

# *“MG Wood Works”*

**EDITOR: SYLVIA JOHNSON**

**2017  
ISSUE: #4**



**July**

## **Note from the President: Reggie Askins**



“The love of gardening is a seed that once sown never dies,”

Gertude Jekyll, English garden designer

I love this quote and feel from personal experience that it is so true. My great aunt and sweet in-laws instilled and nurtured my love of gardening. Who were your gardening mentors?

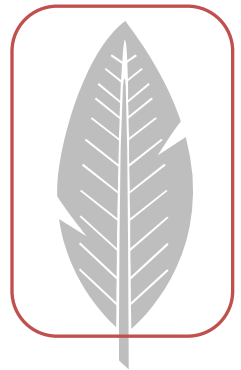
Praise to Linda Avant and her team, who, with Science Days, planted seeds of knowledge and love of nature with our youth. I just finished a five week teaching position and was able to teach a two day outdoor nature course with my fifth graders. They were so excited to do the ten item scavenger hunt in a simple open field across from the school. Considering our “stare at the screen youth”, we might be the only ones to show them the marvels that live in their backyards.

Unfortunately due to work, I missed our successful Class of 2016 Graduation. Thanks to Sylvia I was able to enjoy all the fun photo shots. A warm welcome to all and I look forward to getting to know each of you. Also, congrats to Lin Grado, Gardener of the Year, and Sylvia Johnson, best newsletter. Another shout out to Karen Anderson and her team for the second place award with the 2016 Spring Fling. We knew all of you were wonderfully talented and now the entire state does!

Happy summer gardening and continue to plant those seeds!



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### Schedule Note from the Vice President: Melodee Eishen

**July 20th** — meeting will feature Nancy Falster on fermenting food from our gardens. We have all heard that fermented foods are healthy for us, but do you know "Why" or "How" to ferment? Well, come to this meeting and she'll show you how and explain why. Do you know it's an ancient method of preserving food for an extended period? We will learn some old fashioned methods with newfangled equipment.

**August 17th** — we have scheduled Linda Timmons to present a PowerPoint of "Successes in Our Garden". Therefore, we ALL need to be taking some pictures (okay, I'm talking to myself especially) of our vegetables, flowers, bushes and trees, landscaping, bird and butterfly paradises and our fairy gardens. Did I leave anything out?... Get ready to send Linda your pictures when she send out an E-mail asking for them.

## You might be a Gardener if... by Carol Hollen

You can identify all manner of poisonous snake but squeal like a little girl when a worm slithers across your bare foot,  
You always have the tiniest bit of soil under your nails,  
Your personal scent is a custom blend of Coppertone and Deep Woods Off,  
You talk to your plants as if they were family,  
You are obsessed with the weather forecast,  
You post more pictures of plants on Facebook than of friends and family,  
You go outside to work in the soil, yet come in dirty,  
You're certain that mosquitoes, fire ants, chiggers and ticks are the spawn of the Devil,  
You'd rather go to a plant swap than an all-you-can-eat buffet, and  
You salivate at the scent of compost.



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## 2017 Junior Master Gardener Specialist Training

"We are holding a 2017 Junior Master Gardener Specialist Training for Master Gardeners on August 1-4, 2017, in Denton. We were originally allowing 2 Master Gardener attendees per county, but that as of June 1st, we would allow more than 2 attendees from a county to attend!"

I am including the website for more information: <http://dcmga.com/events/2017-junior-master-gardener-specialist-training/>. Tammy Gurley, Denton MG

*I know our Wood County Jr. Master Gardener Committee are always looking for more volunteers. If you are interested let Clint know. Just read the next article and the Wildscape article to see what fun you can have teaching children about gardening and wildlife!*

The 9th annual 3rd Grade Science Days was held on May 22nd, 23rd, and 24 at the Quitman Arboretum. Over 150 students attended from Quitman, Alba-Golden and a local Home School organization. A representative from Wood County Electric along with Master Gardeners instructed the 3rd graders and all ages of home-schooled students as they rotated around 6 stations. The presenters and their stations were:

1. **Karen Sanders**- Water Conservation and rail barrel collection system



2. **Teresa Runion** - "Gas Gobblers" which demonstrated the interdependence that people share with plants.



