

# *“MG Wood Works”*

**EDITOR: SYLVIA JOHNSON**

**2017  
ISSUE: #5**



**Sept/Oct**

**Note from the President: Reggie Askins**



## What is a “Master Gardener”?

We had a wonderful July meeting with 32 members present. However, I’m beginning to think we need to extend our social time. It was like a family reunion with hugs and sharing’s. I really hated to be the one to have to end it. So I began to ponder, “What is it, besides a love of plants that binds us together?”

We have all taken the AgriLife training, passed those “hard” tests and clocked in our volunteer hours. But is that what defines us as a group? I personally think our roots run deeper and there are certain additional attributes that shape us and our lives. We are attuned to nature’s sense of time; to everything, there is a season. We are a patient people, waiting for winter to pass, knowing that spring will always come. We take pleasure in the simple things in life. The curiosity and expectation of what that tiny seed will become. We always have hope, for a nurturing rain, or the good harvest. We are generous, with a sharing spirit whether it is with time, talent, or our garden treasures. My yard is filled with many “pass-along” plants, given to me by my friends. Thus, I think the greatest blessing in being a “Master Gardener” is the friendships we make.



**TEXAS A&M  
AGRILIFE  
EXTENSION**



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

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

So as teachers and kids go back to school, so are we. Our program for **September 21st** will give us updates about what is happening at the state level for Texas Master Gardeners.

We will do a review of the different areas of Texas Master Gardeners Specialists Training and who has taken these classes in our local area. Also we will discuss Specialists Training Classes we would like to encourage our members to pursue to enhance our local association.

We will also have some discussion on the Texas Master Gardeners Awards Program. The award entry deadline has been moved to an earlier date for 2017 submissions. Start thinking whom you would like to nominate for their outstanding contributions to our Association. Official nomination information will be sent out to all member when available. Please come and learn with us.

Our **October 19th** meeting will be our traditional "Plant Exchange". So now is the time to think about what you would like to bring and share with the rest of the Wood County Master Gardeners Associates. Just so you know, it can be one thing or a lot, and if you don't have something to "share" please come and get something anyway, you may have plants or seeds, or roots, etc. to share next year. Please bring your items labeled with what they are, some will be potted, others bare rooted, bring in boxes, pots, plastic bags, or whatever. If you have extra plastic (Walmart or Brookshire) bags, they would be appreciated. See you there.

## Did you observe any “unnatural” behavior?

By: Sylvia Johnson

As I sit here at my desk editing the articles sent in for this issue, the sky is going dark. A total solar eclipse is happening, just not here in my backyard. However, as I step outside to peek at the sun I asked myself what does nature know about an eclipse? Do the plants and animals know that today is special? So I have done some research. It has been reported anecdotally during past eclipses that bees take to their hives and will not come out until the next day. Certain spiders in Mexico will take down their webs and call it a day thus catching fewer mosquitoes. Some plants have been noted to curl up or unfurl during an eclipse. This is the first year a widespread effort will be made to scientifically document these and other behaviors.

Scientists are gathering data on this year's eclipse and its effect on plants and animals. Did you capture your dog or cat hiding under the bed during this time? (My cats did!) Did you take a video of birds going back to their nest, or did you hear the frogs singing their night time lullaby in the middle of the afternoon? Did you notice your plants going to bed for the evening then waking up again a few hours later. For example, did your squash or okra bloom for the second time that day? Researchers are trying to ascertain if this eclipse will have an effect on the food markets and which varieties of plants are effected most. Does this mean the bees will pollinate fewer plants this month and will that make a difference to the overall food availability? All nature is connected and I find it interesting to contemplate these many unique questions.



A flower closing during totality.  
Credit: owensdc/Creative Commons

“For anyone lucky enough to see the Aug. 21 eclipse, the stars of the show are obviously the sun and moon. But without distracting from the main event, some scientists hope the public will help with a little data collection. Because total solar eclipses are so rare, most of what we know about animals' and plants' reactions is still anecdotal.

The California Academy of Sciences (CAS) has organized a citizen-science project, called **Life Responds**, to document how North American wildlife and plants react to the eclipse. Once the eclipse is over, anyone can submit data using the iNaturalist app.”

"We're just hoping that people who are watching the eclipse, in places of differing levels of totality, will take some time and observe the animals (and plants) around them and see how they respond to the eclipse," says Rebecca Johnson, citizen-science lead for the CAS. "A lot of people are interested in studying how animals (and plants) respond to an eclipse, but as you can imagine it's not a super easy way to set up a research project."

