER:

Photo submitted by: Steven

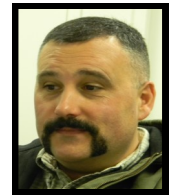
Steven Chamblee is the Chief Horticulturist for Chandor Gardens in Weatherford, TX. He serves as Consulting Editor and Author for Neil Sperry's GARDENS magazine, writes a monthly e-newsletter column entitled "Native Son", and is an Adjunct Instructor for Tarrant County College and Texas Christian University's Extended Education.



Steve will be speaking on "*Garden Harmony 101*". He says that too often the garden "master becomes a slave to the demands of her or his own Creation". By properly honoring time, space, place, form, and function, gardens can be developed that evolve naturally with our lives. We will learn how to re-establish priorities, alter traditional views of garden composition, utilize alternative resources and ultimately, physically create the vision that was once just a dream.

Clint Perkins' Gardening Corner

Wood County, Texas Extension Agent: AG & Natural Resources



Hypoxylon Canker of Oak Trees

I have been getting numerous phone calls about dead or dying oak trees from all areas of Wood County. With the severe drought that we have experienced the past two years and with the stressed condition of the trees, hypoxylon canker has taken its toll. I got this information from the Texas Forest Service website and it gives a very good description of what is occurring.

Hypoxylon canker is a fungus that causes cankers and death of oak and other hardwood trees. The disease is common in East Texas and all across the southern United States. Relatively healthy trees are not invaded by the fungus, but the hypoxylon fungus will readily infect the sapwood of a tree that has been damaged, stressed, or weakened. Natural and man-caused factors that can weaken a tree include defoliation by insects or leaf fungi, saturated soil, fill dirt, soil compaction, excavation in the root zone of the tree, removal of top soil under the tree, disease, herbicide injury, drought, heat, nutrient deficiencies, competition or overcrowding, and other factors. The hypoxylon fungus is considered a weak pathogen in that it is not aggressive enough to invade healthy trees. In addition to the hypoxylon fungus, weakened and stressed trees may become susceptible to a host of other insect and disease pests.

Hypoxylon canker activity usually increases when prolonged drought occurs. When drought stresses trees, the fungus is able to take advantage of these weakened trees. The moisture content of wood in live healthy trees is typically 120% - 160%.

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Hypoxylon Canker of Oak Trees

It is difficult for hypoxylon canker to develop in wood that has normal moisture content. However, any of the factors listed above could weaken or stress trees causing the moisture content of the wood to reach levels low enough for the hypoxylon fungus to develop. When this happens, the fungus becomes active in the tree and invades and decays the sapwood causing the tree to die. Once hypoxylon actively infects a tree, the tree will likely die.

An early indication that hypoxylon canker may be invading a tree is a noticeable thinning of the crown. Also, the crown may exhibit branch dieback. As the fungus develops, small sections of bark will slough from the trunk and branches and collect at the base of the tree. Where the bark has sloughed off, tan, olive green, or reddish-brown, powdery spores can be seen. Different tree species that are infected with hypoxylon canker will produce the different colors of spores. By the time the spores become visible, the tree is dead. In four to eight weeks, these tan areas will turn dark brown to black and become hard. They have the appearance of solidified tar. After several months, the areas will become a silver-gray color.

Once the fungus invades the tree, the sapwood begins to rapidly decay. Dark decay lines can be seen running through the wood. Trees that have died from hypoxylon canker and are located in an area where they could fall on structures, roads, fences, power lines, etc., should be removed as soon as possible. During removal, it is very dangerous to climb trees killed by hypoxylon canker. Because the fungus decays the wood so rapidly, the tree may not support the weight of a climber. Instead, use bucket trucks or other mechanical lift devices.

Probably all oak trees are susceptible to hypoxylon canker. In addition, elm, pecan, hickory, sycamore, maple, beech, and other trees may be infected. The fungus spreads by airborne spores that apparently infect trees of any age by colonizing the inner bark. The fungus is known to be present in many healthy trees and can

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Hypoxylon Canker of Oak Trees

survive for long periods of time in the inner bark without invading the sapwood. As mentioned earlier, when a tree is weakened or stressed, the fungus may then invade the sapwood and become one of several factors that ultimately cause the tree to die.

There is no known control for hypoxylon canker other than maintaining tree vigor. Apparently the spores of this fungus are so common in most areas that removing trees infected with hypoxylon canker is of little value in controlling the spread of the disease. Also, infected fire wood is not considered to be a source of inoculation. The fungus does not kill groups of trees by spreading from tree to tree. There is usually little that can be done to avoid naturally occurring stress factors, but many man-caused stress factors can be avoided. During drought periods, supplemental watering is recommended, if the tree is near a water source. Damage to tree roots around construction areas commonly predisposes a tree to infection by hypoxylon canker.

Certain species of oak trees are very susceptible to hypoxylon canker. Tan, powdery spores are shown on a water oak soon after the tree died in a Lufkin (TX) park (left). Typical tan hypoxylon spores on a water oak in a Tyler County, TX forest (right).



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Hypoxylon Canker of Oak Trees



The hypoxylon canker fungus will exhibit several different color phases after an infected tree has died. Here the fungus has taken on a silver-gray appearance on the bole (trunk) of a young water oak (Lufkin, TX).



Evidence of hypoxylon canker on oak trees can appear black and crusty, similar to dried tar. This stage of the fungus usually appears after the tree has been dead for several months. These black eruptions were found on a dead water oak (Lufkin, TX).



