

MG WOOD WORKS

Edited by: Sylvia Johnson

2018, Issue 1

January/February

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President Reggie Askins: Wishing All a Healthy Happy New Year



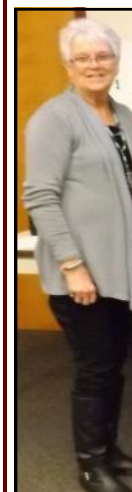
Winter may be a time of rest and renewal for our plants, but not so with our Master Gardeners. The year closed with awards and good-byes.

Congratulations to all association award winners for 2017. Thanks for your talent and time. Nineteen of our members received service pins ranging from five year pins up Pat Johnson’s twenty year pin. Peggy Rogers and Linda Bradley have been our dedicated state directors for several years. You two have served us with honor; remember Peggy was also our State Presi-

dent. Welcome aboard Gayle Mullinax and Charlotte Kettlewell. They will serve as our directors for 2018.

Our awards committee, chaired by Eileen Bartlett, assisted by Marti Da Silva, has been hard at work throughout the holidays. We are applying for four awards including the “Golden Ring”, Outstanding Master Gardeners Association. This team effort is manned by our honorees plus Lin Grado, Melodee Eishen, Gwen Fleishman and your President. Thanks ladies for all your help with this labor

of love. [\(cont. page 2\)](#)



Out going TMGA President, our own Peggy Rogers.

Job well done, Peggy. Thank you for representing Wood County so well during your tenure.

Sj photo from TMGA

VP Melodee Eishen: WCMG Programs for 2018

So I am boldly trying to put together the programming for our Wood County Master Gardeners 2018 year.

A quick review: We started out 2017 with such a bang -out of the gate- program of making "Mushroom Logs", I don't know, but that's going to

be hard to top. Over this past year we have done a "Spring tour at Scarborough Haven", learned how to make goat soap, keep bees, identify prairie lands and learned a little local history, had insight and 'taste' into the old way of preserving- fermented foods, saw a wonderful PowerPoint tour of

our Master Gardeners gardens, exchanged plants and seeds and continuously got updates on all of our projects, advised about how to achieve "Specialists" training and status. And I almost forgot, we had a program on edible landscaping. And to save the best for last,

[\(continued page 2\)](#)

President Article Cont.

Looking forward to 2018: many great programs, our Spring Fling, and helping with the new garden plans at the Arboretum. We still need a Farmer's Market chairman. Your job would be to make sure we have a presence at our two county markets on Saturday mornings. Another need I would like to address this year is the landscape at our Extension Office. I would like to form a committee to address the problems and formulate a low maintenance water wise plan. Please let me know if you agree and want to help.

We had a great turn out at the court house for the presentation of our check. This photo op with Clint was framed and presented to him at our December meeting. Clint, congratulations on your promotion to Smith County, but you will be missed by us all.



(See page # 8 for picture of plaque. sj)

Photo by: Elizabeth Neuens

VP Article Cont.

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(the best for last) or perhaps it should be last, but not least, we look forward to our December meeting to honor those with years of service getting pinned and lots of good food and fellowship. I think it was an outstanding year of programs at the Wood County Master Gardeners Association. Thanks so much for all your help in making 2017 a wildly successful year at WCMG.

So here are my thoughts for 2018 programs. These are tentative and are subject to change. Please note, there are a couple of months that are TBA (to be announced) because I would like your input/vote on what you would like. By the way, if any of you want to volunteer to do a program, please see me. Thanks in advance.

January: A program to help me, I mean us, get inspired to keep a "Garden Journal ". In researching this, everyone claims it really helps to be able to look back and get answers from year to year. When journals are kept, you can get answers to questions like: what did I plant here last year? How much did I spend on my garden? How much produce was produced? What did I do to combat pests and/or diseases? Where did I purchase plants and seeds? When were things planted and harvested? What were the temperatures, general weather, and watering conditions? Notes for next year like - plant more tomatoes! Etc. Etc. The first half of the program will be a few different gardeners discussing how they do their journals (we all have to figure out what works individually for us), and the second part of the program, we will work on putting together a journal of our own, or painting river rocks with names of our plants for plant markers. So bring a journal, Spiral notebook, and or three ring binder to turn into a Garden Journal. Also, if you have card making or paper crafting supplies, like scissors, glue, old magazines we can cut up, etc. it would be appreciated. I think this will be great fun.

