

“MG Wood Works”

EDITOR: SYLVIA JOHNSON

2017
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Nov/Dec

Note from the President: Reggie Askins



Texans have faced a difficult and challenging fall.

With the devastation of Harvey, we have all been proud of the strength and fortitude shown by our fellow Texans. Locally; I have felt that same pride with our master gardeners. Many volunteers have worked like a well oiled machine to save the gardens at the arboretum after three forays by feral hogs. Still their spirit is strong as they salvage what remains and make plans for new gardens. Nothing limits us, not even a broken arm. Linda Timmons carries on weeding one handed at the nature preserve! Gardening truly requires a pioneer spirit as we try to civilize the frontier.

Thank you Melodee for presenting such an informative September meeting. It is so exciting to see the keen interest in specialty training. First and foremost, our purpose is always education and disseminating horticultural knowledge to others. The categories of local and state awards were also presented. By now all should have received via email your ballot for all local awards due November 8. PLEASE, like a good citizen, vote. This is an opportunity to recognize the hard work and creativity of our members. In **November** we will honor our local winners based your needed vote/impute, however I know that you are all winners! Also, I appreciate and value the expertise of our state awards committee, Eileen Bartlett, Jenna Nelson and Marty Da Silva. By the way, if you are selected for a state award nomination, set aside modesty, and be prepared to submit a huge brag bio. The committee needs as much info as possible in order to write our state nominee dossiers.

Thank you Tracy Murphy for offering your home for our **December** meeting. This time of year is so festive and it will be extra special to celebrate at your lovely country home.



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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

November 16 __ Wood County Master Gardeners Association 2017 chapter awards will be awarded. Please remember to get your nominations submitted to Clint before the deadline of **12 NOON, November 8th**. Remember the winners of these awards will be entered as our nominees for the TMGA 2017 state awards. Any full WCMG Associate may be nominated for their work benefiting our association. We will also have A 2017 Project review. This is a great way to learn about all the ongoing permanent projects and the one-time projects that were accomplished during the year.

December 21 __ Our December meeting/Christmas party will be held at Tracy’s house this year. It will be a pot-luck affair. More details and dish sign-up will be announced soon.

Program ideas are welcome for the 2018 CEU presentations during our monthly meetings. If you have a suggestion or a subject you would like to see covered please contact me.

MASTER GARDENERS ARE AHEAD OF THE GAME

Submitted by: Melissa Deakins

In the Health/Good Living section of the summer issue of Martha Stewart Living magazine they listed six ways to benefit one's well-being with summertime experiences. Although here the Texas summertime heat is not really our best time of year, Texas Master Gardeners can enjoy these benefits almost all year long.

LEAN INTO LONGER DAYS: light and time outdoors reboots our brains and we sleep better, are calmer and are able to think more clearly.

SCRAP SCHEDULES: allow for free time, unplug the internet, day dream, reflect, and be spontaneous to replenish maxed-out mental and emotional energy.

STOCK UP AT A FARM STAND: maximize the colors on your plate with locally grown fresh produce and reduce the risk of developing diabetes, heart disease, and certain cancers.

BEHOLD BEAUTY: find a spectacular site while on vacation or just catch a stunning sunset one evening. Viewing things that go beyond our understanding triggers an anti-inflammatory effect and also tends to make us more empathetic to others.

PLAY LIKE A KID: dance, goof off, laugh and try new things to strengthen bonds with others, think more creatively and decompress when stressed.

GET YOUR HANDS DIRTY: physical labor through gardening gets you out of your head and close to the earth, builds upper-body strength and is as healthy as a brisk walk. Studies show that women who garden feel deeply rooted to their communities, eat more fruits and vegetables, and best of all average female gardeners weigh 11 pounds less on average than non-gardeners. Granted I would love to weigh 10 pounds less, but if I did not garden it might be 21 pounds.

KEEP ON GARDENING!



Peaceful view MNP

The Mineola Nature Preserve & Wildscape Gardens

By: Linda Timmons Photos by: Rhonda January

Wildscape Garden in the Fall and Winter

Believe it or not the Wildscape is as colorful in the Fall as it is in the Spring. The colors are different. Pinks and whites are rare but there's lots of yellow, gold, orange, red, and purple. Notice those are warm colors, like maybe the plants that bloom in the Fall have absorbed all the Summer heat and are exploding with the hot colors.



