

“MG Wood Works”

EDITOR: SYLVIA JOHNSON

**2017
ISSUE: #1**



January

Note from the President: Reggie Askins

Peace, Joy and Hope



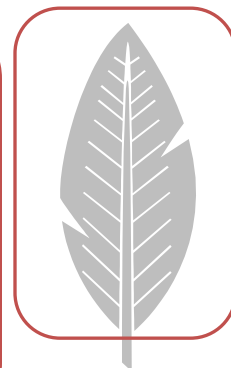
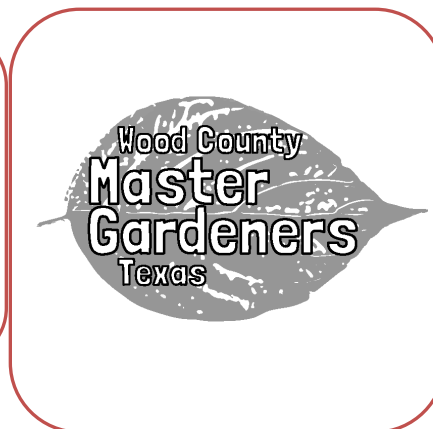
As your President for 2017, for which I am greatly honored, I have been asked, "What is your goal or theme?" Thanks to a Sunday sermon I have an answer; three simple words, Peace, Joy and Hope. First, that your gardening will always give you Peace and satisfaction. With each friendship, fruit or bloom, you will experience Joy. Last is Hope, for a better harvest or if needed a way to fix that plant or friendship. I so look forward to working with all of you in the coming year. There are new things to learn, work to be done and friendships to be made.

Wood County Master Gardeners Association Officers for 2017:

President – Reggie Askins
Vice-President – Melodee Eishen
Secretary – Jan Whitlock
Treasurer – Tracey Snow Murphy



**TEXAS A&M
AGRILIFE
EXTENSION**



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Schedule Note from the Vice President: Melodee Eishen

Our speaker for **January 19th** is Ellen Atkins, giving a demonstration on making mushroom logs. She will be bringing supplies for us to learn to make our own. Please let Ellen or me (Melodee Eishen) know if you plan to attend the January meeting. This demonstration and talk will count for one CU.



At our **February 16th** meeting we will have Tracie Justice demonstrating how to make soap using herbs from our gardens. This demonstration and talk will count for one CU.



2017 MG Training Class Schedule

Date	Subject	Speaker	Hours	Chapter
1/10/17	Botany, Structure, Process	Clint Perkins	3	1
1/17/17	Soil	Clint Perkins	2	2
	Reporting Volunteer Hours	Peggy Rogers	1	
1/24/17	Soil 2	Clint Perkins	2	2
	Project Intro	Project Leaders	1	
1/31/17	Growing Turf/Irrigation	Clint Perkins	3	8
2/7/17	Propagation 1 @	Katie Carter	3	1
2/14/17	Propagation 2 @	Katie Carter	3	1
2/21/17	Entomology	Allen Smith	3	4
2/28/17	IPM	Linda Timmons	3	3
3/7/17	Fruits and Nuts	Tommy Phillips	2	5
	Keyhole & Sq Ft Gardening	Deena Taylor	1	6
3/14/17	Vegetable Farming	Lowell Tanksley	1.5	6
	Herb Gardening	Kathi Ladewig	1.5	6
3/21/17	Trees for the Urban Environment	Daniel Duncam	3	7
3/28/17	Compost-ing/vermicomposting/containers	Holly Ross	3	3
4/4/17	East Texas Plants	Blue Moon Gardens	3	
4/11/17	Rainwater Harvesting	Karen Sanders	1.5	3
	Raised Beds	2016 Class	1.5	6
4/18/17	Landscape Design	Linda Timmons	3	7
4/25/17	Field Trip	Emory	5	
5/9/17	GRADUATION	ST. DUNSTANS		
	TOTAL HOURS		50	
	Time 8:30 -11:30			

If you need a break from the winter blues there is not a better antidote to give yourself than going to WCMG Training Class. The Trainers can always use help. It is always a fun and exciting time where those who are already certified we learn updated material as well as earn those CEUs. Most important you can make new friends. We are all looking forward to the new WCMG Training Class and so it seems are the trainees. Linda received this enthusiastic text and it made all of the class preparation worthwhile:

“Hey All!