3. **Linda Timmons** - Sensory Nature Walk around the gardens

4. **Linda Avant** - Deadly Snakes of East Texas



5. **Paige Eaton** - Energy Conservation by Wood County Electric

6. **Twala Watters** - "Worm Races" that emphasis the benefits of soil composting



Alba-Golden ISD  
Day # 3



Home School Students



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# Three vital additions for your garden

By: Lin Grado

In East Texas Gardens: It's time to get your garden ready for the long, hot summer that seems to be on the near horizon. Here are three important additions you should make to your garden before summer sets in.

**First is compost.** Compost is decomposed organic matter that feeds the soil (which then feeds your plants). It adds much-needed organic matter to the soil. If your soil is hard clay, that organic matter will improve the drainage of your soil and increases air penetration. If your soil is sand, organic matter improves the ability of the soil to retain moisture and nutrients. Compost also improves the biology of the soil, adding micronutrients, fungi, and beneficial bacteria. If there's a miracle in the garden world, it's compost.

When you're first building a bed, you can dig or till three inches of compost into the top six inches of your soil. To determine how much compost you need, place your bags of compost side by side and end to end in the bed – that will give you three inches. If you have a vegetable garden, you will need to add another inch or two each growing season, but for perennial beds or borders, just top-dress your bed with a half-inch or so of compost. I also add a little compost to the planting holes for annuals and perennials in my established beds to give them a boost.

Once you've started increasing the organic matter in your soil with compost, you'll want to protect that investment. This leads to the **second addition**: mulch to cover the soil in your gardens. While you can cover your garden with stone or gravel, the mulch I'm referring to is organic matter that will decompose over time: straw, pine needles, shredded leaves, bark, or tree trimmings that have been allowed to break down a bit. Mulch will help retain soil moisture, moderate soil temperature, and reduce the number of weeds that grow in your beds. To me, mulch is like icing on a cake: it makes your garden beds look finished.

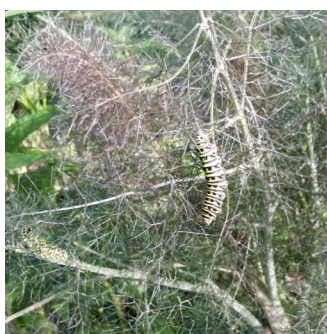
Here in Texas we need a three or four inch layer of mulch to have the best effect through our hot summers. At home I like to start with a layer of cardboard or several sheets of newspaper to cover the bare soil, then water it well before adding mulch. This layer of cardboard acts as a weed barrier, but unlike the black weed cloth you can buy, it is biodegradable and will improve the soil over time. (One warning about using newspaper or cardboard: If your garden is frequented by armadillos, it will look a mess when they dig to get to the earthworms below.) When you mulch, be sure to keep the mulch (or cardboard) away from the crowns of plants and flares of trees, so you don't promote rot. Your mulch shouldn't look like a volcano around the base of your plants.

The **third most important addition** to the garden is your timely observation. Walk around in your garden at least once a week and observe any changes. This time spent can be a key to both enjoying your garden and ensuring its success. First, there may be some ephemeral beauty that you may overlook, such as Mayapples in bloom. At the Quitman Arboretum I noticed swallowtail caterpillars on the bronze fennel that I had planted for them; two days later they were gone. Second, if you see a problem early, chances are greater that you can nip it in the bud. A common pest in the spring on hibiscus and Turk's cap is sawfly larva – they can skeletonize the leaves on a plant. Treatment with an organic insecticide such as Neem every 10 days will halt the damage.