Sometimes several different color phases of hypoxylon canker can be found at the same time on a single tree. This water oak in Tyler County (TX) was a good example.

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Hypoxylon Canker of Oak Trees



The hypoxylon canker fungus often causes part of the bark to separate from the tree. These bark chips can be found on the ground at the base of the tree. A water oak in Lufkin, TX displays a classic example of this phenomenon.

All photos submitted by: Clint

My recommendation ,if you would like to cut the tree down and use it for firewood, is to stack the wood and cover it with clear plastic for several weeks to months. This will insure that the insects will not leave the area underneath the plastic with the fungal spores on them and infect other trees.

Happy Gardening

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

Wood County TX AgriLife Extension Service
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Quitman, TX 75783-0968

Wood County Extension
Clint Perkins

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Spring Conference

March 10

Details for Master Gardeners and Interns



- Be at Mineola Civic Center,
1150 Newsome, at 7:00 a.m.
- Wear green Master Gardener
t-shirt if you have one
- Bring refreshments; bake sale
items
- Be helpful to vendors; SMILE
- Enjoy the conference; earn Volunteer Hours
- Learn from the speakers; earn CEUs
- Stay until the Civic Center is cleared of vendor
items and clean (approximately 12:30 p.m.)

Poster by: Ellen Atkins



Gardening Tips and Tricks

By: Sylvia Johnson

Garden Tools

If you are like me, you will find your hands and other joints getting tired and sore this spring during your garden work. Whether you “over work” or have arthritis there are specialty tools to help. The Arthritis Foundation has tested and awarded their “Ease of Use” to tools they find help arthritis suffers or which will help the “over accomplisheers”! Check out their website under the “Home and Garden” section.

<http://www.arthritis.org/index.php>

I love their recommended ergonomic clipper which uses a gear design. The ones I use have a the rotating bottom handle that rolls when I squeeze. They help my hands to squeeze harder with less effort as the bottom handle turns and the built-in spring snaps them back open. Mine will let me cut through stems and branches up to 3/4 “.

For big jobs I use the recommended loppers with built-in ratchet gears. These give me increased strength with minimum effort. I find I can cut through larger branches and small limbs that used to require me to get out my small electric chainsaw. My geared loppers give me 2 to 3 times the power of regular loppers.

No mater which tools you use, or which brand, they will work better and be easier to use if maintained properly. Clean, dry and oil your tools regularly throughout the gardening season.

Have a better, healthier and easier gardening experience this year.

TMGA & Master Gardener FACT: The Texas Agricultural Extension Service made an official commitment to a Texas Master Gardener program in 1987 with the hiring of a statewide coordinator. At that time guidelines were developed for the program, establishing a minimum of 50 hours of formal training and 50 hours of volunteer service to become a certified Texas Master Gardener. A 500 page training handbook also was completed.

TMGA Website: <http://txmg.org>; WCMGA website: <http://www.wcmgtx.org>

To everything there is a season.

Peggy Rogers

SUNSHINE Chair

As the Sunshine Chair I request that all the MGs please promptly contact me with any information on member or family illnesses, surgeries, hardships, deaths, or any reason we need to spread a little sunshine on behalf of the WCMGs. We need to stay aware and let our members know we care in their time of need. We all may need our MG family at some time and it is important that we be there for one another.

Thank You,

Connie Amsden



By: Joan Morgan

Spring is just around the corner and it is time to assess garden needs at the Wildscape. Unfortunately, we lost some plantings at the Preserve due to the drought, but we all know that the entire East Texas area suffered.

Several members met last Friday at Kitchens Hardware for lunch and a planning meeting afterwards. We generated some thoughts for our future and set goals for the current year. The group addressed fund raisers, needed plants, a new bed for small year round green trees, education programs and drip irrigation among other things. It was good to share ideas with all in attendance including members of the trainee class as well as current WCMG who are regular volunteers at the Wildscape.

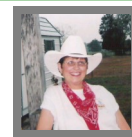
Please mark your calendars for February 22nd, as we have an event planned at the Preserve and Wildscape sponsored by Ozarka Water from Hawkins. Beginning at noon, there will be employees/volunteers from Ozarka, possibly a high school class from Mineola High School and several speakers including 2 Professors, a game warden from Texas Parks and Wildlife and representative from Ducks Unlimited. The volunteers from Ozarka will come prepared to plant daffodils and help with some clean up at the Wildscape. We are excited to host this event and invite all Master Gardeners to attend.

We will have other educational events later in the year and will update all WCMG as the dates are set.

Happy Gardening to all.



Quitman Public Library



By: Linda "Sassy" Cowan

Creeping Phlox

We have Emerald Blue phlox at the Quitman Library and she is showing her little face early. Can't really say that we had much of a winter but mother nature takes care of her own.

Creeping Phlox or Phlox Subulata named in Latin for it's awl-shaped leaves is commonly called Creeping Phlox, Mountain Phlox, or Moss Phlox.

Creeping Phlox welcomes spring with hundreds of fragrant star shaped blue blooms that burst forth in such masses they overtake the foliage.

Sun loving Creeping Phlox forms a low growing mat forming groundcover. Leaves are narrow and pointed and are evergreen.

Highly adaptable to most well drained soils whether acidic or alkaline, it even grows in gravelly soil. How cool is that?