February: "Bulbs All Year Long" by Linn Grado. I love bulbs, but I usually think of them only as a spring plant, so I'm excited to learn how I can incorporate bulbs for year round beauty.

March: We have a wonderful opportunity to have Melissa Deakins demonstrate "Floral Design". Don't we all love bringing beauty indoors? Melissa is a wealth of knowledge and quite adept at floral artistry.

April: Directors Program: "40 Years of Master Gardeners in Review". Our Wood County Master Gardeners Directors will be returning from the wonderful TMGA State Conference at Texas A & M in College Station. They will bring us highlights of what they see, hear and tour during the conference. (continued)

May: We are trying to schedule a tour of a "Shade Garden". I know there are many gardeners out there that have a lot of shade and sometimes feel very limited in what they can plant and grow. Perhaps this will be the inspiration you need to transform your shaded space into that spectacular secret garden.

June: TBA. (See below) **July:** TBA (See below) **September:** TBA (See below)

August: "How Does Your Garden Grow?" Linda Timmons (I hope) will put together a PowerPoint of your interesting and successful gardens. So, we should start early and take lots of pictures of our gardens throughout the year of our successes and failures. Thus sharing and enabling all to enjoy, learn and get inspirations for their own gardens.

October: "Seed and Plant Exchange". I enjoyed doing this at the Mineola Nature Preserve this year. Did you? If so let me know, also let me know if there were problems with this location for you. The weather was perfect to take a stroll through the Wildscape gardens when we were finished.

November: "Awards Announcements and Projects Review". The end of the year is a good time to appreciate the hard work done at all of our projects. This program will help us realize the impact we have on our communities.

December: "Years of Service Pinning and Christmas Party". This program will be a wonderful tribute to those who have reached volunteer service milestones. In addition, it will be a chance to get to know each other better and eat great food. Enjoy and Appreciate!

So below are some options to consider for the three months that say TBA. We will vote on these at the December 2017 meeting. However, if you couldn't make it please drop me a line and let me know your thoughts, or see me during the January 2018 meeting for a paper ballot. Thanks in advance for your input.

- 1) "Using Herbs". Some people grow herbs, but then don't really know what to do with them. We will explore and taste, of course, recipes with herbs. We could explore other uses for herbs, like teas, ferments, oils, tinctures, and remedies. Did you know Bay Laurel leaves are supposed to keep out weevils?
- 2) Guest speaker to talk on new water regulations regarding water wells in Texas. New laws will affect those that sell any of their produce at Farmers Markets, etc.
- 3) "It's a Pickling Party!" So do you remember the wonderful program we had last year on the merits of fermenting our vegetables and making sauerkraut? Well, this would be a take-off of that. We would have a short program again discussing all the advantages of fermenting food for our health, then we would bring some produce from our own gardens and make our own fermented goodies to take home and enjoy. We will pass out recipes beforehand. I hear it's a trendy thing to do, having a "Pickle Party".
- 4) Aquaponics. There is an Aquaponics business in Mineola that I've inquired about touring. I find the idea of growing vegetables faster in water, being fertilized by fish very interesting. They sell produce to area restaurants and grocers.
- 5) Native plants. It gets downright exciting to me to finding out what grows natively here in East Texas, and to see how these plants were used for food, medicine, fodder, soap, etc. as well as beauty. I'm collecting more native plants all the time. I really like the idea that these plants usually don't need to be watered or weeded. Nor do they need repeated planting because they self-seed or come out of dormancy after the winter. These plants provide a lot of bang for little trouble.
- 6) Moringa. How many of you know about the most nutritious plant on the planet? Moringa. Did you know it has complete proteins, more calcium than milk, more Vitamin C than orange juice, the highest concentration of chlorophyll of any plant and has the highest Orac number of any food? Did you know you can grow it in East Texas? You can use it in so many ways from an ingredient in salad, smoothies, pesto, meatloaf, soups, and tea. You can use the oil from the seeds, as a water purifier. And, it has uses as a fertilizer and fodder. My family loves it! Just an FYI there's like 1,200 scientific medical studies showing that it prevents, helps with or cures like 300 diseases. We like it for the taste and nutrition.
- 7) Long-leaf Pine. There's an organization that teaches about the history and benefits of growing this native pine. This group is trying to educate people, especially here in East Texas, by encouraging people to grow this type of pine. They also help people get the trees started. These pines grow relatively slow but get very tall. The Mineola (continued)