Bumble bees, honey bees, and butterflies are busy enjoying the nectar and pollen. We haven't seen any hummingbirds since early October but I wouldn't be surprised if the occasional stragglers enjoying the Turk's Cap and Flame Acanthus.

We had a small group of kids visit the Wildscape for "some learning in the garden" recently. We began their visit by teaching them how to sow wildflower seeds. Then they were grouped by age for the remainder of the lessons. Teresa Reunion explained the water cycle with games and a worksheet.



Linda Avant showed them how to identify the venomous snakes of East Texas. A "snake hunt" followed (yes, we used artificial snakes!).



I gave them an introduction to plant classification and binomial nomenclature. It's a lot more fun learning about plants and their names when you have the plant growing right in front of you.

Late fall and early November the grasses and berries will be the Wildscape stars. Not only are the grass seed heads and berries beautiful they're great food for the winter birds that will be arriving soon. Bluebonnet seedlings are up all over the garden. Most of the rest of the wildflowers are waiting for the Fall rains to germinate. The spring flowers that we enjoy so much will be growing roots all Winter. Sometimes it's hard to tell the "weeds" from the wildflowers.

Don't put off visiting the Wildscape garden until Spring. It's a great place to visit year around.

Be on the lookout for a Thank You Note... By: Sylvia Johnson

Our Association Reporter has been hard at work lately. Part of her job description is to recognize Associates and members of the public who do "nice and thoughtful" things for our Master Gardeners Association. It is always nice to know we are appreciated when we take the extra step in life. So, whether you are the one who brought that great snack to the meeting, a public sponsor, or someone who is always quietly working behind the scene, Lynn is here to make sure you are noticed. Lynn says, "Please ask the membership to alert me to things that would merit a card. They should use the address that is on record in the TMGA Volunteer (Hours) Management System."

I received an E-card note from her this week and almost deleted it by rote. We are told not to open E-mails from a person we do not know; this note said it was from **Jacquie Lawson**. I do not know such a person. However, in the subject line I did see that it was a note from Lynn AronSpeer. OK, I do know her! So, please be on the lookout for E-cards from Jacquie Lawson and don't delete. I know you will enjoy opening a card as much as I did. For anyone who does not have an E-mail on record with us Lynn will continue to send "hard copy" notes and cards. **Thank you Lynn** for the great work.

Inside and Outside the Picket Fence

BY: Jan Whitlock

QUITMAN ARBORETUM AND BOTANICAL GARDENS

I must begin by recognizing those stalwart volunteers from the Wood County Master Gardener Class of 2017 for their unwavering support of the Arboretum. A trusty band of weeders, planters, pruners, and general jack-of-all-trades . . . these folks have given us much needed support during our recent attacks by hairy hogs. I do not like admitting defeat in the face of adversity but to this unseasoned eye I would have to say that the hogs are winning.



<https://www.bing.com/images>
modified by sj

In retrospect, I would have to say it would take a lot of planning and work if I were to completely overhaul the gardens I have established in my yard. So, “hats off” to our planners and planters as the gardens will eventually evolve into re-claimed areas for the public to enjoy. This will be an ongoing project which we can use to educate the public on garden disaster recovery also.

An “intensive care unit” has been established in what used to be an heirloom vegetable garden. Within this area rest the plants that have been attacked, uprooted, and generally left for dead by these hogs. Lin Grado and her crew have saved many favorites by placing them in this fenced in area. Interestingly, this area is now under design as a dedicated memory/reflection garden. The Plans for this piece of land are posted next to the site.

We thank those who came out to help us celebrate the 10th anniversary of the founding of the Quitman Arboretum. We celebrated all those who willingly gave of their time and energy to transform a heavily wooded area into a lovely cultivated area.

We are now looking forward to The Haunting of Hogg Park. This event will take place at the Arboretum on Halloween night, and with a little bit of luck, and many participants in the Scream Contest, perhaps we can drive the feral hog population into the next county! We will let you know if it works!

Before



<https://www.quitmanarboretum.com/>

After



<https://www.facebook.com/quitmanar>

Note from the Editor: The photo above showcased the beautiful rose beds installed and tended by Master Gardeners in the past. Unfortunately, they were among the destroyed beds. Volunteers are needed to help revive as well as reinvent this Flagship Project. Work days and hours may be found on their web-site. The general public is encouraged to participate on any Wednesday. sj

2016 Master Gardeners Association Awards Nominations Due Submitted by: Peggy Rogers

It is that time again! Deadline! Please email your nominee for the End of Year Awards to Clint **by 5:00pm on Wednesday, November 8th**. Awards will be presented at the November 16th meeting.