Thanks so much for a very upbeat entrée into what sounds like a fascinating trip into all things green and growing! Your obvious love of the program and one another was SO inspiring.

Having always been a nature lover, I am looking forward to learning so much AND THEN.....helping our Wood County community thrive. I had been to the Mineola Nature Center but never knew there was an Arboretum in Quitman or a historic house on site either. WOW!

One of the other thrilling aspects of this program is being part of a great community of creative, energetic, hard-working, dedicated, lovers-of-flora-fauna-and-LIFE! What a great way to create a circle of friends.

Thank you so much for introducing us to your world.

All the best and happy holidays!”Peggy Pepper Wilkinson

If you have questions or comments please contact this year's Training Class Project Leader: [Linda K. Bradley](#)

TMGA Directors Meeting by: Linda Bradley

Peggy met me at my house at 6:30 am. Our first stop, of course, was Whataburger in Mineola. Then off we go. We had a little drizzle on our way but nothing speak of. We love this drive time as we talk the whole way. Nothing is off limits, of course grandkids and great grandkids get most of the airtime. Our next stop was Jack-in-the-Box in Palestine, not a food stop.

We left early this morning on purpose because Peggy had discovered a nursery (Bobo's) in Buffalo that we wanted to visit. Don't know why we never stopped here before as it was definitely worth the stop. Peggy bought a potted jew and I bought an angel leaf begonia (for my sister). The prices were really good. We will be back in February.

Back on the road and our next stop was Cracker Barrel in Bryan, usually we stop at McAllisters but we decided to be different this trip. We finished lunch in time to get Peggy to her executive meeting at 1:30. This was my time to go shopping and I decided to go to Navasota to visit “Martha's Bloomers”. This nursery and Tea Room has become a must stop on our trips to these meetings. I got back to College Station in time to check into our room and take a nap, not used to the early wake up that morning. It was 6:00pm before Peggy arrived at the hotel. She had to visit the bank and update the official Texas Master Gardeners Association (TMGA) accounts as a new signature authority; it took a while.

By this time it was raining pretty hard so we decided to eat at a restaurant in the shopping center next to the hotel. We went to Lupe's Tortilla. This Mexican restaurant was recommended to us by my niece. We ate here for the first time in August and really like it. We did a little more shopping at Barnes and Noble then back to the hotel.

Saturday we were up at 9:00 to get ready for the day. We stopped at Denny's to have breakfast then on to a Farmers Market that we go to on College Street. This is always a “must stop” as they have the freshest produce for great prices. I bought a huge bag of carrots, \$4.99, for the kids to feed to our horses. After our stop here it was on to the directors meeting.

We arrived in time for the Meet and Greet. Since Peggy is going to be the TMGA President, she sat in the front of the room. I sat by myself. But, I have pushed myself to meet at least one new person each meeting. This meeting I met Helen Quinn. Helen is from Navasota.

The meeting was called to order at 12:30 and Joseph Johnson was introduced as our program speaker. Mr. Johnson has been hired as the new director of The Gardens at Texas A&M. He has great credentials for this position. He updated us on the newest things going on in the Gardens. There are two structures that are under construction.

After his program we had a break but we had homework to do during that time. We were given a sheet

of paper with 25 statements. We had to find one attendee that met each statement. (Exp. #1 was: Someone who has a December birthday). I thought at first this was dumb but as I got into it, it was so much fun. I met a bunch of new people. I purposefully picked people that I didn't know to ask them questions.