For more info please visit the following pages:

- \* [www.morningagclips.com/watch-what-your-plants-do-during-the-eclipse/](http://www.morningagclips.com/watch-what-your-plants-do-during-the-eclipse/),
- \* [www.mnn.com/earth-matters/animals/blogs/how-does-solar-eclipse-affect-animals](http://www.mnn.com/earth-matters/animals/blogs/how-does-solar-eclipse-affect-animals),
- \* NASA Flickr page at <https://www.flickr.com/groups/nasa-eclipse2017/>,



MNN website

# Summer in the Shade Garden

By: Lin Grado

**When** the temperatures climb into the 90s, time in the garden is best spent in the shade. Picture it - sitting at a table under the oak trees, with glasses of sweet tea sweating in your hand. Perhaps there's a slight breeze moving the trees, or the leaves are glistening with water from the sprinkler that ran in the morning. No matter – a shade garden provides a cooler view to enjoy.

**Generally** speaking, an area of your garden that receives fewer than six hours of sun each day is considered shady. Shade in your garden can be provided naturally by trees and shrubs, and also from structures - arbors, pergolas, or even a house or a fence. The shade under plants is generally not as dense as that from structures since sunlight can peak through the leaves now and then. The amount of shade affects the types of plants that can be grown in an area. For example, full shade, an area of fewer than three hours of sun per day, may not support many flowering plants, so look to foliage for color or rely on leaf texture (after all, green is a color). At the Quitman Arboretum and Botanical Gardens, one bed is called 'Shades of Green', since its interest comes from the foliage color. There are blooms in the spring, before the trees leaf out, but the back side of that bed sees no sun during the summer, yet is still interesting.

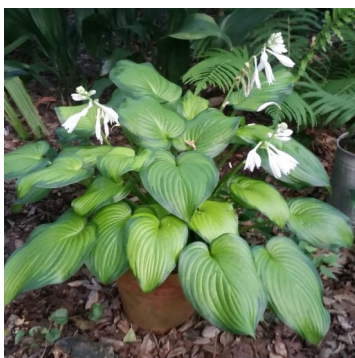
**Most** shade in the garden is partial shade – an area that receives sun some time during the day. In Texas, it's important to distinguish areas by the time of day that they're shaded – for example, shade-loving plants may burn in an area that has afternoon sun. The best shade areas for growing the widest variety of plants experience morning sun then shade from mid-day on.

**So**, you have shade. Now what should you plant? Ferns are the most welcome plants in the shade garden. Southern wood ferns have soft, billowy fronds, while holly ferns are almost spiky. The evergreen autumn fern has new growth that is quite brilliant in shades of copper to red. The fern relative, spike moss, provides a lacy texture as a ground cover in moist shade.

**Other** foliage plants that do well in the shade include two grasses – inland sea oats for dry areas and sweet flag for that damp low-lying area. I grow sea oats along my wire fence to provide a non-solid barrier that moves in the breeze; some golden sweet flag has found its home by my water garden. Several clumps of cast iron plants with sword-like leaves have provided a deep green background, but after a gopher ate his way through several clumps, I'm moving them to pots.



Southern wood fern adds grace to the shade garden



Hosta 'guacamole' combines beautifully-colored leaves with bright white blooms

**Foliage** plants for shade can provide vivid color. Coleus has many colors available; these tender perennials work as well in pots as in borders, as do caladiums – the white ones seem to brighten my shadiest spot. I have a life-long love for hostas - my mom grew them. I don't have much luck growing hostas directly in the ground – they are too tempting to slugs and snails that like the shade – so I keep most in pots, in a rich organic potting mix. My best performer is a variety called 'Guacamole', with leaves of chartreuse edged in green as well as its offspring such as 'Stained Glass'. The colors are best with morning sun and afternoon shade.



**There** are many shade plants that will bloom in summer in partial shade. My shady garden tends to include plants with a tropical flair, such as gingers and cannas -and some of my cannas bloom well in pretty heavy shade. The native Turk's cap blooms well in the shade, with red, pink, and white blooms followed by cherry-red fruit. Finally, there's a pass-along plant called cashmere bouquet – big, heart-shaped leaves that are somewhat malodorous, with huge pink hydrangea-like blooms that butterflies just love. The only down side is it tends to spread. If you'd like a start of these, I will have some available at our fall plant swap.