Nature Preserve has several growing on the premises close to the parking lot.

8) Foraged Food- Do you sometimes wish you knew a little of what our ancestors knew about eating wild foraged food? Just think you don't have to plant it, weed it, fertilize it or water it; just pick and eat. Sounds like a bargain to me. Did you also know that foraged foods many times are more nutritious than the store bought counterparts? You never know when this knowledge might come in handy. I will say, I've got some grandkids that think it's fun to forage with Zizi.

9) Snakes - Many of us have a love hate thing with snakes. We love to hate snakes. Not all snakes are bad; some are actually good to have around, catching rodents and things. However, I must admit, while growing up the only good snake, according to my mother, was a dead snake. So in this program we can learn to identify and appreciate the finer qualities of snakes.

I hope you can find a few topics of interest to pursue as programs.

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I'm looking forward to 2018! See you soon.



Photos by: Sylvia

Jan Whitlock: INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE PICKET FENCE QUITMAN ARBORETUM AND BOTANICAL GARDENS

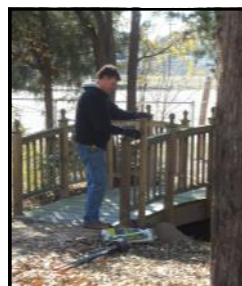
2017 was a most interesting year for those of us volunteering at the Arboretum in Quitman. The addition of some new and return of some ole Master Gardeners helped us tremendously as we weeded, pruned, planted, planned, entertained, sold plants, built and repaired.

The gardens were at their peak this year. This includes the sensory garden, a stepchild from the beginning. Not because we didn't plant and enjoy its beauty, it's location always seemed to put it at the bottom of the "to-do" list. Many of the trees that have been planted are finally coming into their own. Interesting and informative workshops were offered and attended, guest speakers educated us on a variety of subjects. The usual events (plant sales, Fourth of July Celebration, yard sale, Halloween, Christmas Open House) found us with new friends and those who have attended these events from their conception.

A Sunday call from Lin Grado, chief "Guardian of the Gardens", alerted me to hog damage. I grabbed a neighbor and we headed up to replant what had been disturbed. This scenario repeated itself again and again. We grieved, we replanted, we watered, we had an expert with a crossbow wait in the shadows on more than one night, and we erected a large metal trap. We watched ten years of hard work and planning surrender to the forces of nature. The hogs were looking for moist soil and they found it.

To make a long story short, a hog fence has been installed. Under the direction of Todd Neuens, a seasoned fence builder and remodeler in his own right, a hearty band of volunteer fence builders braved some very cold temperatures to install the t-posts and wire mesh. A bit of stretching and tweaking here and there will finalize this effort soon. Only time will tell if the Friends of the Arboretum (and Master Gardeners) will be the victors in this territorial battle.

We would like to thank our friends and neighbors who have made generous donations, allowing us to proceed with this fence installation and give us a bit of leeway in our plans for spring planting. When I think of the challenges Pam Riley and her hearty crew of gardeners faced ten years ago, I hope that we have the same spirit and resolve to begin again. I am confident we do. Thank you, friends, for your time, your money, and your support during very interesting times.



Fence Builders:	Phil Young
Todd Neuens	David Raines
Mark Williams	Joe Mele
Greg Hollen	Tommy Whitlock
Larry Fleishman	Barb Williams
Jerry Kier	



Sylvia Johnson: "Dressing for the Season"

The Stinson House also received it's Christmas makeover. All the volunteers that decorated, cleaned, and served during the busy holiday season are very much appreciated. With their help and ideals it became a wonderland of Christmas nostalgia.



