



## President's Message:



Hi, Everyone.

Can you believe it's almost the end of a year?

I want to encourage you to get out and attend the WCMG Association Christmas Luncheon on December 17th, starting at 10:30 am. The luncheon will be held at St. Dunstan's Episcopal Church, located at 800 N. Johnson St. in Mineola. If you missed signing up

for the food list at the November meeting, contact Melissa Deakins. She can help you decide on a dish to bring. There will be time to visit and look at the 8 beautiful Christmas themed table decorations. Thank you to those who volunteered to create them.

At 11:00 am, Clint will present the program which will include installing the 2016 slate of officers for the WCMG Association. Also, he will introduce the 2015 award winners for the WCMG Association. Come and enjoy the great food, conversation, and

fun.

As the new year approaches so do the 2016 Intern Classes. Plan on attending some of the classes to get CEU's and to brush up on forgotten information and maybe learn some new. This will be a great time to meet our new potential members, to get to know them and help them get acquainted with the association. We have a great group of intern class leaders this year and we need to support them.

[\(click here for full story\)](#)

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## VP- Winding Up the Year

At the **November 19th** meeting of The Wood County Master Gardeners the local club awards will be announced and presented to those deserving hardworking members who have

gone above and beyond the requirements for sustaining membership. Some of these awards will then be written up and submitted to the State Awards committee for considera-

tion. We want everyone in the State to know the variety of involvement members participate in, and what a good job we are doing in our county.

[\(click here\)](#)

### Online with WCMG: [Click here](#)

- Website
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- Sunshine
- Volunteer Hours
- Contact info

MG WOOD WORKS

TEXAS A&M  
AGRI LIFE  
EXTENSION

**President:**

Be prepared to volunteer to help in a position or on a project if you are asked in the coming year. Your new officers will need help with filling the committees and keeping the projects looking beautiful. There will be the MNP 2016 Spring Fling. Karen will need lots of assistance.

It has been an exciting year and I have enjoyed serving with you so that we could fulfill our mission of providing horticultural information to the county. I want to thank the Executive Officers who served with me - Melissa Deakins, Jenna Nelson, and Katie Carter - thank you for all your time, input, creativity, and patience.

I wish you all a blessed year.

Sandra McFall

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**VP: December Schedule...**

On **December 17**, the members will gather at Saint Dunstan's Episcopal Church 800 North Johnson Street in Mineola for lunch and fellowship at 11:00 am. The fellowship hall is a lovely place to meet and some of our very creative members will be decorating the tables. Members are ask to bringing a casserole, a salad, or a dessert to share; drinks will be provided. As we will not have a "main meat" dish, please contact me as I am coordinating the menu in hopes of having a great variety of foods.

New officers will be installed and there will be holiday entertainment. Bring a spouse or a guest and celebrate the end of another good year for the Wood County Master Gardeners.

Melissa Deakins

VP-Programs

**2016 Slate of Officer Nominees are:**

**President:** Linda Timmons

**VP:** ??? (Open at publishing time)

**Treasurer:** Molly Mathis

**Secretary:** Jan Whitlock

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## **Agent Article: Sweet Potatoes - A Near Perfect Food**

The sweet potato should be more than a holiday treat, it should be a part of a year round nutritional program because of its nutritional qualities. It has yellow or orange flesh, and its thin skin may either be white, yellow, orange, red or purple. Sometimes this root vegetable will be shaped like a potato, being short and blocky with rounded ends, while other times it will be longer with tapered ends. There is often much confusion between sweet potatoes and yams; the moist-fleshed, orange-colored root vegetable that is often called a "yam" is actually a sweet potato.