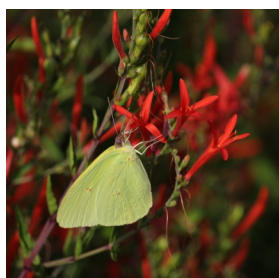
When it's too hot to stay in the sun, enjoy the summer from the shade in your east Texas garden.



Cashmere bouquet can grow to 6' each season

## The Mineola Nature Preserve & Wildscape Gardens “Garden companions” By: Linda Timmons

**One** definition of companion is a person or animal with one spends a lot of time. In our Wildscape garden we have a lot of companions. The companions that are the most obvious right now are the salvia and the bumblebees. The bumblebees' favorite colors of flowers include purple, blue and white-just the colors of the salvias growing at the Wildscape. There are also hummingbirds on the turks cap. Hummers are strongly attracted to bright orange and red flowers that also include the flame acanthus and the Texas Star hibiscus. The Gulf Fritillary caterpillars are munching on the passion vine. This caterpillar is bright orange with rows of black spines. The spines are soft and don't sting, but the larva is poisonous if eaten. The Sulphurs have relatively long tongues and can reach the nectar of the tubular flowers that some other butterflies can't.



This is a Sulphur butterfly on the flame acanthus.

**The** companions that I consider the most important to the Wildscape are the Master Gardeners that work there. I asked them why they come week after week. Getting together with other gardeners was one answer. Giving back to our community and the satisfaction of seeing the native plants and critters thriving is motivation for other gardeners. It is always rewarding to see the joy the gardens bring to people visiting the Nature Preserve. And it seems there's always something new to see and learn. The number one answer to why Master Gardeners come to work at the Wildscape was (drum roll, please) to get volunteer hours!



Master Gardeners work at the Wildscape

# Inside and Outside the Picket Fence

## BY: Jan Whitlock

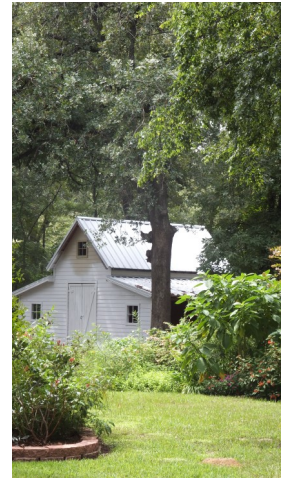
### QUITMAN ARBORETUM AND BOTANICAL GARDENS

I need to begin this article about the progress being made at the Arboretum by mentioning Pam Riley. The 10-year anniversary for the inception of the Arboretum occurs on October 11<sup>th</sup>. How can one mention the many improvements, additions, adventures, parties, plantings, sales, etc. that have taken place somewhere within the perimeter of these 23 acres without mentioning Pam at least once? For those of you who are new to the Wood County Master Gardener organization, Pam was instrumental in gaining permission from the City of Quitman to follow her dream and develop the property into something that would remain for “the long haul”. Many shovelfuls of dirt later this dream has become a reality for those who work there every Wednesday and for those who come out to visit the gardens, walk the trails, buy plants, and enjoy the beauty of East Texas. This “old” volunteer is in awe of how the dream of one person can turn into the passion of many.

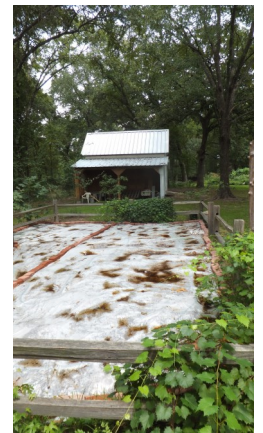
**Thanks** to the barn builders, we have been able to move tools, etc. out of the closet located on the back porch and into the storage area the barn provides. If you have ever tried to find a specific tool in that old closet . . . you will know the excitement of finally having an area in which the light and the room are conducive to organization. Also, chairs and tables have been relocated there freeing up a lot of room in the kitchen area. This allowed a newer model stove to be installed. And stored fine china can now be unpacked and shelved for future use.



**The** new succulent bed is awaiting a load of crushed stone. This should be delivered before the end of August and spread among the many plants that now grace this area. What an attractive welcome to those who park in front of the Arboretum to read the Texas Historical Marker that describes the history of the Stinson House.