The meeting was called back to order and Wood County Master Gardeners were recognized for our donation to the Gardens. I put our rose on the rose bush (see attached picture). Next we followed the agenda and discussed the State Conference Cruise in 2017 and the awards program to follow in Galveston. It was announced the 2018 State Conference will be in College Station. Barbara Porsch also announced that two counties have volunteered for the 2019 and 2020 TMGA Conferences. It was announced that Eleanor Tuck has given up the Outreach Chair and Sharon Barrett, from Henderson County, will be her replacement.



Next we were introduced to our 2017 nominated officers:



- Peggy Rogers- President
- Nikki Maddams- 1st Vice President
- Jack Downey- 2nd Vice President
- Pat Allen- Secretary
- Elizabeth Castro- Treasurer
- Mary Means- Past President

The membership voted and this group was confirmed as our new officers for next year. After this vote, the meeting was adjourned at 3:00pm.

Luckily, the rain had stopped and we had a dry walk to our car. We had a great ride home, even though I don't really like this part of the trip as it is dark most of the drive. We had to take a detour around Athens; they were having their Christmas Parade that night. We finally got to my house around 7:30 pm. Of course Peggy had to drive home from there.

All in all, we had another great directors meeting.

Linda and Peggy

Passing of gavel from outgoing president Mary Means to incoming Peggy Rogers. Pictures taken by Kenneth Means



Some Little Known Facts about Mistletoe: Clint Perkins



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Many families enjoy a Christmas tradition of hanging mistletoe. Did you know that the tradition of hanging mistletoe has pagan roots? There are very few plants that are as steeped in history and folklore. It's a traditional holiday decoration, which incites people to kiss, and is often sold along with Christmas trees at many sites. Yet, this semi-parasitic plant, which is very common statewide, was first mentioned in the third century B.C. by the Greek philosopher Theophrastis, and has a reputation almost worldwide.



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Mistletoe is semi-parasitic that depends on a host plant for all its water and mineral needs. It is also capable of producing part of its food needs through photosynthesis. Mistletoe is most commonly found on oaks, elms, and hickory trees.

The seeds form in the translucent pearly white fruits. The seeds are wrapped in a sticky substance called viscin. Birds eat the berries and then the seed either passes unaffected through the bird's system, or the birds will rub off the offending sticky substance from their beak onto a branch that they are perched on. Either way, as the viscin dries on the tree branch it is strong enough to keep rain from washing the seed off. In the spring, the seeds will germinate and grow. Once established, the mistletoe can live for many years, or as long as its host. Mistletoe is more of a nuisance to healthy trees but can cause damage to weak or draught stressed trees. It is poisonous to humans, but, it is an important food source for birds and deer.

Throughout history, mistletoe has been given credit or held responsible for many different things. Mistletoe was also sacred to the Ainos of Japan and certain tribes in Africa and in Australia. Our modern traditions have been credited to both the Celts and the Scandinavians.

The Celts thought mistletoe was a divine plant that is "rooted" in the tops of trees which made it closer to heaven. Mistletoe was seen as a symbol in the winter solstice as a green guarantee that spring would come. Sprigs of mistletoe were hung over doorways to ward off evil spirits and to indicate that past grievances and hatreds were forgotten.

The Scandinavians believed that mistletoe was blessed by the goddess of love, and that men who met in battle under mistletoe would stop fighting, kiss and make up. This has carried over somewhat in our current tradition that says "If you stand under the mistletoe, you can be kissed".

Although poisonous to humans, many cultures have used mistletoe for medicinal purposes. Mistletoe is able to bear fruit in the winter when most plants are dormant. Because of this, many cultures came to associate it with fertility. They would chop the leaves and spread it on the fields to ensure a good crop. Throughout time it became known as the all healer, with claims that it could protect against witchcraft, nightmares, evil spirits, and even ward off death.