In addition to the festive decorations, the Stinson House received a new microwave and storage shelves for the new storage room. Our thanks go out to all who donated time, articles, and money.



And as usual, no job is complete unless the paperwork is done! Thanks Linda!

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Have you considered donating to Wood County Master Gardeners? We are a 501-c-3 non-profit organization that will joyfully accept your gift and provide a receipt for you tax records. Let your tax donations stay in Wood County and make a difference here to our local residents.

Estate Planning? Consider remembering WCMG in you will or trust.

If you would like to donate to the WCMGA please contact our Treasurer: Tracey Snow Murphy.

Or contact the Wood County AgriLife Office (see page 15 for contact info.)

Sylvia Johnson: Donations are Happily Accepted !

Sylvia Johnson: What is a Texas Master Gardener?



<https://mastergardener.tamu.edu>

Unless you have been through the training program, recertification classes, specialty classes, observed the Associates at work or know a current Texas Master Gardener, you may not appreciate the extensive and in-depth knowledge and work ethics that are combined in our program. These are our Association's guidelines.

Introduction

The Texas Master Gardener Program creates a corps of volunteers with extraordinary talents and abilities. It is imperative that this resource for meeting Extension's goals be understood and managed properly. In making the decision to establish a Master Gardener Program, not only must the time and effort necessary to begin and maintain the program be considered but, more importantly, how the volunteer service from the program will be utilized. Master Gardeners form a network of highly qualified and concerned people who are capable of implementing a wide range of activities useful to the community.

To consider these volunteers cheap labor, useful in handling the less demanding parts of Extension's work overload, is inappropriate. Master Gardeners are trained to help with the work of the Extension office, yet they are not the usual employees. They are loaded with potential that must be used in the best way possible. When a Master Gardener is recruited, Extension obtains horticultural skills in addition to any number of other abilities, including: teaching, public speaking, writing, publishing, managing, designing, analyzing, human relations, mass communication, and computer software and web design.

Defining the Program

The Master Gardener Program is a volunteer development program offered by Texas AgriLife Extension Service and is designed to increase the availability of horticultural information and improve the quality of life through horticultural projects. Program objectives are implemented through the training and "employing" local volunteers, known as Master Gardeners. They aid Extension by conducting school garden projects; answering telephone requests for horticultural information; establishing and maintaining demonstration gardens; working with special audiences in the community; and designing and implementing community improvement projects, as well as coordinating Master Gardener projects.

Program Objectives

The objectives of the Master Gardener Programs include:

- to expand the capabilities of Texas AgriLife Extension Service to disseminate horticultural information to individuals and groups in the community
- to develop and enhance community projects related to horticulture, including: horticultural therapy projects, community gardens, and demonstration gardens
- to develop a Master Gardener network to assist in administration of the local Master Gardener Program
- to enhance 4-H programs through the establishment of 4-H horticultural clubs and Junior Master Gardener groups

As you read our newsletter and learn of all the educational seminars and classes we hold, garden projects we plan and execute, "specialist speakers" we share with the public in educational forums, the class room instruction we provide in County ISDs, the newspaper educational articles written by our Associates and the community outreach events we hold, as well as our web-site and Facebook pages, we hope you get an understanding of how great an asset you have available to you especially here in Wood County, Texas. Happy New Year and be sure to read this bi-monthly publication which is available on our web-site for the public to enjoy. It is a fount of education, information and enjoyable projects. Please share us with your friends and family.

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Millipedes

I have been getting telephone calls about these little worms crawling around outside and inside of people's homes. Millipedes and centipedes are minor nuisance pests that tend to move into houses during brief periods in the fall or spring. Millipedes may feed on tender seedlings in greenhouses and gardens. Control is rarely necessary. If required, it primarily should involve moisture control because these arthropods are susceptible to drying.