**To** the rear of the house, what had previously been a vegetable garden is now being repurposed as an area of serenity and meditation. The plot is now undergoing a solarization process to kill all the grass, weeds and seeds. The split rail fence will then be moved outward a bit to enlarge the area. The details for this project are still being considered and discussed. Mention has been made of asking the community to join us in finding the appropriate name for this site.



**Many** dwarf boxwoods now line the entrance path to the Gazebo. The dogwood trees that had been previously planted in the Gazebo area are continuing to thrive. This area is finally taking on a personality of its own.

**We** have been blessed with an abundance of volunteers in the past few months, and this Friend of the Arboretum would like to say, “thank you” to each one of them. Your presence has allowed us to take many plans off the proverbial drawing board and begin their implementation.

**Future** plans include a Yard Sale on Saturday, September 23<sup>rd</sup>, the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration on Wednesday, October 11<sup>th</sup>, and the annual Fall Plant Sale on Saturday, October 14<sup>th</sup>. We hope you will join us for these events. For more information please read the following article about our new Facebook and website addresses.

There are many other areas that warrant mentioning in this update, however, I shall put these on hold until next time.

Thank you for your continued support.

(Photos by: Sylvia)

## A New Facebook page

By: Elizabeth Neuens

*The Quitman Arboretum and Botanical Garden* now has a **Facebook page** solely to publicize the Arboretum as an organization. A Facebook Page is a business account that represents a company or organization. It allows a businesses/organizations to promote specials and events to followers who have engaged with their page by “liking” it.



The *Quitman Arboretum and Botanical Garden* Facebook page is different than the personal Facebook profile that Pam Riley created years ago for the Arboretum. The page was created to advance the Arboretum's online presence, in accordance with Facebook guidelines.

The Facebook page is now the source for all information regarding the Arboretum, including events, workshops and volunteer opportunities, as well as detailed information about plants and flower beds located on the grounds.

Please visit our Facebook official page at <https://www.facebook.com/quitmanarbortum/> and be sure to “like” and follow it, as well as, “liking” our posts. Consider sharing our page, also, to let others know what's new at the Arboretum. You can “check in” and “review” our page when you visit the gardens as well!

You can also find us on Instagram and Twitter by searching for Quitman Arboretum. Links can also be found on the Arboretum website <https://www.quitmanarboretum.com/>

[Click to return to index](#)

## Did you Know... By: Sylvia Johnson

**...THAT IN TEXAS, THE OFFICIAL STATE ARBOR DAY CELEBRATION IS HELD IN A DIFFERENT HOST CITY EACH YEAR ON THE FIRST FRIDAY IN NOVEMBER?**

Under the leadership of the Texas Forestry Association, Texas first observed Arbor Day in 1889, celebrating the benefits that trees provide over a lifetime. Texas A&M Forest Service revealed that this year's state celebration will be hosted in Grand Prairie. Across the Lone Star State, Texans are invited to the celebration November 3 at Grand Central Park.

“The idea is for everyone in Texas to take one day – the same day – to truly appreciate trees and plant one,” said Paul Johnson Texas A&M Forest Service urban and community forestry program coordinator. “Planting a tree leaves a legacy for future generations while beautifying the spaces where we live, work and play today.” <http://tfsweb.tamu.edu/>

Of course if you cannot attend the big celebration festival in Grand Prairie, you can celebrate right here in Wood County by visiting our own Arboretum in Quitman. The Quitman Arboretum and Botanical Gardens are a perfect example of how the Master Gardeners support and enhance our long history in Texas of being Arborists. (See Jan's article: Inside and Outside the Picket Fence, in this issue, for more information on our 10 year arboretum celebration.)

What is an arboretum (plural: arboreta)? In a narrow sense it is a collection of trees only. Arboreta differ from pieces of woodland or plantations because they are botanically significant collections with a variety of examples rather than just a few kinds. The term arboretum was first used in an English publication by John Claudius Loudon in 1833 in “The Gardener's Magazine” but the concept was already long-established by then. Egyptian Pharaohs planted exotic trees and cared for them; they brought ebony wood from the Sudan, and pine and cedar from Syria. Hatshepsut's expedition to Punt returned bearing thirty-one live frankincense trees, the roots of which were carefully kept in baskets for the duration of the voyage; this was the first recorded attempt to transplant foreign trees. Now you know.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arboretum>



Texas A&M Master Gardeners have a major role in planning, planting, maintaining and supporting the AgriLife Extension and thus Forest Service. Our work benefits the university and our State through many areas of horticulture.