Sweet potatoes are very good for your health. Not only do they taste like dessert, they possess antioxidant effects and are considered an antidiabetic food. Recent studies have shown sweet potatoes to contain some unique root storage proteins that have been observed to have significant antioxidant capacities. These proteins had about one-third the antioxidant activity of glutathione-one of the body's most impressive internally produced antioxidants. More studies are needed to further prove the sweet potatoes claim to being the "near perfect" vegetable

According to the George Mateljan Foundation, a non-profit organization, the sweet potato has been recently classified as an "antidiabetic" food. Sweet potatoes have been given this label because of some recent animal studies in which sweet potato helped stabilize blood sugar levels and lowered insulin resistance. (Insulin resistance is a problem caused when cells don't respond to the hormone insulin, which is supposed to act as a key and unlock the cell in order to allow sugar to pass from the blood into the cell). Some of its blood sugar regulatory properties may come from the fact that sweet potatoes are concentrated in carotenoids. Research has suggested that physiological levels, as well as dietary intake, of carotenoids may be inversely associated with insulin resistance and high blood sugar levels. Once again, more research is needed in this area, but the stage is set for sweet potatoes to show unique healing properties in the area of blood sugar control. The numbers for the nutritional sweet potato speak for themselves: almost twice the recommended daily allowance of vitamin A, 42 percent of the recommendation for vitamin C, four times the RDA for beta carotene, and, when eaten with the skin, sweet potatoes have more fiber than oatmeal. All these benefits with only about 130 to 160 calories!

Here are the facts on sweet potatoes (for one medium size sweet potato) from the USDA:

Calories -130	Fat -0.39 g
Protein- 2.15 g	Net Carbs -31.56 g
Dietary Fiber -3.9 g	Calcium -28.6 mg
Sodium -16.9 mg	Potassium -265.2
Folate -18.2 mcg	Vitamin C -29.51 mg
Vitamin A -26081.9 IU	

[\(continued on next page\)](#)



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Wood County Extension Agent,

Clint Perkins

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\*Extension programs serve people of all ages regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, religion, disability or national origin.

Among root vegetables, sweet potatoes offer the lowest glycemic index rating. That's because the sweet potato digests slowly, causing a gradual rise in blood sugar so you feel satisfied longer. It's time to move sweet potatoes to the "good" carb list.

Happy Gardening

Clint Perkins

## How to Cook Sweet Potatoes

**Baked:** Rub a little fat or oil over clean and dry sweet potatoes of uniform size. Place on baking sheet and bake at 400 degrees F. until soft, 30 to 50 minutes, depending on size. Sweet potatoes that are greased before baking peel easily.

**Boiled:** Place clean sweet potatoes into enough boiling water to cover them. Cover pan and return water to boiling as quickly as possible. Lower heat and cook until tender. Drain at once. Peel and season with butter and salt to taste. Use 1 medium sweet potato per person. Boiled sweet potatoes can be used for pies, cookies, casseroles, glazed, candied or frozen.

**Deep Fat French Fried Sweet Potatoes:** Pare and cut into length-wise strips, about 1/2 inch thick. Heat oil in fryer to 365 degrees F. Keep fry basket in fat as it heats.

Raise basket and add enough sweet potato strips to cover bottom of basket. Lower basket slowly into hot fat. If fat bubbles much, lift and lower basket until bubbling subsides. Fry until sweet potato strips are brown and tender. Remove from hot oil and drain onto paper towels. Sprinkle with salt, if desired. Spread sweet potatoes on baking sheet and place in a warm oven while others are being cooked.

**Charcoal Broiled Sweet Potatoes:** Rub a little fat over clean sweet potato skins. Wrap double foil loosely around sweet potatoes. Cook in coals for about 45 minutes. Keep warm on edge of grill.

**Skillet Sweet Potatoes:** In large deep skillet, heat 1 1/2 inch deep vegetable oil to 365 degrees F. Add sweet potato strips to cover bottom of skillet; fry 5 minutes or until brown and tender. Remove from hot oil and drain on paper towels. Sprinkle with salt or powdered sugar.



**Microwave Sweet Potatoes:** For best results, choose uniform size sweet potatoes. Pierce washed sweet potatoes with a fork. Place on paper towel on shelf of microwave oven 1 inch apart. Turn sweet potatoes over and rearrange after half of cooking time. Cook on HIGH power level. Cooking time will vary, depending on the number of sweet potatoes.