As Christianity evolved, mistletoe gradually became incorporated into the traditional Christmas celebration, and is still used today. Mistletoe is as much a part of the holiday traditions as poinsettias and hollies. To our ancestors, the special characteristics of this plant, endowed it with mystical powers, and for plant scientist throughout the ages, mistletoe aroused wonder and curiosity.

So, next Fall when you hang the mistletoe from the top of the doorway, you will have a better understanding of the history of this plant and why we use it to decorate with at Christmas.

Happy Gardening

County Extension Agent-Ag/NR: Clint Perkins

Wood County TX
AgriLife Extension Service
618 South Main Street
Quitman, TX 75783-0968
Phone: 903-763-2924

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 join.

TEXAS A&M
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2016 WCMG Awards by: Sylvia Johnson

Officer Appreciation Certificates



Molly Mathis, Treasurer



Jan Whitlock, Secretary



Mellisa Deakins, VP



Linda Timmons, President



Tracy Justice, Rookie of the Year



Karen Anderson, Community Outreach-Spring Fling



Jan Whitlock, Project Leader-JMG-Science Days



Linda Timmons, Innovator of the Year



Lin Grado, Master Gardener of the Year

Wildscape by: Linda Timmons at Mineola Nature Preserve

At this time of the year we're cleaning up the garden but not completely. As a Wildscape garden we showcase native plants that are naturally hardy and also provide shelter and food for wildlife. We leave a lot of what a homeowner might consider "mess".

Many of the perennials can be cut back but if the plant has berries or seeds we're leaving it for the critters. Even lantana berries that make most mammals sick are good food for birds. We'll leave the grasses until late February to cut back. They provide winter time interest as well as seeds for the ground birds.

The possumhaw (*Ilex deciduas*) in the Wildscape is just coming into its own. The small trees are loaded with bright red berries. Now that the leaves are starting to drop, the berries really shine. Possumhaw berries are a favorite of the cedar waxwings. The other holly in the Wildscape is yaupon (*Ilex vomitoria*). This is another plant that has berries that would make us sick but are great for the birds.



Even though we're just getting started on winter the spring flowers are sprouting. It looks like we will have a bumper crop of bluebonnets (*Lupinus* sp.). Shortly after we started getting our fall rains the seedlings started popping up all over. Did you know that there are five varieties of bluebonnets in Texas and all five are the state flower?

Another native wildflower in the Wildscape is the pink or Mexican evening primrose (*Oenothera speciosa*). These perennial plants are native from Mexico all the way north to Nebraska. In the north the flowers open in the evening (hence the name) and close in the morning. In the south they open in the morning and close in the evening. The plants spread aggressively by both seed and runners. They are drought tolerant and grow in both sun and shade but need sun to bloom well. For those of you that are foragers, the young leaves are edible either raw or cooked.



We're taking the holidays off but starting January 10th our workdays at the Wildscape will be every Tuesday at 1PM.

Did You Know This?

A tip from The 1899 Old Farmer's Almanac "Useful Hints": "Keep all fruit stones (pits), cooked or uncooked. Dry them slowly in the oven, put in a large jar, and in winter throw a handful on the fire of an evening. They will crackle for a moment, send up a bright flame, and fill the room with a delicious aroma."

Ellen Atkins



clipart

QUITMAN ARBORETUM AND BOTANICAL GARDENS

By: Jan Whitlock

The bunny that lives under the front porch of the Stinson House is tucked in from the winter winds and colder temperatures. The feral hogs and armadillos have obviously migrated into another county as the digging and rooting around the house have lessened with the arrival of winter.



Photo from: Friends of the Arboretum

The Friends of the Arboretum have been busy, as usual, decorating for the holidays, raking leaves, winterizing various plants, and trying to tie up a lot of loose ends.