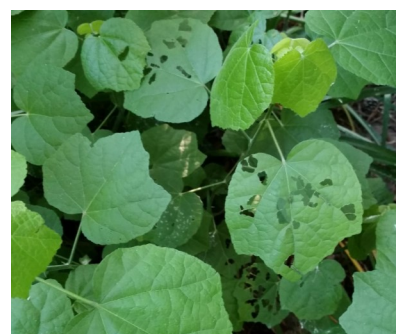
A Chinese proverb states, "The best fertilizer is the gardener's shadow." Cast your shadow often on your east Texas garden.



Mulch showcases the plants in this garden bed



This swallowtail caterpillar soon left this bronze fennel



Sawfly damage on this turk's cap suggests quick treatment

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# The Mineola Nature Preserve & Wildscape Gardens

## By: Linda Timmons

### Visitors to the garden

The spring wildflowers have been spectacular this year. Now the summer flowers are coming on strong while the spring flowers are starting to go to seed. The Wildscape helpers have been working hard to keep the gardens looking neat and the visitors have been noticing.

Our usual summer visitors, the Swallowtail and the Sulphur butterflies love the turk's cap (*Malvaviscus arboreus*) and the butterfly weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*). There are enough salvias blooming to make the bumble bees and honey bees happy. All the insects are attracted to the native button bush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*).



Swallowtail on button bush

Some of the new visitors to the Wildscape this past month were a Checkered white butterfly and a Salt Marsh caterpillar observed chomping away on a tall Texas vervain (*Verbena halei*). Human visitors have been enjoying the Wildscape, too. Photographers visit regularly and last week a man from China was inquiring about the native Texas plants.

Friday the Mineola ISD brought 55 summer school students to the Nature Preserve. Each of the three classes (kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grade) spent a half hour in the Wildscape gardens. Kim Mason, Reggie Askins and Linda Timmons spent the time letting the kids touch and smell plants. They got to touch the fun bark on the Lace Bark elm tree and learned about the importance of healthy bark to a growing tree. They felt the seed heads of the soft Indian Blanket and the prickly center of the cone flower and heard about how plants produce seeds and attract pollinators. Their favorite plant was "Cowboy Toilet Paper", the soft leafed mullien (*Verbascum* species).



The Mineola Nature Preserve is open from 7:30AM until sunset every day. If you get a chance to visit be sure to check out the Wildscape gardens. Like we did with the school kids, we encourage you to look at the little things and touch, smell and listen.

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I found some plants in my small flower patch and thought they might be weeds. But I did not take them out. Thank Goodness! Later I saw a surprising flower appear.



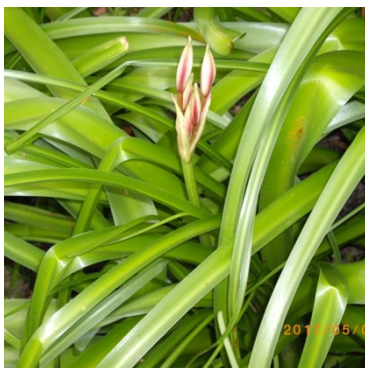
I did some research and found out that it is called *Alstroemeria isabellana* found in southern Brazil to Argentina. I do not know how it got into my yard.



What pretty flowers as the plant multiplied big time. It is pretty rare in cultivation. Mature flower stalks are about 18 inches tall. Hummingbirds love it!



A nice neighbor gave me some bulbs of Crinum Lilies. They have very long leaves and one should not trim them but leave the clumps undisturbed for more flowering. The flowering stalk appears overnight and the next day some buds are opening up.



The lilies have big fleshy roots from the bulbs and they are quite difficult to dig up. The flowers have a very fragrant smell which reminds me of my trip to India.

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# SUMMER VACATION LANDSCAPE PREPARATION

By: Clint Perkins, AgriLife Agent

Landscape preparation for a summer vacation may sound like a lot of extra work, but it is really not much more than the normal weekend routine of maintaining a healthy, well-groomed landscape. Just a little extra effort on your part before leaving can make a big difference in the health and well-being of your plants. Here are some practical tips that should help ensure that your home landscape will not suffer the post-vacation blues. And don't forget to visit some gardens while you are away. There are many spectacular gardens to enjoy in just about any part of the country where you may be headed.