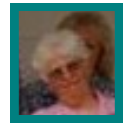
Stunning in mass planting. Use as a foreground planting to colorful Cornflower, upright Sedums or medium sized shrubs.

Phlox does like a sunny location with good air circulation which helps to prevent powdery mildew disease. A good compost mixed with the planting soil keeps the Phlox happy. Don't forget mulch and added moisture during the hottest part of the summer. Water regularly around the base of the plant because Phlox doesn't like wet foliage or flowers.

Zones: 2—9

Happy Planting!

THE 2012 MASTER GARDENER TRAINING CLASS



By Gail Newman

Remaining Class Schedule

This year we have 14 Trainees who are very excited about learning new things about gardening & interacting with others who have the same passion. It is truly an honor to be a part of organizing & working with this training class. We have a great group of speakers lined up. Some are new to us & others have taught here before. We have some wonderful teachers within our WCMG. Other groups are calling us requesting our speakers. That says a lot about WCMG! I encourage all members to join us at any or all of these remaining classes & don't forget about our field trip. Here is the remaining schedule for this Training Class.

Mar. 13: Gaylen Logen, Extension Agent, will be doing the Fruit & Nut class. He will talk about things that grow well in our area. Also, Lowell Tanksly, who is a truck farmer, will be teaching Vegetable Gardening in East Texas.

Mar. 20: Dr. Knoop is with us to teach Turf Grass. Holly Ross has agreed to teach Herbs in that day's 2nd session. If you think her compost class was good, this should be awesome since herbs are her 1st love.

Mar. 27: Linda Timmons will be doing the Landscape Design class. She has attended in-depth training classes in this subject at Texas A&M, becoming a specialist.

Apr. 3: We are lucky to have Eric Taylor & Daniel Duncom teaching about Trees. Eric will do a film presentation & then we go to the Arboretum for Daniel to do hands on with pruning, diseases, etc.

Apr. 10: This is our last class. We will start at the office with Liz Soutendijk giving a film presentation on Wildscape/Natives plants for Texas. We will leave the office & go to the Mineola Nature Preserve for Liz to show us their plants. Lucy Germany will follow up with her Edible Wild Plants (continued on next page)

Karen Anderson will do her tour of the Rainwater Harvest/irrigation system that was set up there. We suggest that everyone bring a sack lunch & stay for some down time together. Lucy will also be serving her Wild Salad.

Apr. 17: Will be our Field Trip to Clymer Meadow Fields.*

Apr. 24: Graduation! This year it will be a Pot-Luck luncheon & we want everyone, who can, to plan on being there to help us Celebrate & Welcome our New Master Gardeners. It will be held at the Hogg Arboretum.

Field Trip Information: Claymer Meadow Fields

By: Janet Cook

***Students will get an introduction to the ecoregions of Texas, an overview of the Texas Nature Conservancy, and a firsthand look at a restoration project.**

The 1,400-acre Clymer Meadow Preserve contains some of the largest and most diverse remnants of the Blackland Prairie—the Texas version of the tall grass prairie that once stretched from near the Texas Coast to southern Manitoba. The preserve is part of a larger conservation area that includes land owned by The Nature Conservancy of Texas and other private owners. Named for pioneer Jim Clymer, who bought the first tracts in the 1850s, Clymer Meadow serves as a center for study of the Blackland Prairie and has been the site of more than a dozen scientific investigations ranging in scope from inventories of prairie invertebrates to noxious weed control. Clymer Meadow Preserve is home to the Conservancy's plant material center, which houses seeds harvested from native plants within the preserve for prairie restoration. Two globally imperiled prairie plant communities are represented here: little bluestem-Indiangrass and gamagrass-switchgrass community series types. Other important grasses include big bluestem, meadow dropseed, sideoats grama, and Canada wildrye. Wildflowers, such as rough-leaf rosinweed, purple Indian paintbrush, prairie clover and American basket flower are abundant.

EarthKind Specialist News

By: Ellen Atkins



Water

A Most Important Substance

"An adequate supply of high quality water has become a critical issue for the future prosperity of Texas." Water covers 70.9% of the Earth's surface, with 96.5% of that water found in oceans, 1.7% in groundwater, 1.7% in glaciers and ice caps, 0.001% in the air as vapor, clouds and precipitation and a small fraction in other large water bodies. Freshwater makes up only 2.5% of Earth's water and 98.8% of that water is in ice and groundwater. With such a small amount of water being available for use in our homes and gardens, it behooves us to be conscientious about how we use water.

Earth Kind® principles of water conservation include design and planning, soil analysis, appropriate plant selection, practical turf areas, efficient irrigation, use of mulches and appropriate maintenance. Rainwater harvesting is another important aspect of water conservation. By incorporating these principles, you can help preserve our most precious natural resource-water.

And what if we don't? Experts believe that by 2030, Texans will use more water than is available. Americans use approximately 150 gallons of water each day. That is four times a European's daily water usage and almost seven times that of a person in China. Thirty-six states in the US face severe water shortages in the next three years. Water, or the lack of it, may become the primary reason for future conflicts between nations.

"But what can I do?" you may ask yourself.

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-Water-

A good place to begin is to pay attention to the way you use water in your everyday activities. Do you let the water run down the drain while you wait for a warm shower? Does the water run while you wash fruit and vegetables? Does the 'gray water' from your washing machine drain into the septic system? While some things are not easy to change, we can all change our own habits. Consider placing a bucket in the shower to catch that cold water before it runs down the drain. Turn off the water while you brush your teeth or wash your hands. Water that has soil in it from plants or vegetables can be captured in a dishpan and used to water container plants. Think before you touch the tap! If we all commit to change even one wasteful habit, we may be able to increase our available water supplies and postpone the coming water shortage for a few years.