Millipedes and centipedes generally are found in small numbers in damp locations around the yard. Occasionally, they become unusually abundant or move into homes, where they may cause considerable concern to homeowners.

The most common millipedes are dark brown and reach 1 to 1 ½ inches when full grown. They are round and elongated, with many small legs. When dead or disturbed, they tend to curl into a tight coil.

Millipedes do not bite or pose any danger to humans. They feed on rotting organic matter such as leaves and wood and rarely feed on tender green leaves and roots. They spend almost all their time in moist areas, such as under rocks or logs and in lawn thatch.

Movement into houses often is sudden and sporadic. Most millipede movement takes place in September and October and again in mid-spring. Invasions often take place shortly after a period of wet weather and end as suddenly as they start.

Because millipedes require high moisture, they usually die in a home within a day or two. Chronic problems are associated with damp conditions. Measures taken to dry out moist areas usually are sufficient. The hard body of the millipede, however, remains intact for a considerable time after it is dead.

Because millipedes cause no damage in homes other than minor annoyance, the best way to handle infestations is to wait a few days for the problem to subside, then vacuum the bodies that remain. Remove debris and other favorite habitats from around building foundations to help reduce problems. Seal or caulk openings around the foundation to reduce future millipede problems.

Where problems are more severe, band the foundation exterior with an insecticide to prevent movement into homes. Sprays or dusts containing diazinon, malathion, carbaryl (Sevin), (Baygon), and pyrethrin applied around building foundations may provide some control.

Happy Gardening

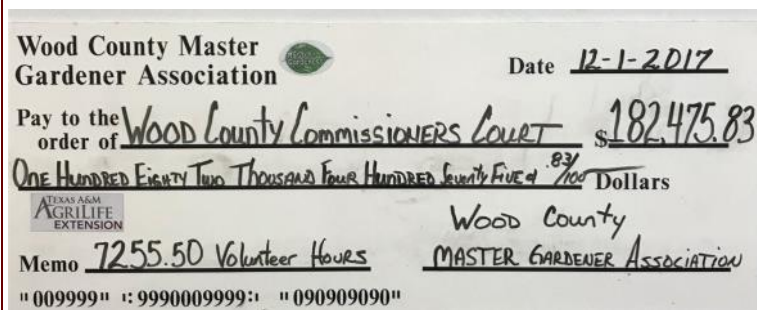
For further information: <https://texasinsects.tamu.edu/centipede-millipede/>

Photos: Wikipedia



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**Sylvia Johnson: 2017 Wood County
Commissioner's Court**



Clint Perkins, Wood County AgriLife Agent, presented the Wood County Commissioner's Court with a mock "CHECK" that showed the work and dedication demonstrated by the Wood County Master Gardeners Association this year. The check represents the dollar equivalent saved by the education classes provided, projects planned and implemented, and labor saved on all Wood County Garden Projects, Nature Preserves, the Arboretum, County ISD Programs and the Stinson House. These savings are due to the volunteer hours worked by our Associates.



Clint Perkins

Thank you for Your Leadership and Encouragement – Wood County Master Gardeners Association 2006-2017

(Inscription Printed with Photograph of WCMG Presenting Check at Courthouse on December 1, 2017. Gift given to Clint Perkins.)

Clint reported that the Association had reached over 4,000 people in their educational programs this year. In addition the Association was the home to the Texas State Master Gardener President, Peggy Roger. Also in 2017 Lin Grado was voted Texas Master Gardener of the Year. The association's newsletter, "MG Wood Works", edited by Sylvia Johnson, was voted 2017 Texas Master Gardener Written Education #1st Place winner.

In attendance at the ceremony were: All 5 County Commissioners, AgriLife Agent Clint Perkins, our Association President Reggie Askins and in alphabetical order: Ellen Atkins, Linda Bradley, Katie Carter, Melissa Deakins, Marty Desilva, Melodee Eishon, Lin Grado, Sylvia Johnson, Charlotte Kettewell, Gayle Mullinsax, Keith Mullinax, Tracey Murphy, Jeanna Nelson, Elizabeth Neuens, David Rains, Gloria Jeane Roswell, Deena Taylor, Linda Timmons, Barbara Williams and Phil Young.