The attached form gives you the list of awards and a short explanation for each award.

You do not have to use this exact form! You may just type your nominee's name within the body of your email with a brief explanation of why they deserve the award. Send to: ctperkins@ag.tamu.edu

1. Innovator _____

Explain why are you voting for this person? _____

An Innovator is ready to try or introduces new ideas, ready for change, new experiences and use multiple sources for making a decision to get the job done. Approaches a job with a "get- r-done" attitude!

2. Project Leader _____

Why are you voting for this person? _____

The project leader is in charge of a project at a physical location works toward displaying best horticultural practices for educational purposes. The individual is involved in planning, development and implementation of a project. (Anyone that is associated with a project. It is an award that shows leadership in a project. It doesn't have to be a project chair. It could be a MG that showed leadership in a certain project within a project. That's what I think. Clint)

3. Community Outreach _____

Explain why ____ Outreach person creates and plans for the Master Gardeners in educational and activities. They collaborate with community leaders and individuals to promote the Texas Master Gardener program.

4. Outstanding Master Gardener of the Year _____

Explain why ____ The Outstanding Master Gardener of the Year should have involvement and contributions during the year that is of primary importance, but prior year contributions or involvement may also be considered. The individual should have involvement that has educational value/benefits for the Master Gardener program.

5. Rookie of 2017 _____

Explain ____ An individual from the 2017 Trainee Class that exemplifies and promotes the Texas Master Gardener program through leadership and volunteer service.

HAPPY THANKSGIVING and MERRY CHRISTMAS!!!

By: Clint Perkins, AgriLife Agent

Turkey and dressing. Mounds of steaming vegetables. Shining, freshly baked bread. Pumpkin pie. Sounds good, doesn't it? The abundance of food during the holiday season, and throughout the rest of the year for that matter, is a tribute to the efficiency and effectiveness of the industry that we call agriculture. It is one of the most important industries in Texas and the United States. Many businesses, financial institutions and individuals are involved in providing supplies, credit and services to the men and women who work as farmers and ranchers.

The United States is blessed with abundant resources and excellent technology to help us lead the world in agriculture and maintain one of the most advanced and successful societies that the world has ever known. The richest resource, however, of American agriculture is its people - over 23 million men and women whose talents and efforts drive the efficient productivity of our food and fiber industry. They seek to produce the best crops, raise the healthiest livestock and maintain a sound stewardship of the land. The initiative, creativity and plain hard work of these people are one of the cornerstones to the efficiency of agriculture and its ability to compete in a world market place. It's in everyone's best interest for our farms and cities to remain strong, healthy and viable.

As the population becomes increasingly urban, it is essential that the importance of agriculture is understood by all. You may not think about where your food originates, but you should. The income of over 23 million Americans, or one in five jobs, depends on the production of reliable, efficient farms and ranches.

Compared to the rest of the world, we live in an affluent society with good: safe food, education, transportation, communication and opportunity. Still, we need to improve the understanding of the important contributions each of these two groups (rural and urban) make to the wellbeing and prosperity of the other. It is essential for us to understand our similarities, differences and interdependence.

With an increasing demand for food and fiber worldwide, and because of the importance of agricultural exports to this nation's trade balance, agriculture is destined to play an ever-expanding role in the future. The value of the Wood County Agricultural Income receipts is over \$172 million. The diversity of agriculture in our county with beef, dairy, fruit, vegetable, timber, horticulture and other commodities will ensure that we have a definite role to fulfill in the future.

As we sit down to Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners with our friends, relatives and neighbors this year, pause and give thanks for the farmers and ranchers of the UNITED STATES of AMERICA who make it possible for most of us to enjoy an abundance of food and fiber. Also, let's not forget our United States Service Members who are deployed protecting our freedom and cannot share in this abundance with their friends and family. God Bless them for their service!

From my family to yours, Happy Thanksgiving and Merry Christmas!