# Integrated Pest Management Works!

## By: Clint Perkins, AgriLife Agent

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) applies to all kinds of pests including those in homes, lawns, gardens, crops and even pests on animals. IPM for the yard and garden, for example, includes planting well adapted varieties that may naturally resist pests, keeping plants healthy and vigorous (and more resistant to insects and diseases), encouraging natural enemies of pests like lady bugs and spiders and, if necessary, using pesticides which are less toxic and break down quickly.

While IPM may be a new concept to many of us, it's old hat to people in agriculture, the industry that pioneered IPM in the United States. Working for decades with land-grant colleges like Texas A&M University, agencies of the U. S. Department of Agriculture and private agencies like the Texas Pest Management Association, farmers and agribusinesses have been developing IPM methods for practically every commodity. IPM makes maximum use of conditions and methods that control pests naturally. Here are some examples of how IPM is used in agriculture to provide us with safe and inexpensive food and fiber. In some of the earliest IPM practices, Texas cotton farmers in the 1920's and 1930's found that destroying cotton stalks immediately after harvest cut down on boll weevil populations. This practice disrupted the life cycle of the weevils by taking away their food source. Other effective practices include scheduling planting and harvesting at times that avoid high pest populations and using fast maturing crops that have limited exposure to pest damage.

Pesticides are often essential parts of IPM strategies, but they are applied typically after field checks or other evidence indicates their use is necessary to prevent extensive crop damage. IPM has reduced pesticide use in some crops by as much as 70 percent. Many chemicals used today are designed to break down rapidly in the environment and target specific pests without harming "good" insects.

Research is making IPM easier to carry out, more effective and more reliable. This is important because IPM practices vary from place to place with differences in climate, growing conditions and soil types. If the past is any indication, IPM is the future of effective pest control. IPM techniques are like a craftsman's box of tools. The more the craftsman learns, the more tools are added to the collection. In the same way, the more that people learn about IPM, the more IPM tools they use. (continued on next page)

### Some Beneficial Insects



<https://vegetableipm.tamu.edu/insects-by-name/>

## 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.

Experienced vegetable gardeners know the value of proper crop rotation. They are aware that certain vegetables planted year after year in the same plot decline in productivity. Consider factors that interact to affect the soil's productive potential if you wish to plant many kinds of vegetables in the same garden each year. Important factors to consider in planning a proper crop rotation are: soil borne diseases, nematodes, soil insects, organic matter, chemical residues and levels of essential mineral elements.

Each family of vegetables has unique effects on the soil and most vegetables within a given family fall prey to the same diseases and insects. Most vegetables planted in home gardens belong to nine distinctive families. It is important to know that the pea or legume family includes peas and beans of all kinds. Beets, chard and spinach belong to the goosefoot family. The mustard family has many members: cabbage, collards, Brussel sprouts, kale, cauliflower, broccoli, kohlrabi, rutabaga, turnip, cress, horseradish and radish. Carrots, parsley, celery and parsnip all belong to the parsley family. The nightshade family encompasses potatoes, tomatoes, eggplants and peppers. The gourd family claims the vine crops: summer squash, winter squash, pumpkin, watermelon, cantaloupe and cucumber. Chicory, endive, salsify, dandelion, lettuce, Jerusalem artichoke and globe artichoke are all included in the composite family. The lily family includes onions, garlic, leeks and chives. Sweet corn is a member of the grass family.

In a small garden, rotate families of vegetables where only a few plants of each kind are planted. For example, treat tomatoes, peppers, eggplants and potatoes as a single group in a rotation. Effectively control common vegetable diseases that survive in soil and attack vegetables by timely rotation coupled with a preventive fungicide program. For example, anthracnose and fusarium root rot fungi build up in beans and peas unless there is a span of 2 to 3 years between plantings on the same plot. Tomato bacterial canker persists in a viable state for 3 years, once it is introduced into the garden soil. Some vegetable varieties resist or tolerate infection by certain fungi and bacteria. A gardener who knows his soil harbors a harmful organism can often select a resistant variety.