Sweet Potatoes	1	2	3	4
Minutes	4 to 6	6 to 8	8 to 12	12 to 16

Sweet potatoes may still feel firm when done. Let stand 5 minutes to soften.

*Hope you enjoy these recipes. I love sweet potatoes and find olive oil instead of butter lets the real sweet taste of the potato shine. For more recipes go to:*

<http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/archives/parsons/vegetables/sweetpotato.html>

Sylvia Johnson

Photos from Pixabay

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## Mineola Nature Preserve: **Wildscape and Sensory Educational Gardens**



Blue and White Salvia

The Wildscape Gardens have survived another strange weather year. It took a while for everything to bloom with the cooler weather and excess rain during the spring. But when they did it was fabulous and the colors were magnificent. The grasses we acquired from SFA have grown tall and wispy and are beautiful when the wind blows. The bees were so thick on the Salvia it sounded like helicopters hovering over head.



Star Esparanza and Blue Grass

We have cleared out the bed under the tree and it is ready to be re-planted with semi-shade plants since our tree has grown so much this past year. The Gardens received a small grant to help establish a Monarch Waystation and that area is almost ready for landscaping.

In September the annual Wood County Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Office tour stopped at the Preserve for lunch and a tour of the gardens and the Rainwater Collection System Demonstration Area. The Kacey Musgraves concert at the Preserve was a success with approximately 4,000 people attending. Hopefully some of those visitors made it to the garden area and toured the Preserve to view our natural setting.

The committee is starting to work on the “Spring Fling” program to be presented April 23, 2016 at the Pavilion. So watch for more information on that in the coming months. Make plans now to become involved with our “Fling” as we will need volunteers for many varied projects. It is always a blast to enjoy each other’s company while educating the public and each other! More information and details for fun opportunities will be disseminated at the monthly Association meetings next year.

A heartfelt Thank You to the volunteers who have suffered thru the heat this year trying to keep ahead of the weeds, watering the plants and helping keep me on the right track. Also to the young people who were scheduled to help us for three days but two of them got rained out. They made up for it on that third day and we really appreciated their help. Oh to be so young and limber again.

Karen Anderson

Photos by Karen



Butterfly Weed/Lantana-MNP

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## INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE PICKETT FENCE

### QUITMAN ARBORETUM AND BOTANICAL GARDEN



Sometimes we planters of plants, semi-warriors wonder if it is time to trade in the retire to the back porch with a beverage of

Then, out of the blue, a glimmer of hope appears. Then, out of the blue, a glimmer of hope appears, truck-loads of mulch are spread, willing volunteers appear on the horizon, and

professional groundskeepers and fire ant garden gloves for a box of bonbons and choice.

pears. Blisters and bites are forgotten and Bermuda grass and nut sedge are in retreat, all is well again.

The Arboretum and Stinson House have weathered another “interesting” Texas summer. Our trusty irrigation system has been tested to the limit. Many thanks to those seasoned Master Gardeners who selected plants that would thrive during a wet spring and a long dry summer. The Water-wise Garden reminds me of the Zilker Park Gardens in Austin, Texas; drought resistant and tough as nails. If you number yourself among those Master Gardener Interns who installed this garden, under the supervision of Lin Grado, stop by and pat yourself on the back for a job well done. This is an affirmation of the right plant in the right location. Now, I will say, some of your plants could use a bit of care every now and then so feel free to stop by and renew your friendship with these plants who give so much joy and ask so little in return.

Local armadillos have had many a hoedown in the rose beds and surrounding lawns this summer. A number of roses have thrived, even under this abuse, and some will need to be replaced in the near future.

New plans are being drawn up for parts of the Sensory (fountain) Garden. The Wood County chapter of the 4-H recently planted a bur oak there to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Texas Forestry Service.

The Butterfly Gardens are always interesting and do put on quite a show of form and color during September and October.