1-Water Conservation; Texas AgriLIFE Extension Earth Kind: Environmental Stewardship Program, Department of Horticultural Sciences; Texas A&M University System .

Ellen Atkins, Volunteer Hours Recorder, reminds us about filling out our time records.

The main points are:

- 1. Put your name on the form**
- 2. Don't skip lines**
- 3. Use only listed codes**
- 4. Interns include class CEU hours**
- 5. Interns do not use T (training) or SPKR (speaker) codes**
- 6. No mileage is counted for class hours, only for volunteer hours**

Plant of the Month: Gourds

By: Andria Hawk

GROWING GOURDS:

An Experience at Gorilla Gardens

Gourds were introduced to me by the Texas Gourd Society at the Texas Master Gardeners state conference that was held in Denton, TX while I was a Master Gardener in training during 2005. I don't remember what drew me to their table, but I went away with a few packages of seeds. In that year, a friend received a piece of gourd art, and a Denton, County Master Gardener; Darlene Welge came to speak to us about growing and crafting gourds. My thoughts....I would like to do that someday.

In 2008, I came to Gilmer and made my home on Gorilla Road with some property and space. As a home health physical therapist, I have the opportunity to travel many highways and farm roads as well as see a variety of homes and farms. You'll never guess what caught my eye. Those gourds again! Gourds were hanging as birdhouses, gourds were growing along fence lines, gourds were in the cow pastures, and the most gigantic kettle gourd was sitting amongst piles of dried gourds on a porch.

In 2009, I started my first vegetable garden at Gorilla Gardens. I saved a small area for gourds, pulling out the seeds from my purchase in 2005. The vines flourished traveling outside the garden and covered the vegetable crop that shared the space. There were gourds and LOTS OF gourds. It was also my introduction to squash bugs. Some gourds did survive and I was able to watch the drying process.

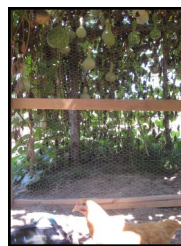
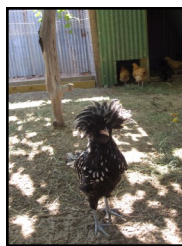
The 2010 planting season arrived and I was determined to grow those gourds again allowing a full garden for just the gourds. I included ornamental gourds in the crop along with the hard-shelled varieties. The ornamental had a much shorter growing season and they came and went before it was time to put out fall decorations.

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GROWING GOURDS

The hard-shelled gourds became the gathering place for all the squash bugs in East Texas among the powdery mildew... Still, a few gourds survived but they were not as large and the walls were thinner.

Not ready to give up.....2011 brought a NEED to grow gourds. Chickens were introduced to Gorilla Gardens and the coop needed shade from the western sun. Keeping with a more natural look, posts from downed cedar trees along with old cattle panels were added to the exterior of the chicken coop, and once again I planted those hard-shelled gourd seeds. Now, these vines grew, and they grew even more. 20 to 50 feet of vines traveled up the cattle panels and completely covered the yard area of the coops roof. Along with those vines came not just LOTS, but TONS of heavy green gourds of all shapes and sizes. Besides having to reinforce the roof of the coop, the gourds did their job of shading the chicken yard during the heat of the summer. The gourds hung down from the cattle panels and some made it through the chicken wire roof providing a beautiful walk to the doors of the coop. There were no squash bugs or powdery mildew and the vines were able to dry naturally as well as the gourds with the roof of the coop serving as the perfect drying rack. Success at last!!!



Photos by: Andria

If you would like to try your hand at growing hard-shelled gourds, the following growing directions and lessons learned at Gorilla Gardens should help you get started:

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Gourd growing directions:

- Ψ **Hard-shelled gourds, *Lagenaria siceraria* (L. *Vulgaris* and L. *leucantha*) species are a family of plants collectively known as Cucurbits that come in a wide variety of shapes and sizes.**
- Ψ **If you choose a large variety, a sturdy trellis or structure is recommended and planting around small trees should be avoided due to the weight of the green gourd.**
- Ψ **I recommend allowing vertical growth to decrease the occurrence of disease and insect infestation. This also allows for watering at the root of the plant vs. Consistent wetting of the leaves.**
- Ψ **The soil should be prepared with compost, and heavily mulched around the seedlings and beyond due to the large root surface of the vine.**
- Ψ **Seeds can be directly sown in the ground after the last frost and germinate best at soil temperatures of 70 degrees. I prefer to use nail clippers to snip off the shoulders of the seeds before planting vs. soaking them whole for 24 hours. The seeds should be placed into the soil at a depth of two times it's length.**
- Ψ **Hard-shelled gourds require 120 to 140 frost free days to mature, and 6 months to 1 year to cure and become totally dry. They need at least 6 hours of sunlight and plenty of water.**
- Ψ **A good nitrogen fertilizer is recommended around the seeds to help encourage vine growth. After the vines are about 8 feet long, lower the nitrogen level of your fertilizer to something like a 5-10-10. Around September stop fertilizing but continue to water.**
- Ψ **Harvest the gourd only after it has ripened on the vine. The shell is hard to the touch, and the stem is dried out. Or you can leave it in place to dry and cure for the year.**
- Ψ **It is recommended to allow the gourds to cure in a dry airy space out of direct sunlight. I have found that air circulation is important, but direct or indirect sunlight does not make a difference except in cure time. Do not allow it to cure in an**

(continued on next page)

Gourd growing directions:

- Ψ **enclosed space due to the mold that forms on the epidermis.**
- Ψ **As the green gourds dry, the epidermis becomes covered with mold. Have no fear. The patterns it makes on the shells are worth millions to those with creativity. The shell will turn a light tan color. You know your gourds are ready when you can hear the seeds rattle inside!**



Nine-banded armadillo tortilla warmer was made by Darlene Welge. Small gourd bowl was made by Celia 1998.