Our good friend, Louis Theriault, has relocated with his wife Peggy to the wilds of Arkansas. We wish to thank him for his tireless work on the storage barn that is under construction at the rear of the gardens. His “partners in crime”, Mike Ferguson, Larry Fleishman, and Leo Fisher continue to toil on this project and are now ready for the addition of the roof, siding, and the stairs to reach the loft level. Good work, men. We appreciate your efforts!

There is a distinct possibility that a third film will be produced using the Stinson House as a background. This not only highlights the gardens and the Arboretum venue in general but also brings commerce into Wood County. Pam Riley could look for work with MGM if things don’t go well in the dairy cattle business. We hope you were among the many that came out to the annual Friends of the Arboretum open house. Guests were entertained in style by the Quitman Bell Ringers and Delene and Eugene Allen. They provided some beautiful Christmas music as the backdrop for good food and good friends.

Garden plans abound as Lin Grado and her trusty crew consider renovations to the existing rose beds, moving some perennials that have outgrown their bounds, maintenance and upkeep of the newly renovated island in the middle of the park road (thank you WCMG who helped with that project), and general pruning and tidying up. A complete renovation of the vegetable garden at the rear of the house is also in the works.

May I just say how much the Friends of the Arboretum appreciate the continued support from our friends and families. We could not possibly continue with this project without your support and help. If you have ever purchased a plant at the plant sale, a cake at the Christmas bake sale, raked leaves, pulled weeds, been stung by a fire ant in the line of duty, thank you for your participation and responding when the call for “help” goes out to our gardening community.

May your New Year be one of Peace, Joy and Hope.

WCMG of 2016

Lin Grado, Master Gardener of the Year

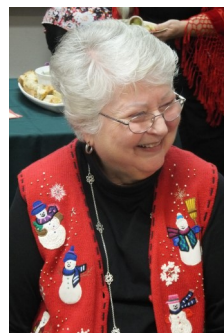
Photo by: Sylvia



Christmas Party by: Sylvia Johnson

Melissa Deakins and her crew put on another great event. The last minute change of venue did not even phase them. In a “twinkling of an eye” they not only changed location but set up new decorations and we had a fun and intimate gathering. Thank You also for the great munchies that were provided by her crew. The variety of finger foods and drink were wonderful. It was a great day for all who were lucky enough to attend.

I speak for all Associates when I thank Melissa and her full committee for their hard work this year. We all enjoyed the new innovative speakers and subjects for our monthly CEU requirements.



Follow-up on Ginger Plants and Bay Tree by: Sylvia Johnson



This ginger was planted in early March 2016. I used Miracle Grow Potting Soil. The blue pot was planted with ginger roots from a Garden Catalogue and the Clay pot was planted with ginger root from Wal-Mart market. They both were fertilized with Osmocote. Both sets of roots grew and produced equally for me. I could not tell the difference in the expensive catalogue root and the cheap Wally-World root. Culinary ginger flowers are green and insignificant, but are interesting as you can see in the photo on the right. As the weather grew cold the leaves started dying back and turning yellow. I harvested them all on December 13th.

I have used them to make fresh ginger “Gingerbread Cookies” and used 5 tbs. fresh grated ginger in place of 1/2 tsp of dried ground ginger. It has a much milder “heat” when fresh. I have received rave reviews! **Note:** different roots had more heat than others, test your root before you use it.

I have shared my extra roots with friends and frozen some for use throughout coming the year. This was a fun plant to grow (as in easy). Make sure the roots do not dry out during July/August. Make sure the soil stays moist, not wet with late afternoon shade. Next year I will try to grow ginger in the ground and it should not be so water needy as I can mulch it heavier.

So it is a GO on ginger in Texas!



This is a picture of my Bay Tree as of December 17th. I planted it in March also, it was 8” tall. It struggled through the first part of spring when I was out of town and it did not get supplemental watering for 5 weeks in April and May. Once I returned, the dead leaves were pulled and used for cooking. After all, I planted a Bay Tree to dry out the leaves for cooking!