On a financial note, we are pleased to announce the yard sale and the fall plant sale were both very successful fundraisers. We want to thank all of you who donated, shopped, participated in and cleaned up after these events.

Quitman Boy Scout Troop # 36, along with a car-full of Scouts from Tyler, recently helped the Friends of the Arboretum spread 4 truck-loads of mulch. Four hours of hard work in dust filled air ended with a great lunch and a BIG “Thank You” for a job well done. Once again, many thanks to those who came out that day to assist in this daunting task.

On Saturday, November 14th, Ann Norris will be conducting a Wreath Making class in the garden that will utilize natural materials. Space is limited and Pam Riley is accepting reservations now (903-466-4327).

December already has a number of bookings for holiday gatherings at the Stinson House. Be sure and join us at the House on the evening of December 15th for the annual Stinson Open House. Good company, good food and good music will combine to make this an enjoyable evening.

Jan Whitlock

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## HARWOOD PROPAGATION

As winter approaches here in Texas, our gardens become dormant and growth slows down – even appears to stop. At this time, though, we gardeners need not be dormant. There are plants that can be propagated even in winter; rhododendrons, camellias, azaleas and most other broad leaf evergreens as well as many shrubs (including forsythia), deciduous trees and climbers (honeysuckle, wisteria, grapes). This method of propagation is from cuttings of the mother plant. In essence, you are cloning the plant. A method which is very beneficial when you find a hybrid you love and just have to have another one. Seed propagation from hybrids do not match the mother plant - so cuttings are the way to go.

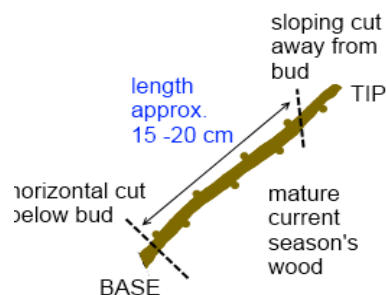
Propagating plants is also an effective and inexpensive way to build your (and friends) gardens and landscape. You can start with one favored plant and usually provide for your needs as well as have plants to share.

Correct timing, moisture, exposure and rooting medium will be the key factors in having success with cuttings. Assemble all the tools and materials you will need in advance of taking the cuttings. Have the pots, planting medium and water ready if stowing in pots. If planting in a bed, have the bed (in dabbled shade) prepared. Also, wipe your knife/bypass pruners between cuts in a solution of 10% bleach or rubbing alcohol and be sure to wear gloves as many plants are unexpectedly poisonous.

Take the hardwood cuttings from dormant, mature stems in late fall, when the deciduous plant has dropped its leaves or in early winter for evergreens. Always take cuttings from a mature section of this current year's growth before the buds begin to swell. Hardwood cuttings from shrubs or evergreens should come from upright growing stems at the center, or from stems that are nearest to the ground rather than higher on the shrub. Cut the entire stem from the mother plant. You will get multiple plants from one steam. Keep basic pruning procedures in mind as you cut away the stems. Don't ruin the appearance of the mother plant.

Evergreen cuttings require more moisture than deciduous plants and will be covered in another article. For deciduous plants, use wood of moderate size, 1/4" to 2" depending on type of plant, and in good condition. Take cuttings preferably in the morning while the stem is full of water. Cuttings from the base of the stem are best. This is where the highest concentration of carbohydrates are stored.

Take a stem and cut just below a node (1/4") in a clean horizontal cut without splintering. Next, measure 6-10" up from horizontal cut making sure to have at least 2 nodes total on the section. Cut 1" above the top node on a diagonal. The diagonal cut sheds water away and helps to keep disease and insects away from the cutting. You may take as many cuttings from each steam as possible but avoid using flimsy wood near the tips.



The stem cutting may be wounded to help promote roots. Remove an inch-long slender strip of bark from the base of the cutting, exposing the cambium. This helps promote root development. Place cuttings in water or wrap with moist paper towels for a couple hours to harden the cutting.