While writing this article, I returned to my initial thoughts of someday crafting with the gourds. Now, I recognize my interest in the growth process of the gourds. Looking forward to the 2012 planting season, I believe I will actually follow the recommended growing instructions and begin experimenting with the “molding into shapes” of the gourds during their growth cycle. For any of you artists or crafters that don’t want to grow your own gourds.....You know where you can find some!

SOURCES:

Growing and Crafting gourds by Darlene Welge

Summit, Ginger *Gourds in Your Garden a Guidebook for the Home Gardener*. 2006 revised, Los Altos, CA: Hillway Press

Backwoods home magazine March/April 2012 *Mother Nature’s pottery* pgs. 50-55

Texas Gardener The magazine for Texas gardeners, by Texas gardeners January/February 2012 *The Incredible Versatile Gourd* pgs. 32-35

Trials and Errors at Gorilla Gardens 2009-2011

the garden box



By: Holly Ross



Photo by: Holly

For everyone who has thought of growing their own vegetables, flower gardening, or raising herbs, the garden box is a great way to go. With the garden box the soil is easy to amend, the plants are easy to care for and the beds are defined clearly.

There are several ways to build a garden box. My favorite way is to use 2X12 untreated lumber. Many publications say that if you use lumber it must be cedar or cypress. Although these two materials are extremely long-lived they are also very expensive. I simply used pine available at our local lumber yard. My first boxes were built 4 years ago and are still in great shape. I live in a very humid area with lots of insects including termites and those first boxes are showing very little decay.

Sizes of garden boxes depend much in part to the size of the area you have available. I did find that my five foot wide beds are just a little too wide to reach the middle without stepping in the beds. I really like my beds that are 2' X 10'. These are a really great size and hold plenty of veggies. The width of the beds is the major consideration, the length is totally at your discretion simply based on your space available. The depth of 12 inches is a great depth. I grow carrots every spring and fall and those orange roots come out beautiful.

Now comes the filling. There are so many great options that your choice really depends on what is readily available in your area. I filled mine with aged horse manure that came from a friend's stable. To this, I apply compost to the boxes every fall and spring. The results I am getting from this recipe are really great. Replenishing with compost twice a year keeps the boxes really fertile.

The ease of weeding, planting, and rotating crops has made me a total fan of the garden box. I will be using these boxes for the rest of my gardening days.

Humorous Mishaps

by Lynn AronSpeer with thanks to M. & K.



GUINEA DIN

“Guineas make good watchdogs.”

“Guineas eat bugs and don’t make the same mess in the garden as chickens.”

Guineas say, “Buckwheat! Buckwheat! Not yet! Not yet!”

K. thought that was pretty darned cute *and* practical. This could be just what was needed in their garden. Yes, chickens were indelicate where flowering bushes and vegetables were concerned. Reading further she learned guinea fowl were low-maintenance, semi-wild and would eat up ticks and chiggers while keeping snakes at bay. Further described were the advantages of eggs and meat with only a minimal investment in feed—just enough to keep the guineas pleasantly employed on your property and not someone else’s.

Shortly after K. began her M., surprised her with would fit in her palm.

Next morning only eighteen found dozing off a huge room where the keets had think that would have been grand guinea experiment was doomed to failure. Not yet...



guinea campaign, her husband, twenty-five tiny keets; two K. was in love.

remained and a snake was meal on a bunk in the sauna passed the night. One would enough to convince K. the

Graciously, K. had M. move the keets into her home office and then to a large wire cage on stilts, which they put in the empty chicken shack. Meanwhile the keets were becoming adolescents and somewhat less adorable; whenever they opened the cage door to give them food, they ran to the far corner of cage and clambered on top of one another in an effort to

(continued on next page)

GUINEA DIN

escape their captors. It annoyed K. and M. to wait on them beak and claw and then be treated like a couple of axe murderers. They didn't deserve it—not yet...K. reminded M. of their traumatic keethood, seeing their seven siblings eaten alive in front of their very eyes by a chicken snake. K. argued they deserved compassion and a little patience.

It was decided the teens needed more room in which to explore so M. and K. released them to run freely around the larger chicken pen in which they'd placed the wire cage. After all, hadn't three large red hens occupied these quarters for many months without complaint until they nearly scratched the azalea and gardenia bushes to death, forcing M. & K. to give the hens to friends who wished to raise farm fowl? The pen would be a good graduation for the guineas. Curiously, the guineas moved about like a school of fish from one side of the pen to the other, loathe to be separated. M. and K. went to bed that evening and the next, confident their guineas were content and safe.