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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Texas Master Gardeners 2018 Conference

Submitted by: Peggy Rogers, TMGA President



Honoring the Past; Celebrating the Present; Embrace the Future Celebrating 40 Years 1978 - 2018

Host: Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

Co-host: Texas Master Gardener Association
cooperating with Brazos County Master Gardeners

Host Hotel: Hilton College Station Hotel and Conference Center

Where: The New Gardens at Texas A&M College Station

When: April 4-6, 2018

What:

- Organic Gardening Techniques That Work
- Texas Plant Explorers
- How to create a Garden of Love, not a Labor of Love
- Butter Beans to Asian Greens, Old favorites and New flavors
- Old Roses — Peggy Martin herself will present the Peggy Martin Rose
- Succulents: They're just plants.

Speakers you will not want to miss:

- ◇ Ever heard of Buchart Gardens? You can hear more from Rick Los, Director of Horticulture of Buchart Gardens.
- ◇ How about how the Master Gardener program started in the state of Washington? Oh, yes, the man himself David Gibby will be speaking.
- ◇ A pilot training program on Leadership. This is just a few ideas of what will be offered.

Volunteers needed: nmaddams@tamu.edu

- ◇ Be a Conference ambassador
- ◇ Be a "town crier" by sharing information
- ◇ Be a Volunteer during the event

Photos wanted: Send

- ◇ A 'selfie' of you in your Master Gardener attire or
- ◇ A group photo of your association or
- ◇ A photo of one of your groups projects or
- ◇ A photo of something you do when NOT being a Master Gardener.

Fall and East Texas Natives By: Lin Grado

The third week in October was Texas Native Plant Week, and many beautiful native plants were in bloom in east Texas. Native plants are adapted to local conditions and, since they evolved with local wildlife, offer food sources to pollinators and our wildlife.

Even though a plant is a Texas native, it may not thrive in east Texas. Our soils are mostly acidic and our humidity high, natives of central or west Texas may struggle, as they've developed under very different conditions. Even those plants native to east Texas may have specific needs, such as amount of sunlight or water. To select the right plant for the right spot, use the resources from the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center; they have a list 'commercially available native plant species suitable for planned landscapes in East Texas'.



Blue mistflower a great groundcover

Choose native plants that can fill a need in your garden, and you can enhance your existing landscape. For example, you may have noticed blue-to-lavender fuzzy blooms in roadside ditches right now. This blue mistflower or wild ageratum can be used as a groundcover in a garden bed – it will grow in sun to part shade, and prefers moist soil, so an irrigated bed is best.



Maximilian sunflower is a striking native perennial

Most gardeners plant annuals or perennials to provide color. Flowering natives such as Texas sage (a red-flowering shade-tolerant annual) and mealycup sage (blue or white long-blooming perennials) can add color through the fall to almost any garden in east Texas. Fall asters have blooms ranging from whites to pinks and blues; my favorite is the vivid blue of aromatic asters. For a striking plant, choose Maximilian sunflower, a perennial sunflower that can grow to ten feet, covered in three-inch blooms on its branching stems. You can see this specimen plant currently in bloom at the Quitman Arboretum, along the fence bordering the Carroll Green Civic Center. If you choose this native for your garden, give it plenty of room (and have a way to stake it) – it will reward you with brilliant flowers, while providing seeds for wildlife.

There are many native shrubs for your garden, and one of my favorites is flame acanthus, a full-sun plant with arching stems up to five feet, and scarlet-orange blooms. A common name is 'hummingbird bush', and you'll likely see hummingbirds feeding on it. This shrub can die to the ground in cold winters, but bounces back. It responds to shearing, so is suitable for a formal area, and can also be grown in containers.

American beautyberry is not in bloom this time of year, but its berries provide an electric purple color in the landscape. The shrub can be a bit unsightly in dry summers, so plant it in the back of the border and wait for its time to shine. You can cut it short (about a foot tall) in the winter to try to contain its size, or limb it up so that you can garden under it. I have not found any other pruning to actually improve its appearance. Deer love the leaves, which are reputed to repel mosquitoes when crushed and rubbed on skin; the fruit makes a very pretty jelly.



Beautyberries add color to your shrub border in fall

Finally, as cooler days and nights arrive, look to native shrubs and trees, small and large, for fall interest. The leaves of oak leaf hydrangeas, flowering dogwood, and rusty blackhaw turn shades of maroon before they drop, followed by a later similar change in the leaves of Carolina buckthorn. Farkleberry and Virginia sweetspire can have fall foliage of yellow, orange, or red as days shorten. The woods around east Texas will have vivid red highlights from blackgum, red maples, and many oak trees, with other native trees showing warm yellow foliage. If you're buying trees for fall color, be sure to select them now, as the color can vary greatly from tree to tree.