After the hardening, dip cutting base (horizontal cut) into a rooting compound covering the base node and wounded area. Tap off excess if using powder. Place horizontal cut end into soil 2 to 3 inches deep and 2 inches apart. Pack soil around base of cutting firmly. Water well and keep moist at all times, but don't overwater. Planting in pots you may have 4 to 6 cuttings in one pot.

The freezing weather will not hurt your hardwood cuttings. For the most part they'll remain dormant until spring comes, and then they'll develop roots at the same time they produce leaves. If planting in pots, you may speed up the formation of roots by placing the containers in a cold frame or greenhouse.

Pot well rooted cuttings into good compost. One recommendation is a mixture of 50% each of peat moss and coarse sand. Cuttings should be placed into small pots to establish a good root system before transferring them into a larger pot or your garden.

Katie Carter

Photos by: <http://deepgreenpermaculture.com>



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## **People are like Potatoes** --Unknown

Some people never seem motivated to participate, but are content to watch others do.

They are called "Speck Tators".

Some people never do anything to help, but are gifted at finding fault with the way others do things.

They're called "Comment Tators".

Some are always looking to cause problems and really get under your skin.

They are called "Aggie Tators".

There are those who are always saying they will, but somehow, they never get around to doing.

We call them "Hezzie Tators".

Some people put on a front and act like someone else.

They are called "Emma Tators".

Then, there are those who walk what they talk. They're always prepared to stop what they're doing to lend a hand to others and bring real sunshine into the lives of others.

You can call them "Sweet Tators".

*I found this poem handwritten on a piece of paper in an very old book at a yard sale. Sylvia*



## Tools in the Garden

Of course I could write the usual article your garden hand tools for winter storage water tanks and birdbaths around the foam “bras” that need to go over your freezing this year. I could expound up-mowers and other machines before storing all your good garden hoses, drip so far as to remind you to oil and wax keep them from rusting during our spell out how to spend the winter sand-



Clip art

about cleaning, oiling, and repairing age. I could write about draining the house. I could mention those little outside faucets to keep them from on draining the gas out of your lawn age. I could expand on draining and lines and sprinklers. Heck, I could go your shears, snips, hoes and shovels to freeze/thaw type of winters. I could ing and re-varnishing your wood handled tools to cut down on next springs bout of blisters. But, since I know all good gardeners already know all that, and in reality we will all do some of that, I will not mention those things this Fall edition.

Instead I will tell you about how to use one of your extra office supplies for gardening this winter. Office Supplies?, you may ask. Yes, and here is one of my favorite tricks.

I live on a wooded piece of land that had a gazillion vines of various types growing up into the trees. While these vines made a great canopy overhead and brought shade they were also killing the trees. After several years of trying to at least control the monsters I found that (a) cutting them just brought more vines the next year, (b) burning them- ditto, (c) regular herbicides did not work on the really tough varieties. What to do? One day I was riding AMTRAK and thought to myself, “I wonder what the railroads use to kill all the vegetation along the rails?” I did some research and found a very strong herbicide that will kill ANYTHING! And I do mean ANYTHING! What to do? Spraying did not work because anything that it touched died. Pouring it on the vine killed the tree next to it because it soaked into the tree roots same with the flowers in my flower bed.

Then I had a great idea that worked and I still use today. I went into the house got the little plastic bottle with the foam stopper that is sold as an “envelope moistener”. Instead of filling it with water I filled it with the herbicide. Then I carefully cut the vine a few



Phot of root: Sylvia

inches from the ground and “painted” the vine stub using my new “garden tool”. It worked as the herbicide was taken up through the plant stem and it actually killed the massive roots! This is a great thing to do in the late fall when you can see the still green vine



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leaves on the sleeping trees, there isn’t much rain to wash off the herbicide and you need exercise! Yes, this is slow and my knees only let me do a small area a day, but I have finally gotten the thorny vines out of my trees and out of my pathways and out of my hair.