Photos by: Ernie Johnson

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2017 WCMG Awards



Innovator of the Year 2017

Melodee Eichen

Community Outreach Person of the Year 2017

Lin Grado



Project Leader of the Year 2017 (tie)

Barbara Williams

Rookie of the Year 2017

Elizabeth Neuens



Project Leader of the Year 2017 (tie)

Linda Bradley

Wood County Master Gardener of the Year 2017

Linda Timmons



Certificates of Appreciation were awarded to the WCMG Officers of 2017.

President – Reggie Askins

Vice-President – Melodee Eishen

Secretary – Jan Whitlock

Treasurer – Tracey Snow Murphy

We are grateful for the well run year. These Officers showed their dedication and inventiveness while promoting comradery in all programs.

Thank You and well done!

Photos by: Elizabeth Neuens

Lin Grado: Books for East Texas Gardeners

I love reading about gardening almost as much as I love gardening. I have an ever-growing library of gardening books, many previously-owned, with notes and marks from previous gardeners in the text. One note may read 'try this with lilies', while another may say 'didn't work in sun'. Used books – pennies on the dollar; advice from a gardener- priceless! Since I haven't found a used book store nearby, my sources are estate sales, library sales, and websites (Thrift Books and Amazon are two I frequent). My garden library has long since spilled out of its small bookcase in my office to occupy a reading corner in my sunroom.

I feel I may be alone in collecting gardening books – most think it's easier to search the internet for anything they need to know. After all, the answer is just a Google away. Well, actually, 10,000 answers are just a Google away. How do you know which answer is the best for east Texas? I prefer to keep on hand some reference books by authors I trust, as my first source of information.

The first reference book I bought after moving to Texas was written by local organic guru Howard Garrett, the Dirt Doctor. My copy of his 'Organic Manual' is just about worn out from use over the past 20 years. His common-sense approach to gardening – to feed the soil, not the plants – and use of feed-store amendments, has struck a chord with me: I'm gardening like my grandma did. His 'Texas Organic Vegetable Gardening' focused on growing plants 'the natural way' - with no chemical fertilizers or pesticides. Some of his other books like 'the Texas Bug Book' and 'Texas Trees', have also earned a place in my library – they are comprehensive and totally Texan.

Once I covered the basics in my library, I branched out to books that appeal to my gardening passion. I happen to be a bulbophile – I'm obsessed with bulbous plants - so I have several books on bulbs. The best references for Southern bulb growers are 'Bulbs for Warm Climate' by Thad Howard and 'Garden Bulbs for the South' by Scott Ogden. But my favorite bulb books to read are written by Chris Wiesinger – his latest, 'The Bulb Hunter', was co-authored by Dr. William C. Welch. Chris's books tell stories of his adventures in finding bulbs at old home sites in Texas and are great reads, providing a sense of history as well as being great resources for Texas gardeners.

There are certain Southern authors who entertain as well as inform. I would read a cereal box if it were written by Felder Rushing. A friend gave me Felder's book, 'Tough Plants for Southern Gardens', and I love his advice to gardeners: "Find and plant things that grow themselves". Felder also collaborated with another outstanding Southern garden writer, Steve Bender, on 'Passalong Plants', a fascinating guide to heirloom plants that have graced Southern gardens for decades – many of which now grow in my garden. Steve also writes for Southern Living as the Grumpy Gardener, and I look forward to purchasing his book of the same name.

In addition to my home library, I keep field guides in my car – after all, who doesn't need to look up a wildflower while they're out and about? My favorite wildflower field guide is 'Wildflowers of Texas' by Geyata Ajilvsgi – the plants are arranged by color of the flowers, and that makes it easier to identify a plant. (Ajilvsgi also wrote 'Butterfly Gardening for Texas', another comprehensive work for the Texas gardener.) The other field guide that I keep with me at all times is Stan Tekeila's 'Trees of Texas Field Guide': two pages per tree provide all the information you'll need to identify many different Texas trees.