While most people think of wildflower meadows when they think of native plants, you can select suitable native plants to enhance your east Texas gardens.



Oak leaves turn shades of maroon

Did you Know... "Why spices taste good?" Submitted by: Sylvia Johnson

Why does my neighbor love hot spicy burn your tongue off curry while I won't even eat mild salsa? I was tired of trying to answer this question every time we go out for a meal. So, I researched the subject and here is a great article that I, and you, can now use to explain this difference. It made sense to me as my neighbor and I have ancestors from different parts of the world!



Clip-art

"Humans' use of antimicrobial spices developed in parallel with food-spoilage microorganisms, Cornell University biologists have demonstrated in a international survey of spice use in cooking."

The same chemical compounds that protect the spiciest spice plants from their natural enemies are at work today in foods from parts of the world where -- before refrigeration -- food-spoilage microbes were an even more serious threat to human health and survival than they are today, Jennifer Billing and Paul W. Sherman report in the March 1998 issue of the journal Quarterly Review of Biology.

"The proximate reason for spice use obviously is to enhance food palatability," says Sherman, an evolutionary biologist and professor of neurobiology and behavior at Cornell. **"But why do spices taste good?"** Traits that are beneficial are transmitted both culturally and genetically, and that includes taste receptors in our mouths and our taste for certain flavors. People who enjoyed food with antibacterial spices probably were healthier, especially in hot climates. They lived longer and left more offspring. And they taught their offspring and others: 'This is how to cook a mastodon.' We believe the ultimate reason for using spices is to kill food-borne bacteria and fungi."

Sherman credits Billing, a Cornell undergraduate student of biology at the time of the research, with compiling many of the data required to make the microbe-spice connection: More than 4,570 recipes from 93 cookbooks representing traditional, meat-based cuisines of 36 countries; the temperature and precipitation levels of each country; the horticultural ranges of 43 spice plants; and the antibacterial properties of each spice.

Garlic, onion, allspice and oregano, for example, were found to be the best all-around bacteria killers (they kill everything), followed by thyme, cinnamon, tarragon and cumin (any of which kill up to 80 percent of bacteria). Capsicums, including chilies and other hot peppers, are in the middle of the antimicrobial pack (killing or inhibiting up to 75 percent of bacteria), while pepper of the white or black variety inhibits 25 percent of bacteria, as do ginger, anise seed, celery seed and the juices of lemons and limes.



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The Cornell researchers report in the article, "Countries with hotter climates used spices more frequently than countries with cooler climates. Indeed, in hot countries nearly every meat-based recipe calls for at least one spice, and most include many spices, especially the potent spices, whereas in cooler countries substantial fractions of dishes are prepared without spices, or with just a few." As a result, the estimated fraction of food-spoilage bacteria inhibited by the spices in each recipe is greater in hot than in cold climates.

Accordingly, countries like Thailand, the Philippines, India and Malaysia are at the top of the hot climate-hot food list, while Sweden, Finland and Norway are at the bottom. The United States and China are somewhere in the middle, although the Cornell researchers studied these two countries' cuisines by region and found significant latitude-related correlations. Which helps explain why crawfish *etouffe* is spicier than New England clam chowder.

Sherman says. "Everything we do with food -- drying, cooking, smoking, salting or adding spices -- is an attempt to keep from being poisoned by our microscopic competitors. They're constantly mutating and evolving to stay ahead of us. One way we reduce food-borne illnesses is to add another spice to the recipe. Of course that makes the food taste different, and the people who learn to like the new taste are healthier for it."