Since having this great result, I have discovered many uses for this little gizmo. If you put milk in one you can get right at the downy mildew on your squash. If you put a light mix of garlic and water in one you can “paint” the flowers the squirrels love to eat. And of course, during the winter if you do go back to the tool winterizing chores, you can put oil or wax in one and “paint” your tools with a fine even coating.

What have you repurposed? Sylvia

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# COLLECTING RAINWATER

## IS IT WORTH IT?

I would have to say “Yes it is” and I speak from experience. My husband has always been frugal about our water usage but after I took the TMGA Rainwater Harvesting Specialist training classes he has really taken the bull by the horns.



Over a year's time he installed 42 blue food barrels around our double-wide mobile home, across the back of the carport and on one end of our storage building. With all the rain we had this spring we collected over 2,300 gallons of rain water. It was difficult to convince people to set up a collection system during this time period. Then the rain stopped in late May and the drought began again. We used water from these barrels for our flower gardens, rose beds and the vegetable garden thru most of the summer. Our water bill during this period was the minimum of



\$17.50. Starting the last of August we had to supplement our supply using the county water system and our last 2 bills have been \$87 and \$56. So it does make a difference.

The initial set up is not expensive and it lets people experiment and use their imagination for saving water and money. The items needed are a food type 55 gallon drum or barrel, a six inch plastic flower pot and window screening for your filter system, a 3/4" faucet, some PVC pipe and cinder blocks or something to place under the barrel for height. A collection system can be this simple or more complicated with large storage tanks. Numerous barrels can be attached together with PVC pipe for more storage.

The State of Texas has passed numerous bills over the years to encourage Texans to save our precious water supply by capturing rainwater for home and business use. Tax Code Section 151.355 gives a sales tax exemption for establishing a Rainwater Harvesting system including rain barrels, tanks and cisterns, gutter used solely to route the water into rain barrels or rainwater collection system, screens and filters for the gutters, barrels, tanks, cisterns and roof washers. If they don't have a faucet on them, they are just a barrel and do not meet the criterion that states: “An exemption applies to equipment, supplies and/or services used “solely” for certain types of water conservation. “A barrel could be used for anything....add the faucet and it's a rain barrel”.

There are numerous websites that have tanks for sale or information on how to set up a collection system, but Texas A&M's is the best. We Wood County Master Gardeners have a working Rain Water Harvesting Demonstration Station at the Mineola Nature Preserve where we hold educational and hands-on seminars several times each year. Please read our Newsletter or contact the Wood County AgriLife Agent for advance notice of when these seminars and demonstrations will be held. We also can provide trained Texas Master Rain Water Harvesting Specialists to lecture for groups and classes.



So give it a try and you will be surprised how much water you can collect from a one inch rain and how happy it makes your plants and your wallet.

Web site for information about the sales tax exemption is: <http://www.window.state.tx.us/taxinfo/tarpnw/tpn2012/tpn1206.html>.

Web site for information from Texas A&M about Rainwater Harvesting is: [Tamu.edu/Rainwater Harvesting](http://Tamu.edu/Rainwater_Harvesting)

Article and Photos: Karen Anderson

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## Dealing in Dirt

### Don't pay someone to haul off your waste! Compost!

We all like the idea of getting something free and this can be possible if we compost. As Master Gardeners, most of us have all the components for making compost. It's in our yards, gardens, kitchens, barnyards and maybe our friends and neighbors have some that they don't want and will be glad to give to you. That's right, it's called waste. But don't waste it. Use it to make that free stuff that will improve your soil, save you time and money, and label you as a recycler. You say how does it do all that?