The third morning it was discovered a coon has climbed the fence or a tree hanging over the fence, dropped down inside the pen, and dug a softball sized hole. Through the hole, the coon had made off with an even dozen guineas, leaving only a leg and feather behind as evidence of the crime. Tightlipped, M. lined the ground around the hen house with sheet metal, weighted down with cinder blocks and other heavy objects and finally herded in the remaining birds.

Shortly thereafter, one guinea got sick and died from all the ordeals of its youth, leaving but a fifth of the original flock. Nevertheless, five would be enough to do the job of yard maintenance envisioned for them and build a formidable flock, provided some were males and some were females. This determination could only be made once they became guinea fowl. Their vocalizations would determine if the flock had the potential to be fruitful and multiply. So, with anticipation, M. and K. awaited their first cries. The females shout, "Buckwheat! Buckwheat!" while the males let loose with a series of "Beep-beep-beeps" that can sound like, "Not yet! Not yet!"

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GUINEA DIN

About the time they found their voices, their heads also lost their pretty stripes, gained some ugly waddles, and the skin became leathery white—faces only a real guinea mum could love. In all fairness, they did grow into nice plump birds whose feathers made an attractive pattern of dots, stripes and solids in gray, white, and dark brown. Unfortunately, their violent encounter with the coon left them wilder than ever and they ran, terrified, at the sight of K. and M. who found this terribly off-putting. After all, they hadn't done anything to deserve such a crazed response—not yet.

Under supervision, the guineas were let out for a stroll and grew gradually from timidly skulking misfits to a gang of thugs, terrorizing the area by flying over the fence to harass neighbors too. At home, they flew to the tin roof of the shack and ran about, screaming their fool heads off—not literally, that is, not yet.

Finally, M. announced he'd had enough and the guineas had to go. K. pleaded their case, insisting it was only one loudmouthed 'Buckwheat' who disturbed the peace and instigated all the other 'Buckwheats' and 'Not yet.' An interim agreement was instituted and Madam Bigmouth Buckwheat was enjoyed for supper.

Not long after, another 'Buckwheat' determined to come to power, getting up on the feeding trough like a politician and rousing the others with her loud speeches until her followers, with no means with which to clap, shrieked their approval of her promised policies.

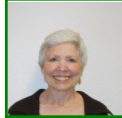
Her reign was short. M. put his foot down. The guineas had one last bountiful meal before finding their final resting place in the freezer.

Even now, faintly, sometimes K. hears, "Buckwheat! Buckwheat! Not yet! Not yet!" while in the vicinity of their freezer. But nowadays, she only places a gentle hand on the lid and smiles.



Photos by: Terrell Aronspeer

MEMBER BIOGRAPHY



The Journey to a Horticultural Life – to Become a Master Gardener

NAME: Joan Morgan

LOCATION: Quitman, TX

FAMILY: My Mom and Dad grew up and were married during Depression days, so their lives were more about survival and feeding 4 growing children. My Dad actually worked for a nursery near our home for several years, and went from that job to basically truck farming. I in the age of limited electricity and outdoor facilities. Yes, I know, too much information, but that was my young life growing up on the farm. I have many fond memories of life on the farm. I remember the mammoth black diamond watermelons he grew during those years and how wonderful they tasted. Unfortunately, I was only involved in hoeing and not in the actual growing of the farm products, but I did get to enjoy the food. Mom canned a lot of the vegetables and fruits that were grown and these were kept in our cellar until used. Okay, this lets all know that I am old as I grew up in the age of limited electricity and outdoor facilities. Yes, I know, too much information, but that was my young life growing up on the farm. I have many fond memories of life on the farm. Interesting that as a country, we are again growing our own vegetables and trying to conserve energy.

CURRENT EMPLOYMENT/RETIREMENT AND ANY BACKGROUND YOU

WOULD LIKE TO SHARE: I retired 2 years ago from an insurance claims, underwriting and insurance sales (AFLAC) background. I seem to do things later in life than early, such as learning to ride and riding or driving my own motorcycle (Harley Davidson) at age 50 until age 62.

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Joan Morgan:

I also began riding a horse and going on trail rides with my horse after age 65 and enjoyed most of the ride except for being displaced (bucked off) a couple of times. I have survived both of those ventures, and now merely take care of my horse and 10 other horses for a friend and neighbor. So I have a varied daily schedule with yard work, horse care including trips to the vet and involvement with Wood County Master Gardeners. I have enjoyed growing stuff for years, and have taken several courses related to plants and bed design through Neal Sperry over the years.

WHEN AND WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO JOIN THE MASTER GARDENERS:

I took the Master Gardeners course in 2009 thinking that I would instantly know all things about plants and growing plants. Well, certainly you can only cram so much knowledge in 4 short months, but I did learn that it will take me years to even scratch the surface. However, the class and follow up volunteer work has exposed me to many folks who are very knowledgeable and willing to share their knowledge. What a network of fine folks.

CHILDHOOD PLANT EXPERIENCES WITH GARDENS (OR NOT): I had some exposure to gardens in my early years, but my interest in gardening did not surface until many years later.

GARDEN MENTORS: (none provided)

CURRENT GARDEN INTERESTS/GOALS/DREAMS: I continue to enjoy growing things, or trying to grow things, and much prefer being outside in the fresh air. I would love to convert our front yard into gardens, but unfortunately, my husband can only enjoy grass. Of course, we have very little grass in the front yard, even after years of fertilizing, mowing, watering and cussing the moles, etc. I hope to try either centipede grass or buffalo grass in one more effort to salvage the front area, so I will let you know later if my efforts pay off.