Top 30 Spices with Antimicrobial Properties

(Listed from greatest to least inhibition of food-spoilage bacteria)

1. Garlic
2. Onion
3. Allspice
4. Oregano
5. Thyme
6. Cinnamon
7. Tarragon
8. Cumin
9. Cloves
10. Lemon grass
11. Bay leaf
12. Capsicums
13. Rosemary
14. Marjoram
15. Mustard
16. Caraway
17. Mint
18. Sage
19. Fennel
20. Coriander
21. Dill
22. Nutmeg
23. Basil
24. Parsley
25. Cardamom
26. Pepper (white/black)
27. Ginger
28. Anise seed
29. Celery seed
30. Lemon/lime



Clip-art

Grandma Mary's chicken soup, Grandpa Sven creamed herring, Uncle Lo's General Toa's chicken or Cousin Jose's gingerbread cookies we usually crave or like what food our ancestors laid the pathway for us to follow. Think about it. What is your "comfort food" and what does it say about your ancestors? However, we are luckier than they because in modern society we get to experience all "ethnic" foods if we want. How many times do we ask ourselves "What kind of food am I hungry for tonight? But, I still do not like hot spicy food!

Source: "Antimicrobial Functions of Spices: Why Some Like It Hot," Jennifer Billing and Paul W. Sherman, The Quarterly Review of Biology, Vol. 73, No.1, March 1998

SOIL IS THE KEY TO GOOD GARDENING!

Submitted by: Peggy Rogers

THE EARTH-KIND™ GUIDE TO HEALTHY SOILS ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

We should manage landscape beds, vegetable gardens and fruit plantings in much the same way that Mother Nature sustains the soil in a mature hardwood forest.

Earth-Kind™ Environmental Soil Management is a compost and mulch only approach. The incorporation of compost and the application of mulch to soil surfaces will:

- a) Attract and increase microbial activity and earthworm population which will loosen and aerate the soil and improve the soil thereby improving your plant's life;
- b) Promote the development of root systems which will become larger and healthier;
- c) Eliminate the need for commercial synthetic or organic fertilizers;
- d) Reduce salt burn on leaf margins;
- e) Greatly reduce the need for supplemental irrigation - under normal conditions;
- f) Promote the development of a more vigorous plant, increasing the plant's ability to withstand pest infestation and disease.

Texture and Structure are the two components that make up the physical properties of soil.

In Sandy soils, sand particles are numerous. The soil is very well aerated and easy to work, but it does not hold moisture or nutrients.

Loamy soil has a nice balance of sand, silt and clay making the soil well aerated and easy to work. It holds plenty of moisture and nutrients and is the ideal soil type.

In clay-based soil, there are numerous small size particles. Clay soils are typically well supplied with nutrients but low in organic matter. It is difficult to work and it will hold large amounts of moisture causing rotted roots making it difficult for plants to tolerate pest attacks.

(Special Note: Expanded Shale will benefit clay soil by tilling 3 inches of Expanded Shale and 3 inches of compost into the soil. Field testing has shown that Shale and Compost are a great benefit in clay soils.)

Soil pH is depicted on a scale from 1 to 14; pH value of 7 is neutral, below 7 - acidic and above 7 - alkaline.

Soil fertility refers to the amount of nutrients existing in the soil, as well as the pH. To accurately determine the pH and micro/micronutrient levels in your soil, have your soil tested at a reputable laboratory. Contact your local County Agricultural Extension Office for a soil testing kit. Changing the pH and nutrient levels in soil can take from several months to years. It is good to repeat the soil test every 2-3 years.

The Earth-Kind™ approach does not include the addition of any chemical or organic fertilizers. Compost worked into the soil prior to planting acts as the initial boost of nutrients. Maintaining a 3 inch-thick layer of mulch year-round will act as a super-slow-release fertilizer. (*After*) Implementing the Earth-Kind™ system (other than perhaps in desert areas), no additional applications of fertilizer should be necessary.

The advantages of using aged compost in the Earth-Kind™ Soil Management Program (*are*): (1) it adds all important organic matter to the soil, (2) it is very high in beneficial microorganisms, (3) it provides a source of plant nutrients, (4) it is inexpensive, and (5) it is locally available. In truly aged compost, the materials should be decomposed to the extent that their original form is no longer discernable.

Mulch is a layer of material applied so as to completely cover the soil surface (versus a soil amendment which is worked into the soil). Any high carbon, low nitrogen materials (wood or paper) worked into the soil should be fully composted; however, mulch, which is applied only on the soil surface can be raw. The advantages of using an organic mulch are: (1) the decomposition acts as a slow release fertilizer, (2) (*it*) promotes earthworm activity, (3) increased activity of beneficial soil microorganisms, (4) increased moisture retention in the soil, (5) reduction of soil temperature during summer months and insulation of the soil and roots of plants during winter, (6) (*it*) helps prevent weeds and (7) (*it*) makes your garden more attractive. As the mulch decomposes, you will need to replenish it at least twice a year to maintain the minimum thickness of 3".