Tomatoes, potatoes and carrots are very susceptible to injury by the root knot nematode and favor the build-up of this problem in soils. Corn and other grasses suppress this condition. Wireworms and white grubs thrive in grass turf. A new garden plot usually contains many active soil insects. Sweet corn, watermelons and winter squash are better choices than root or tuber crops for newly tilled soil. Try to follow a crop that supplies a large amount of organic matter with one that favors decomposition of organic matter. Sweet corn produces much coarse crop refuse. Pumpkins, winter squash and watermelons favor the decay of crop refuse. It is important to precede shallow-rooted crops requiring close cultivation, such as lettuce, beets and other greens with clean culture crops such as tomatoes, peppers or summer squash, which tend to extend their roots deeply into the soil.

I hope this helps!

Happy Gardening



For more information:

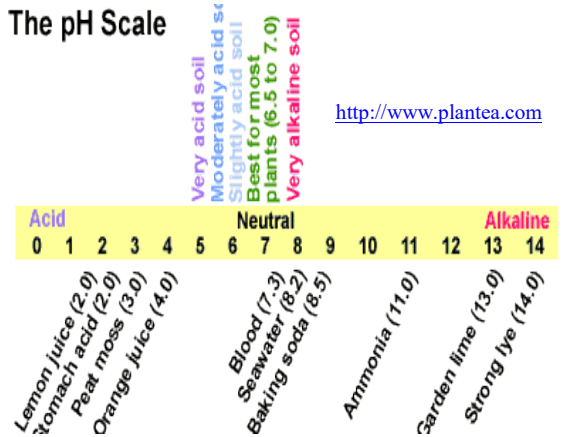
<https://vegetableipm.tamu.edu>

# Test Your Soil \* By: Sandra McFall

Would you put some unmarked ingredient into your cake recipe? Or take someone else's medication? So why would you plant seeds or live plants in soil that you don't know the condition of?

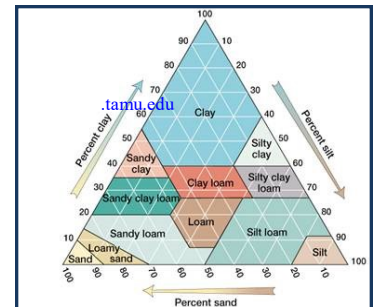
**First**, before you plant, you need to have the soil tested. That can be done by our Extension office. Clint will send it to Texas A&M and then with Clint's help you can be sure just what is needed for your soil and your plants. Plants need more than just food to stay healthy. They need a congenial environment; healthy soil so that the roots can grow, air, water, and nutrients. After you have the soil tested you need to evaluate your soil. What do you see, feel, smell? Many factors can affect the health of your soil such as poor aeration due to compaction, high or low moisture levels, inappropriate fertility or Ph. The soil may need amendments to correct or improve its biological, chemical, and physical conditions for the roots of the plants. Amendments can sometimes add nutrients to the soil, but that is not the primary reason for the amendments. Many are needed to improve the soil to allow the roots to better take up nutrients and to provide moisture and aeration. If the structure of the soil is too tight, etc., amendments are needed to correct this.

## The pH Scale



**Tight Soil:** This could be caused by walking on the area. If this is the cause of the compacted soil then stop walking on the soil. I put a board down between the rows of plants to keep this problem under control. If the area you are working has never been turned (new field), then till. If it is a clay soil, use organic material to aggregate small clay particles into larger units. A one-time digging to 6 inches with a large amount of sawdust, leaves, compost, and any organic material will help. Sawdust is good because it is easier to mix into the clay and it doesn't break down as easily. Don't use sawdust from treated wood. This is an ongoing need, the more compost, the better. It provides a good mix of carbon and nitrogen. Remember; don't walk on wet clay or till it.

**Sterile Soil:** This can be caused from too much commercial fertilizer, excess use of pesticides, top soil being stripped away, or having remnants of mining operations been laid on top of the ground. Sterile soil means the soil is lacking in resident microorganisms. This prevents nutrients being supplied to the plant, which causes pests (insects) and diseases to be more detrimental and also prevents breakdown of compost matter. To correct this problem, add organic material in the form of soil amendments, such as peat, straw, wood chips, and compost. These help provide microorganisms. They feed on the organic material which provides nutrition for the microorganisms to survive. Be sure to check the pH of the soil. Most cultivated plants prefer a slightly acidic soil (a pH of less than 7.0). Provide regular organic material as needed to feed microorganisms.