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Joan Morgan:

FAVORITE GARDEN/ARBORETUM/LOCATION: Dallas Arboretum is my favorite, but I enjoyed the Biltmore Gardens also. I have several on my list of must see gardens.

FAVORITE PLANTS/SHRUBS/TREES: I love my Oak leaf Hydrangea plants more than any one other plant. I am not sure why I never used them before moving to east Texas.

LEAST FAVORITE PLANTS/SHRUBS/TREES: Least favorite tree must be the pine tree as it is a mess 24/7 and then they fall over at the most inopportune times. A cedar tree near the house is not my favorite, but it is okay outside the yard, as I love the smell. I love the sweet gum tree for its foliage, but hate the nasty sweet gum balls dropped in and around my yard.

FAVORITE BENEFICIAL CRITTERS: Gecko and Ladybugs take the top of the critter list.

Other Hobbies: I love to read fiction on my kindle and spend many long hours doing so on the back porch. We have several (I won't report how many) dogs and 3 cats, but I guess those wouldn't be considered a hobby, as they can be a chore at times.

Pictures You Would Like To Share: (none provided)

facebook

If anyone is interested in finding our page, all you have to do is go on facebook, search for **Wood County Master Gardeners, Inc.** You should find 3 pages to choose from, 1. is a blank site that has been removed, 2. is Wood County Master Gardeners from Kentucky and 3. Wood County Master Gardeners, Quitman. Then "like" the page and it will be listed on your profile. In case you don't find it, I am listed as Peggy Smith Rogers and I'll be glad to be your friend. Happy facebook-ing! *Peggy Rogers*

MEMBER BIOGRAPHY



The Journey to a Horticultural Life – to Become a Master Gardener

NAME: Ann Norris

LOCATION: Quitman, TX

FAMILY: Husband Jeff

CURRENT EMPLOYMENT/RETIREMENT AND ANY BACKGROUND YOU

WOULD LIKE TO SHARE: I owned/operated a wedding design business.

We made custom wedding gowns and formal wear, rented tuxedos, dyed satin shoes, sold matching jewelry, headpieces, formal invitations etc. I retired in 2001 and hit the roads of the USA for 9 years. We lived full-time in our RV till 2010 when we built our final home on our pecan orchard 9 miles north of Quitman.

WHEN AND WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO JOIN THE MASTER GARDENERS:

I have always had a love for flowers (passed on from my grandmothers). I lived in Midlothian, TX for 28 yrs. (Cement Capitol of the World) where we had to rent a jackhammer to plant trees. When we moved to East Texas I thought I'd died and gone to Heaven. I joined Master Gardeners in 2008 to meet other garden lovers and learn more about successful gardening. It worked! Lifetime friends were made and my gardens are much healthier with less work.

Childhood plant experiences with gardens (or not) My grand mother always let me help her plant seeds in the spring. She planted snap dragons, zinnias, and petunias.

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Ann Norris

We always had fresh flowers to decorate my “mud pies”.

GARDEN MENTORS My mom and dad (farmers from many generations of farmers).

CURRENT GARDEN INTERESTS/GOALS/DREAMS: I now have 97 acres to work. There's always too much to do. But, I've learned to drive a tractor and use all the equipment that goes along with that. I had plans for landscaping the whole place >>>> but I won't live to see that. After establishing a bed it usually takes about three years before it is relatively maintenance easy. There's just ONE of me and LOTS of plants that are dependent on my care.

FAVORITE GARDEN/ARBORETUM/LOCATION:

FAVORITE PLANTS/SHRUBS/TREES: Any tree, shrub or plant that has pink blooms. Pink blooms? Hmmm...Roses, Indian Hawthorne, Honey-suckle Petunias, clematis, Crepe Myrtle, Mimosa

LEAST FAVORITE PLANTS SHRUBS/TREES: WEEDS! Locust Trees

FAVORITE BENEFICIAL CRITTERS: All those that break down all the mulch I use.

OTHER HOBBIES: Playing music and singing with my autoharp, sewing decorative items, flower arranging, refinishing old furniture, reading, writing, cooking and entertaining in my home.

PICTURES YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE: (none provided)

Wood County Master Gardeners' History

2003 - 2011

Compiled by: Peggy Rogers**

Part I

Texas Cooperative Extension Agent, Jerry Jackson, Wood County, Quitman TX began the first Master Gardening Trainee Class in January 2003. The 13 members of the class were Shirley Bates, Donna Clark, Judy Doolley*, Betty Groepper, Sally Houk*, Jessie Johnson, Johnny Johnson, Linda Long*, Norma Monday, Willie Kay Paradez*, Linda Timmons*, Lea Tryon and Cecil Wallace*. This class met mostly on Wednesdays for 3 hours in the morning with an hour for lunch and 3 hours after lunch. For homework each week, these trainees created seven informational papers suitable to be published as articles in the local newspapers. These articles were a requirement to graduate. This class was not allowed to start their volunteer hours until all class room hours were completed. Graduation of 2003 class was held at Oak Ridge Marina on April 17, 2003

From an agenda of April 10, 2003, officers were Betty Groepper-President, Johnny Johnson-Vice President, Secretary-Donna Clark and Treasurer was Linda Timmons. This was a breakfast meeting at 7:30a.m. Ranchero Buffet, Mineola TX. Shirley Bates served as Historian/Scrapbook. In May, Donna resigned as secretary and Sally Houk took the position. In October, Sally resigned as secretary and Jesse Johnson became secretary. Johnny resigned as Vice President and Cecil Wallace took the position.