Websites that offer more Earth-Kind resources: <http://earthkind.tamu.edu>, <http://earthkindroses.tamu.edu>, <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu>, or <http://urbanlandscapeguide.tamu.edu>.

Peggy Rogers. Texas Master Gardener, Wood County Master Gardener's Association,
2017 TMGA President; in association with Texas AgriLife Extension Service, Texas A&M System

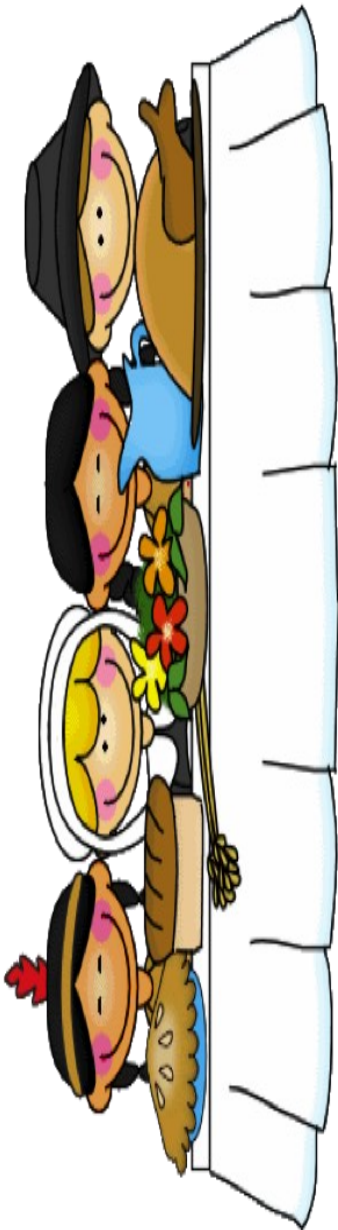
Last Minute Reminders...

1. Please remember to bring your Texas Gardener magazine renewals to Gayle Mullinax. You can drop them off at the extension office. Attach your money or check on the completed renewal form. These make great Christmas and birthday presents for your family and friends. Our Wood County Master Gardener Association gets a percentage of the renewal amount for our educational activities. Thank You, Gayle Mullinax

2. Volunteer hours for the remainder of 2017 should be logged into the system before November 28th. You may estimate your hours. Clint needs these projected hours to include in his report for the Wood County Commissioners. Our formal "mock check" documenting our yearly volunteer time benefiting the county will be presented on December 1 at 9:30 A.M. Associates are encouraged to attend this ceremony. Peggy Rogers

3. December 7—You are invited to the 2018 Training Class Orientation starting at 10:00 A.M. at the AgriLife office. We also invite everyone to attend the first class on January 9th. Linda Bradley

4. December 14—Quitman Arboretum and Botanical Gardens/Stenson House will hold their annual Christmas Open House. All are welcome to attend and/or help out during this occasion. See their website for further details. <https://www.quitmanarboretum.com/>



A Gardener's Thanksgiving

Let us give thanks for a bounty of people:

For children who are our second planting, and though they grow like weeds and the wind too soon blows them away, may they forgive us our cultivation and fondly remember where their roots are;

For generous friends with hearts and smiles as bright as their blossoms;
For feisty friends as tart as apples;

For continuous friends, who, like scallions and cucumbers, keep reminding us that we've had them;

For crotchety friends, as sour as rhubarb and as indestructible;

For handsome friends, who are as gorgeous as eggplants and as elegant as a row of corn, and the other, plain as potatoes and as good for you;

For funny friends, who are as silly as Brussels Sprouts and as amusing as Jerusalem Artichokes, and serious friends, as complex as cauliflowers and as intricate as onions;

For friends as unpretentious as cabbages, as subtle as summer squash, as persistent as parsley, as delightful as dill, as endless as zucchini, and who, like parsnips, can be counted on to see you through the winter;

For old friends, nodding like sunflowers in the evening-time, and young friends coming on as fast as radishes;

For loving friends, who wind around us like tendrils and hold us, despite our blights, wilts and withering's;

And finally, for those friends now gone, like gardens past that have been harvested, and who fed us in their times that we might have life thereafter;

For all these we give thanks.

Reverend Max Coots 1928-2009

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 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-