**WATER** - I know that we have been getting good rains here lately, but make sure to water the home grounds well prior to leaving if there is not ample moisture. Soak your lawn, garden and all landscape plants deeply. Our soils can dry out rapidly even after a heavy watering, so if you will be gone for a week, plan to have a neighbor hook up your hose and do a little supplemental watering.



**CUT** - Mow your lawn a day or two before you leave. Use the same cutting height that you normally do. Don't lower the mower blade for a "closer shave". Doing so could easily cause sun scald and damage. If you plan to be gone more than a week, it would be ideal to have someone mow the lawn for you during your absence. Prune hedges and other plants likely to get gangly by the time you return. Be sure that walks and flower beds are neatly edged before your departure. A buildup of growth while you are away will be difficult to manage on your return.

**MULCH** - Mulching helps conserve valuable moisture for plant growth while you are at home or away. Choose mulch that is free of weed seed and one which will remain loose and well aerated. Consider grass clippings, pine bark, compost or a variety of organic material. Mulching will also reduce or eliminate the weeding problem.

(continued on next page)

## 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.

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## AgriLife Agent Cont.

**CHECK FOR INSECTS AND DISEASES** - Spray, if necessary, for insects and diseases, to prevent a buildup of pests during your absence. Summer insects and diseases do not take a vacation and will work overtime on your healthy plants. This goes particularly for chinch bugs. Make sure you have applied chinch bug control to your St. Augustine lawn or you just might find it severely damaged by this little critter when you return.

**HARVEST** - Pick all ripe or nearly ripe fruit and vegetables. If you will be gone over a week, arrange for a friend to pull and use produce. Vegetable plants left unpicked will frequently cease to bear.



**EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE** – Take any lawn and garden equipment in need of maintenance to the repair shop. It should be repaired and ready for pick-up by the time you return.



**PROTECT PROPERTY** - Arrange for a neighbor to pick up newspapers, or ask the paper delivery service to hold them until you return. Newspapers scattered over the front lawn are a dead giveaway that no one is home. Also, don't forget to have your postal mail put on hold too. To have FedEx or UPS packages held, go to their websites and sign up for package management. Putting house lights on a timer is a good idea; this can give an impression that someone is home.

**Happy Gardening & Travels**



Clip-art

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## Inside and Outside the Picket Fence

### BY: JAN WHITLOCK

As published in the Wood County Monitor

Posted Wednesday, June 21, 2017 1:30 am

Summer is upon us, and that signals preparations for the annual Fourth of July celebration! Join us at the Quitman Arboretum on Tuesday, July Fourth, as we celebrate and commemorate the founding of our great nation. We are excited to be partnering with the City of Quitman and the Quitman Chamber of Commerce as salute the Red, White and Blue.

This year's celebration will kick off at 10 a.m. with a parade for children 10 and younger. The parade will begin at the RV park and end at the picket fence in front of the Stinson House. Decorated bikes, strollers, pets and wagons are welcome. Please register your child or pet by sending an email to [quitmanarboretum.com](mailto:quitmanarboretum.com).



## Farmers Market By: Reggie Askins

Melissa Deakins made this scarecrow for her farmers market table she manned at our Wood County Master Gardeners Spring Conference.

She also heads up the farmer's market in Mineola and of course is our past VP. The contest promoting Mineola's Farmers Market is her brainchild.



(Courtesy photo) Article Posted Wednesday, June 21, 2017 1:30 am in the Wood County Monitor:

"Miss Minnie is the mascot for the (Mineola) Farmers Market. The contest is to find Minnie around Mineola and take a picture with her to promote the farmers market.

The Farmers Market is located at the pavilion on Front Street, next to the train depot and is open every Saturday during the summer from 8 a.m. to noon.