After that hic-up I made sure that the tree got at least 1” of water per week and mulched it heavily. The Bay perked right up and is thriving with new leaves this fall and grown to 13” tall.

Lavishing wrappings, during nights that get below freezing, for the first winter produces self sustaining growth. (At least that is what the nursery owner who sold me the bare root tree told me.) I will let y’all know whether or not it survives and continues to thrive.

How exciting, this winter I have homegrown Ginger Roots and Bay Leaves to use during days with weather just perfect for soups and gingerbreads!

Recipes using Fall Garden Harvest: by Sylvia Johnson

These two recipes are taken from the “Rainbow of Recipes” book by UNMC-College of Nursing-Class of 1983.

Bay Leaf: Borsch

You will need: large sauce pan, or Crock Pot,

2 c. diced beets	1/4 c. chopped parsley
4 c. shredded cabbage	1 dried <u>Bay Leaf</u> or two fresh <u>Bay Leaves</u>
2 lb. soup bone	1 tsp. paprika
2 chopped onions	3 tbs. sugar
3 1/2 c. canned tomatoes	1 tsp. salt
1/2 –3/4 c. lemon juice	Black pepper (to taste)
Garlic salt (to taste)	1 c. sour cream (optional)

Add 2 quarts water to soup bone in large pot, bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer 2-3 hours, or simmer overnight on low in a crock pot. Next morning take out the bone and remove all the meat. Set aside meat. Discard bone.

Add vegetables, lemon juice and seasonings to bone broth. Simmer 1-3 hours on low. (Crock pot timing may vary). When vegetables are soft return meat to pot long enough for it to reheat.

Serve soup in large bowls with a dollop of sour cream on top, if desired. This soup goes great with pumpernickel bread.

Serves 6.

Fresh Ginger: Grandma's Saucepan Raisin Ginger Bars

You will need: a large sauce pan, a 8"x13" greased and floured baking pan

1 c. sugar	2 c. sifted flour (extra to flour greased pan)
1/2 c. shortening (extra to grease pan)	1/4 tsp. salt
1 c. water	1 tsp. baking soda
1 c. raisins	1/2 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. ground cloves	1.2 tsp. vanilla
1/4 tsp. ground nutmeg	1/2 c. chopped nuts (your choice)
2 tbs. grated <u>Fresh or Frozen Ginger</u> (or to taste)	Powder sugar (optional)