So whether you're looking for a gift for a gardener or for a gardening book for yourself, head to a used book store or log on to your favorite website. You'll be sure to learn more about your east Texas garden.



A gardener's bookcase is as colorful as the garden



There are a wide array of gardening books that can be purchased second-hand.

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Original Photo: Ernie Johnson

Photo of Plaque: Reggie Askins

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Linda Timmons: Texas Native Plant Information Web-Sites

Native plants in the home landscape is “in”. Using natives benefit the environment by using less water, fertilizer, and pesticides. Here are a few good sources for finding appropriate native plants to use in your landscape. Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center is dedicated to the conservation of native plants in natural and designed landscapes.

(<https://www.wildflower.org/plants/>)

Their Native Plants Database is available to explore native plants in all of North America. Select “Texas” in the option for state to search the native plant data base by scientific or common name or choose a particular family of plants. You can also select by type of plant (herb, perennial, tree etc.), bloom time, soil moisture and light requirements. Or you can select “recommended species list” at the beginning of your search. This will give you the option of searching directly in the Texas-East section.

Texas SmartScape™ is helping to promote education on pollution prevention through efficient and effective water use for the benefit of our citizens.

(<http://txsmartscape.com/>)

Their Native Plants Database is available to explore native plants in all of North America. Select “Texas” in the option for state to search the native plant data base by scientific or common name or choose a particular family of plants. You can also select by type of plant (herb, perennial, tree etc.), bloom time, soil moisture and light requirements. Or you can select “recommended species list” at the beginning of your search. This will give you the option of searching directly in the Texas-East section. Texas SmartScape™ is helping to promote education on pollution prevention through efficient and effective water use for the benefit of our citizens.

(<http://txsmartscape.com/>)

The plant data base can be narrowed down by region to North Central, West or All of Texas. I guess because this site focuses on efficient use of water they aren’t as concerned with Northeast or South Texas. You can filter by “Native and Adapted” plants or “Native to Texas” only. This site also has landscape design tools to help you design your own “Texas SmartScape™”. Native Plants of Texas Search Engine is designed to aid with native plant selection for garden planning.

(<http://www.npot.org/>)

Once you click on the scientific name you are taken to Dave's Garden Plant Files for a complete description and pictures. While there are thousands of plants in Dave's Plant Files, this search engine narrows your search to Native Texas Plants, including naturalized and cultivars. Aggie Horticulture has a limited search for native trees and shrubs, only.

(<https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/ornamentals/natives/tamuhort.html>)

(<https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/texasnativesshrubs/>)

These 2 areas are credited to Benny Simpson’s work. Benny was a Texas horticulturist that started looking for drought tolerant plants to use in the landscape in 1973 before it was cool to use natives in landscaping.

If you’re looking for great Texas natives to use in your landscape these sites are good places to start OR you can just come on over to the **Mineola Nature Preserve Wildscape Garden** and see what’s growing.



The workers at the Wildscape have unanimously voted that our next workday will be January 9th at 1PM. We will switch to afternoons until the 2018 training class is done. Wishing you a safe and happy 2018.

Possumhaw berries lite up the Wildscape in winter.

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Lin Grado: Trees that no east Texan should plant!

Once again Texans celebrated Arbor Day, on Friday, November 3. Last year this column addressed some of my favorite trees for east Texas; this year I'd like to write about trees that no east Texan should plant.

When you plant a tree, you're not planting for yourself – you're planting for your children and grandchildren. So when you choose a tree, you should consider the lifespan of the tree. Some trees that are commercially available are very short-lived – you can usually tell because the description on the tag will say 'fast growing' or 'instant shade'. Trees such as silver maples, fruitless mulberries, ornamental pears, and willows may last no more than ten to 25 years, and may have problems during much of that time. For long-lasting trees in east Texas, look to oaks, pecans, and other natives like blackgum. Magnolias and male ginkgoes grow a bit more slowly but are marvelous trees for the landscape.