The newly-formed Wood County Master Gardeners chose as its first project to work with the Special Education Department of Quitman High School. They helped students prepare plants to take home and care for over the summer. (Wood County Democrat, June 18, 2003)

Another project for volunteer hours, was going to the 4H summer Camp, giving 24 kids classes on why birds are important to our environment, attracting birds, identifying birds and instructing the 4H'ers on making a bird feeder. Master Gardeners contributed out of their pocket to fund this project. Other projects were Wood County Courthouse Landscape, Mineola Sabine Nature Project,

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WCMG HISTORY

a Master Gardener brochure, and some repair of the Quitman Special Ed greenhouse.

The interns also worked on a brochure to use as a handout at local fairs. They volunteered by serving breakfast at the Ag Tour, setting up booths at the Hawkins Oil Festival, two different weeks of Hwy 80 garage sale, Golden Sweet Potato Festival, Winnsboro Trade Days Swap Meet and the Old Settler's Reunion; not only to count towards their 50 mandatory hours but to make the Wood County Master Gardener Association visible and known in the area and to earn money for the Association. Plans were made for the first annual gardening conference to be held in 2004 in Winnsboro. They began planning for a 2004 Trainee Class.

On the first day, the 2003 class selected the name "Lake Country Master Gardeners". Finding the name to be confusing when they attended State and other county functions, the name was changed to "Wood County Master Gardeners Association" and incorporated on June 23, 2003. Before the end of 2003, this enthusiastic group of new Master Gardeners had submitted all the tax papers and had become a 501(C) (3) corporation.

On August 14, 2003, the By-Laws, as amended and distributed at the June 12th meeting and mailed to all members not present, were adopted. Incorporating officers elected to complete the 2003 calendar year were Betty Groepper-President, Johnny Johnson-Vice President, Sally Houk-Secretary and Linda Timmons as Treasurer. Standing Rules were adopted. These same officers were also elected to serve for the 2004 year.

Janet Starr joined the Wood County Master Gardeners Association in November 2003 as a transfer from Denton County, being the first additional member and the first transferee.

*** current members**

****Thank you to Clint Perkins – AgriLife Extension, Linda Timmons, Eileen Bartlett, Pam Riley, Billie Wilder and Judy Dooley for their time of looking through their personal records for information and to all of the MG's that I inundated with emails looking for information. Additional information was taken from records in AgriLife Ext office, scrapbooks, newsletters and minutes.**

Wood County Master Gardener Projects

2012

<u>Project</u>	<u>Chair</u>	<u>Email</u>
Hawkins Helping Hands	Lucy Germany	lgermany@etex.net
Junior Master Gardeners	Linda Avant	linavant@peoplescom.net
Mineola Nature Preserve Sensory Garden	Peggy Rogers	peggyrogersc21@gmail.com
Mineola Nature Preserve Wildscape	Joan Morgan	cdmorgan@peoplescom.net
Quitman Arboretum & Botanical Garden	Pam Riley	pam_riley2003@yahoo.com
Quitman Library	Linda Cowan	ladypeanut1255@yahoo.com
Quitman Special Ed Greenhouse	Fran McKinney	mckfran@gmail.com
	Clyde McKinney	mckclyde@gmail.com
Winnsboro Depot	Jerrie Sutphin	granfarm@peoplescom.net
	Sandra Patrick	sppat57@suddenlink.net
Winnsboro Library	Jerrie Sutphin	granfarm@peoplescom.net
	Sandra Patrick	sppat57@suddenlink.net
Winnsboro Morgan mercy Mission	Jerrie Sutphin	granfarm@peoplescom.net
	Sandea Patrick	sppat57@suddenlink.net
Wood Co. Airport Landscape	Connie Amsden	amsdentx@yahoo.com

Wood County Master Gardener Committees

<u>Committee</u>	<u>Chair</u>	<u>EMAIL</u>
Awards	Eileen Bartlett	ebartlet3@yahoo.com
Facebook	Peggy Rogers	peggyrogersc21@gmail.com
Festivals	Willie Kay Paredez	jwkpared@peoplescom.netator
Historian	Peggy Rogers	peggyrogersc21@gmail.com
Intern Class	Gail Newman	travlinnewman@aol.com
WCMG Library	Anita Baker	ldandanita@hughes.net
Newsletter	Sylvia Johnson	mgnewsletter@hotmail.com
Spring Conference	Ellen Atkins	ellen.atkins@hotmail.com
Sunshine		
Volunteer Hours Coordinator (Hrs/CEUs)	Ellen Atkins	ellen.atkins@hotmail.com
Website	Bart Bartlett	bbartlett@peoplescom.net
Website E-mail	Ruth Allen	ruth_allen1@msn.com
	Lynette Irizarry	platinumfish@msn.com

STOP THE PRESS!



Apr. 24: Graduation! We welcome our new members.

For members needing Continuing Education, go to TMGA website, click Training, click Training Opportunities, click Earth-Kind and follow instructions. You may pick 3 of the subjects in any one year and complete an on line questionnaire for 1 CEU each. Certification will be sent to Clint. What a great way to get CEU's completed. Try it. I know some of you are having a hard time attending Continuing Education classes and this should help you. Happy on line education~

Peggy Rogers

Texas Master Gardener Conference, San Antonio, May 3-5th