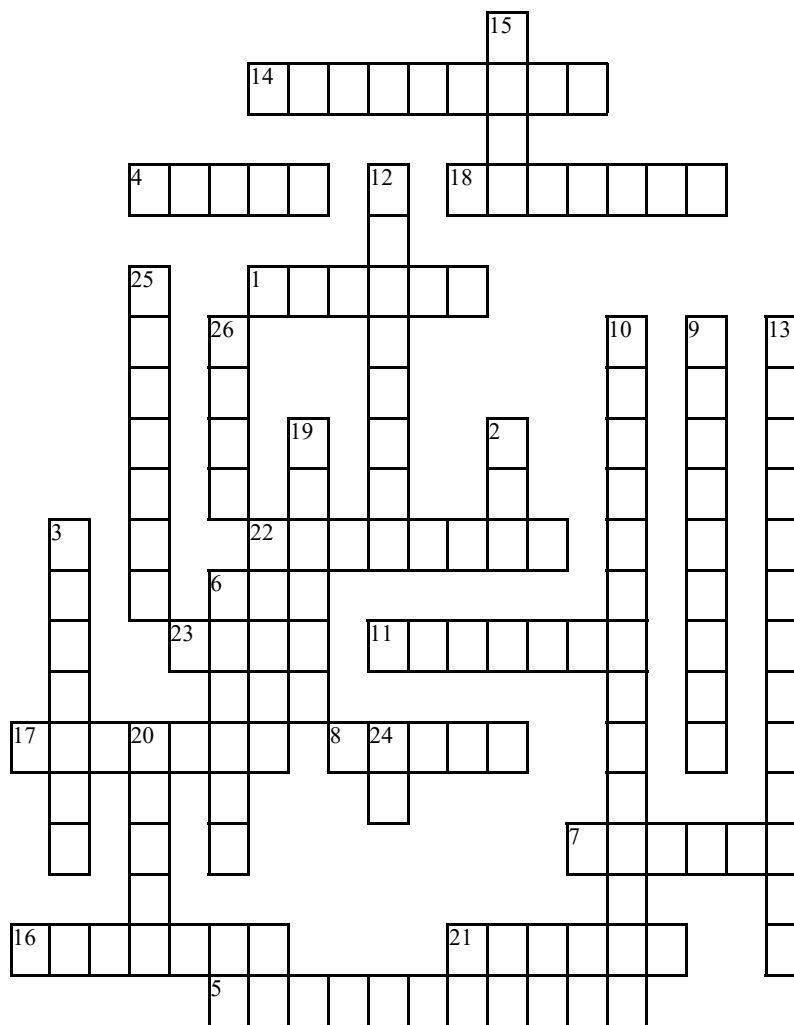
Combine shortening, sugar, water, raisins, ginger and all spices/salt in a large saucepan. Heat gently until sugar becomes incorporated. Then boil for 3 minutes; let cool in pot. Sift flour, soda and baking powder into cooled mixture; mix together with large spoon. Add vanilla and nuts. Mix until it comes together and nuts are scattered throughout batter.

Turn into a greased and floured 8"x13" baking pan.

Bake at 350° for 20-25 minutes. Frost with powder sugar if desired. Cut into bars.

PUZZLE By: Ellen Atkins

Use The Right Tool



Across

- 1 Dig a hole
- 4 Set post
- 5 Attach low tunnel PVC
- 7 Research garden info
- 8 Hear music
- 11 Apply pesticide
- 14 Harden transplants
- 16 Cut a limb
- 17 Rid of squirrel
- 18 Protect berries
- 21 Collect debris
- 22 Create a garden puzzle
- 23 Pick up leaves

Down

- 2 Weed
- 3 Plant a tree
- 6 Suck up pests
- 9 Cut grass
- 10 Edge
- 12 Eliminate armadillo
- 13 Trim by hand
- 15 Tomato support
- 19 Hand shovel
- 20 Tie up a plant
- 24 Hack at roots
- 25 Most useful vehicle
- 26 Turn compost pile

We hope you all enjoy the puzzles. There will be a new one each issue. Need the answers? Come to the next meeting!

Things to Note:

New Sunshine Chair: Laurie Fisher is our new chair for sending Get Well, Sympathy, Congratulation and We are thinking of You cards and memos to our Associates.

Wood County Commissioner Court Check Award Ceremony: Dec 30, 10AM. All are encouraged to attend and show support for WCMG. The number of hours this year were 6,486. This relates to \$162,863.46.

2016 Awards Write-ups: Are due to TMGA by the 30th. Please contact the committee for full information.

Heads-up on 2017 Spring Conference: Date March 11. Speaker will be Keith Hanson. Subject will be Landscaping. You can look forward to more information as plans are made during this winter. This is always a fun and exciting event. Volunteer early and get in on the fun.

Online with WCMG

—**“MG Wood Works” Newsletter:** You are all invited to submit your thoughts and learnings both new and old to this newsletter. You are permitted to count time writing articles as volunteer hours. If you have questions please contact the editor: Sylvia Johnson mgnewsletter@hotmail.com.

—**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**, <https://www.facebook.com/Wood-County-Master-Gardeners-Inc-205733709448425/?fref=ts>

Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1534107646899295/>

—**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:** Know of a member who needs a warm thought or sympathy? Contact **Laurie Fisher**

—**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.

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