pH ALTERATION TABLE

Your Soil Type	Organic Matter content	Amount of lime to apply (ounces per square yard)	
		Using Hydrated Lime	Using Chalk or Ground Limestone
Sandy Soils	Medium	4	5
	Low	3	4
Loam Soils	High	16	21.5
	Medium	8	10.75
Clay soils	Low	6	8
	High	20	27
	Medium	12	16
	Low	9	12

**Highly Acidic Soil:** Test your soil to know the pH. Plants generally have a pH range they can survive in. If, however, the pH is below 6.0 for cultivated plants, they cannot absorb the nutrients and elements they need (example, aluminum) and will die. To correct this problem, simply add limestone after the soil test is done. Your agent can tell you how much limestone to add to the soil to bring the pH to its desired range.

<http://farmerfredrant.blogspot.com>

**Highly Alkaline Soil:** Too much alkaline, generally over 8.0, is as detrimental to plants. Plants can't take in iron, manganese, boron, copper, or zinc. Some diseases thrive in alkaline soils. Perform a soil test and then follow the advice of the county agent. The usual correction is to add sulfur to the soil. Peat moss can be used also. It is acidic and will decrease the pH of the alkaline soil.

**Sandy Soil:** The sand has large particles and drains quickly and is unable to hold nutrients. There is good aeration but the plants wilt easily. Plants need a lot of moisture and repeated doses of nutrients. Add plenty of organic material. This will improve the consistency of the soil and help retain moisture and nutrients. Along with adding organic material, add a high nitrogen fertilizer. This is needed because of the quick breakdown of the organic material.

Test your soil every three years, or more frequently if you are having problems with your plants.

\* "Rotation of crops can help build soils. Earthworms and many other beneficial organisms need continual supplies of organic matter to sustain themselves, and they deposit the digested materials on soil aggregates and thereby stabilize them. Also, the living roots and symbiotic microorganisms (for example, mycorrhizal fungi) can exude organic materials that nourish soil organisms and help with aggregation. More info:

<https://agrillifeextension.tamu.edu/solutions/soil-testing/>



*Thus , IPM, Crop Rotation and Soil Testing are all needed to have a healthy and productive garden of any kind. sj*

## Fall Leaves By: Sylvia Johnson



Fall is one of those magical times of year when my spouse and I can sit over coffee and discuss Bob Vila, Popular Mechanics, Northern Tool, Brigs and Stratton, Craftsman and Pinterest gardening pictures while fully understand each other. This is because we are talking leaf mulch, how best to make it this year and where to use it best for our woods.

Whether we rake the leaves and put them through our chipper shredder, run over them with a lawn mower, draw them through a leaf blower or turn them over into the compost pile one thing we both agree upon is not to burn them or bag them for the trash pickup. Did you know the EPA says 13 per cent of municipal waste volume nation-wide is from lawns, parks and other growing spaces? By weight, it is over half. Eight million tons of leaves went into landfills in 2005. Thanks in part to educational programs like Master Gardeners Training, it is estimated the amount has decreased by 6.2% as of Jan 2017.\*\* That is why our mantra is partly "mulch, mulch, mulch"!

Leaves are great for your fall and winter garden. They provide fertilizer. Pound for pound, the leaves of most trees contain twice the mineral content of manure. 50 to 80 percent of all the nutrients trees extract from the ground end up in the leaves. Gathered at their peak and composted correctly, leaves will transfer this nutrition to your soil. \* They insulate delicate roots and provide moisture control. Leaf mold absorbs five times its weight in water. \* Leaves also provide shelter for creatures, if you do not mulch them too finely. In fact, they make a soft insulating bed for a dog or fox during the fall too.

So gather those mechanical catalogues along with your gardening catalogues, have a "cup-a" and make those fall garden plans based upon natural, readily available, free leaf mulch.

\*[www.planetnatural.com/leaf-mold/](http://www.planetnatural.com/leaf-mold/)

\*\*EPA

# 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:** [mgnewsletter@hotmail.com](mailto:mgnewsletter@hotmail.com) You are all invited to submit your thoughts and learnings to this newsletter. You are permitted to count time writing articles as volunteer hours. If you have questions please contact the editor: **Sylvia Johnson** .

—**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 get well, warm thought or sympathy card? Contact **Laurie Fisher**. She will insure one is sent from the Association.

—**Reporter:** To ensure an Associate gets praise/a pat on the back from the community at large, send a message to **Lynn Arron-Speer**. She is the official media contact reporter.

—**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-*