By composting you turn the free organic matter into a useable soil amendment that loosens tight clay soil and improves the water-holding capabilities of sandy soils. Binding soil particles also helps improve aeration, root penetration, and water infiltration while reducing the crusting of the soil surface. It also adds nutrients with the fertilizer. You may still need to, however, add additional fertilizer to obtain the best growth and yield of the plants. Composting is the best mulching material. It holds moisture, prevents weed growth, prevents splashing, and cools the soil during the summer. At the end of the growing season, till it into the soil for added organic material. It can be used for potting mix for seedlings and as part of a growing medium for houseplants. So you have made good organic soil from waste, saved money by mulching and by not having to pay to have the waste hauled off, and saved time from weeding and watering. Not a bad deal for a little effort. Oh, did I forget to mention that this entire compost making is great exercise. And don't forget, you now have a label. You are a recycler.

Compost is a mixture of partially decomposed organic matters, called greens and browns. By mixing them together, keeping them damp, and turning the pile at regular intervals for aeration, you will have black gold. Officially it's called humus and it should be dark, easily crumbled, and have an earthy aroma. This occurs after microorganisms decompose the organic materials; their body heat causes the temperature in the pile to rise to 110-140 degrees in 4-5 days. The pile will settle and sometimes you will actually see the pile give off smoke. If the pile heats up as it should this will kill most weed seeds and disease organisms. But to be on the safe side (as I found out the hard way); don't put diseased plants in the pile or weeds with seeds. Adding nitrogen is beneficial to the breakdown of the organic material by the organisms which is necessary for rapid decomposition. This nitrogen will be released for your plant use after decomposition is complete. So now you have compost.

### What Can I Compost?

The best compost "recipe" is a combination of carbon-rich **brown** materials; dry leaves, plant stalks, pine needles, small twigs, wood shavings, shredded paper, hay, dryer lint, nutshells, straw, and many more to choose from. Nitrogen rich **green** materials include coffee grounds with filters, tea bags, eggshells, fish waste, fruits, grains, grass clippings, hair, manure, vegetable scraps, weeds, and fertilizer. Try to add about three times as many brown materials as green materials. Do not compost meat, bones, animal waste (dog, cat, or bird), dairy products, diseased plants, seeded weeds, plants treated with herbicides or pesticides or any inorganic material.

There is something called the Carbon to Nitrogen ratio that is the ideal ratio for carbon and nitrogen in a compost pile. Don't get caught up in the numbers. Remember, what is important to understand is how greens and browns affect the compost process. Carbon is the spark that starts the composting process and nitrogen fuels the microorganisms that decompose materials. It is usually based on the percent dry weight of carbon and nitrogen in the material. A ratio of about 30:1 is ideal for the activity of the microbes in the compost. You will need a chart to refer to which may be obtained at the county extension office (referred to as the ideal (C-

N=30:1). Math class is over. Like I already said, don't stress over the numbers. Remember more brown than green.

### How to build the pile and care for it

Put the pile in a convenient area that water doesn't stand, that has good air circulation, is shaded, and is easy to work in and around. The pile may be started on the ground. Begin with organic materials 6-8 inches deep. If possible, shred your materials for they will decompose faster. If you have damp grass clippings, lay them in layers 2-3 inch thick or mix with some dried material. Between these layers, wet the material, but do not soak it. Next add a layer of manure 1-2 inches deep, or sprinkle a high-nitrogen garden fertilizer. Add a layer of soil or sod about 1 inch deep. This contains microorganisms that help to start the process. Continue to build to about 4 feet or whatever is easy for you to turn frequently. Keep it moist during hot dry weather. If you keep it turned and moist with correct brown to green ratio you will have compost in 3-9 months. You will know it is ready as it will shrink and when you dig into the middle you will find soft dark crumbly soil. Happy gardening.

You should add compost annually if you are using it to improve the soil. The best time to add it to the vegetables or flowers is during fall or spring tilling.

### Composting problems

- If you smell a bad odor from the pile it may be too wet, too tight, or both. Turn it for air circulation and to loosen the soil. If dry materials are available, add these.
- If the pile seems to be just sitting there nothing happening it may be too dry. Water it and turn it.
- The pile is wet enough and the center is warm but not hot - the pile is too small. Add matter to it, turn it, and mix it together. If the pile was not too small and not decomposing add some nitrogen.