Minnie can be found anywhere in town visiting the local restaurants, stores and offices in the downtown area.

The rules for the contest are as follows. You must be 18 or older, LIKE the Mineola Farmers Market Facebook page, find Miss Minnie and take a photo with her and post it on the market's Facebook page and share it with your friends. Do not reveal Miss Minnie's location, but post in the comment section for the week's contest announcement so that you can be entered into the contest.

After all of the contestants have entered, a name will be drawn randomly from that week's entries. The winner will win a free bag of assorted goodies from the market. The winners will be posted on the Mineola Farmers Market Facebook page on Thursday afternoons each week.

If your name was drawn, stop by the market on Saturday morning to get your prize.

The Mineola Farmers Market has fresh produce, farm fresh eggs, homemade breads, salsa, jams, plants and herbs as well as [Click to return to index](#)

## Did you Know? By: Sylvia Johnson

Clean dirty hands - "We don't have to tell you how much dirt gets into those hands and under the fingernails when you work in your garden. It can be really hard to get off too - in fact, you might think you're in need of a pair of brand new hands. Of course, while that may not be possible just yet, you can get them clean by using a little baking soda. Just get your hands wet, and coat them with baking soda. The dirt will scrub out much easier. You can use a nail brush for hard to reach dirt under the nails.

Once the dirt has been removed, simply rinse your hands and they'll be nice and clean again, almost like new, albeit maybe with a few age spots - but wait! Actually, the wonders of baking soda include fading those pesky dark spots too. All you need to do is leave that baking soda paste you've created on your hands for 5 minutes before rinsing. Then, rub it off to exfoliate and rinse." *While this will not change your spots over night or after one use, over time it will help. However, nothing beats wearing gloves!*

<http://www.naturallivingideas.com/baking-soda-garden/>

## Shirley Chadwick (4/10/1943 - 5/7/2017)



“In a small garden in a backyard in the middle of town, happy rows of tomatoes ripen in the late spring sun--leaves turned to the light, eagerly absorbing its rays to produce sweet red fruit. In years past, they played host to an array of green goods. But this year, the tomatoes are undoubtedly the main event, their simple, understated beauty championing their long time gardener--Shirley Tumbleson Chadwick was a lifelong gardener.

In retirement, Mrs. Chadwick continued to cultivate her lifelong love of quilting, and was delighted to finally have the time to pursue the long-held goal of becoming a Master Gardener. The Wood County Master Gardeners became her second family and they cherished their time with her; one member reports that, on the whole, the group learned more from her than she from them and that her dedication was unparalleled. On their most recent volunteer day, Mrs. Chadwick arrived enthusiastic about planting for the spring. When she discovered that they would only be preparing beds that day, she rose to the challenge of tending the soil alongside her fellow gardeners, working in harmony to prepare a solid foundation for the future garden.”

<https://obittree.com/obituary/us/texas/mineola/mineola/shirley-chadwick/2916935/.php>

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## John Patrick Lafferty (8/21/1942 - 6/25/2017)



“Pat” 74, of Quitman, TX passed away on June 25, 2017 in Tyler, TX. He was born on Friday, August 21, 1942 to the late Alfred Lafferty and Elsie Ewald Lafferty.

“Pat” was a member of Wood County Master Gardner Club. He was on the original Arboretum board when it was established. It was due to no small dedication on his part that we have the beautiful gardens in Quitman. “Pat” was a member from 2007-2017. He is survived by his wife Sondra Lafferty, of Quitman, who is also a Master Gardner.

He was also active with the republican party and was a Eagle Scout. John graduated from the Miami University in Oxford, OH. He served 31 years as a Special Agent for the IRS.

<http://www.beatyfuneralhome.com/book-of-memories/2967213/Lafferty-John/obituary.php>

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## Wood County Master Gardeners Association Officers for 2017



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

### 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](mailto: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.

—**Newsletter:** *Unless otherwise annotated, all photos in this publication were taken by the author of the article in which they appear.*

*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-*

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