There are many helpful websites you can get more information from and there is an article available at the extension office. Hope this helps you grow big beautiful vegetable and flowers.

*(This article has been on-hold for fall. But, oops, the Author's name is not on the article. Please let me know if you wrote this informative article. Editor @: [mgnewsletter@hotmail.com](mailto:mgnewsletter@hotmail.com) )*

For more information on compost please go to: <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/earthkind/landscape/dont-bag-it/>



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*I thought this was a great follow-on article that goes well with last issue's article about leaf burning. Starting in January 2016 we will have a series of articles on WEEDS. To weed or not to weed, or don't have to weed?! What is a weed? That is one of the things I love about gardening, there are a lot of different ways to do or grow just about everything, even weeds. Each garden is as unique as each Gardener. If you have ideas about weeds, share with your fellow gardeners and send me a note.*

*Editor [mgnewsletter@hotmail.com](mailto:mgnewsletter@hotmail.com)*

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## Work Days and Schedules

**Wildscape**—Tuesdays starting around 8:00. Bring your basic gardening tools. We do have larger tools like shovels, rakes, etc. We will work every Tues. unless there is a chance of severe weather or high percentage of rain.

**QA&BG**—Wednesdays at 0900. Bring your own gardening tools. Please come and help us maintain our public garden.

*All are welcome to come out and help. Not a member of WCMG? No problem, we welcome all helpers from the county. Have a few hours to spare, help us keep up your public gardens. Interested in becoming a Master Gardener and contributing to your county? If so, call the Wood County AgriLife Extension office for more information and to sign up for classes which will start in January 2016. Phone: 903-763-2924*

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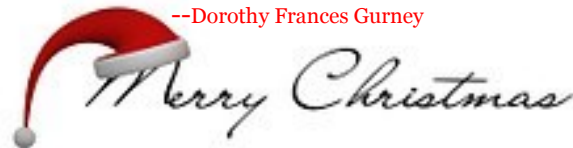
The kiss of the sun for pardon,

The song of the birds for mirth---

One is nearer God's heart in a garden

Than anywhere else on earth.

--Dorothy Frances Gurney



Have you considered giving to Wood County Master Gardeners?  
We are a 501-C-3 non-profit organization that will joyfully receive  
your gift and provide a receipt for you tax records.

Contact Katy Carter, WCMG Treasurer



Clip art



## 2015 Wood County Master Gardeners Officers



**Left to Right**

**Treasurer:** Katy Carter

**Secretary:** Jenna Nelson

**President:** Sandra McFall

**Vice President:** Melissa Deakins

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### Online with WCMG

–**Website** at <http://txmg.org/woodcounty> for up-to-the-minute news and scheduled events, back issues of the newsletter and seasonal videos. Any new content for the web-site can be sent to Keith Zimmerman.

–**Facebook**, search for **Wood County Master Gardeners, Inc.** You should find 3 pages to choose from,

- Page 1 is a blank site that has been removed
- Page 2 is Wood County Master Gardeners / Kentucky
- [Page 3 Wood County Master Gardeners, Quitman](#)
- Then "like" us!

–**CEU—ON LINE:** <http://txmg.org> -look to side of page, click on Training, click on Training Opportunities, click Earth-Kind Training for Master Gardeners, almost to bottom of page you will find Directions. There are 12 subjects, click on arrow in front of subject for video then click on survey or test. You are not graded on the test.

–**Sunshine:** If you know of a member who needs a warm thought or sympathy contact **Joyce Holloway**

–**Volunteer Hours:** <http://texas.volunteersystem.org> Just click on the link and you will see where to enter your password. Before logging in, right click on the page and save to favorites or bookmark or Create Shortcut to you desktop. Thanks for entering your hours. If you need help contact Peggy Rogers.

*Editor-you can find all E-mail address and contact information on the Membership Roster sent to you by E-mail or in the Member Roster on the Volunteer Hours Website site above.*