In addition to these short-lived trees, there are also trees that are subject to frost or wind damage, insect problems, and disease. These include hackberry, Siberian elm, Italian cypress, green ash, and sycamore trees. Other trees are messy, like cottonwood, catalpa, fruiting mulberry, and female ginkgoes. Honey locust trees have those brutal thorns and are best not planted in a landscape. Some of these trees are useful in a wildlife garden, but don't expect them to be a long-term part of the landscape.

The final group of trees that should not be planted is those that are invasive species. While not native to east Texas, these trees are extremely well-adapted to our climate and soils. (Please note that not all non-native trees are invasive.) Since they're foreign to this region, they lack the natural competitors, predators, and diseases that would keep them in balance, so they spread unchecked and form a monoculture. However, our woodlands and pastures are home to many animals including birds and insects, which depend upon native trees for sustenance.

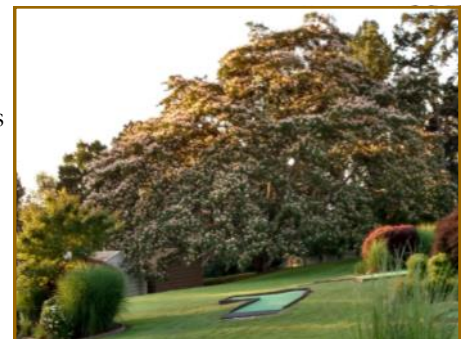
There are several trees that are invasive in east Texas: Chinese tallow tree, chinaberry tree, mimosa, and empress tree. All outcompete native plants, are difficult to eradicate once established (most will re-sprout when cut), and are destructive to our environment.



Chinese tallow trees can grow to 60 feet, with oval leaves and dangling yellow flowers in spring; the white seed pods in the fall are also ornamental. Chinese tallow was brought to the gulf coast in the 1900s by the USDA to establish a soap-making industry. Its leaves contain a toxin that creates a soil environment where other plants cannot grow, and its long taproot ensures its success. Both the leaves and fruit are toxic. Chinese tallow is common in roadside ditches.

Chinaberry tree is a fast-growing tree with lacy dark green leaves, brought to the US as an ornamental tree. I have to confess that it is one of my favorite flowering trees - the lavender blooms in spring are as fragrant as lilacs. The toxic seeds persist on the tree in the fall after the leaves have fallen. Chinaberry is resistant to insects and diseases, so it outperforms other trees. Its fallen leaves increase the alkalinity of the soil, so that native seeds cannot sprout or thrive. You will find chinaberry along roadsides and around old homesteads.

Mimosa is a familiar sight along east Texas roads, with its ferny leaves and showy pink puffball flowers that are fragrant and attract hummingbirds. It was also introduced as an ornamental tree. Mimosa is tolerant of many environments, and forms dense stands that crowd out native plants. Mimosa seeds are remarkable for maintaining viability for as much as 50 years. If growing along a creek or river, the seeds can be dispersed downstream along the banks.



Mimosa dominates this landscape.

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Photo by Katie Carter

The empress or princess tree is one of the fastest-growing ornamental trees in east Texas, with root sprouts growing 15' a year. It has showy purple flowers in the spring, followed by large fuzzy heart-shaped leaves. The empress tree was introduced in the 1800s when its seed pods were used as packing material from China. It rapidly grows in disturbed areas, and each tree produces millions of seeds that are spread by wind.

From these descriptions, you may be tempted to plant an invasive tree in your yard. As stewards of our land, we have to see past their beauty to their potential destruction of native Texas (habitats). Can you imagine no birds or butterflies in your east Texas garden?

Empress Tree is extremely fast growing.

Photo by Linda Bradley



(clip art)

Sylvia Johnson:
2018 WCMG Intern Training Class
Begins January 9

We are all looking forward to this year's Wood County Master Gardeners Intern Training Classes. This year almost all classes will be taught by our own Specialist. We have the great fortune of having many great Associates who have not only taken and recertified each year in all the Texas Master Gardener Classes but who have gone above and attended additional training and educational classes in their chosen subjects. These individuals are now certified to teach subjects according to the Texas A&M research-based knowledge of horticulture. They teach our Interns, other counties MG Associations, and the public at large.

And, it all begins with our own Intern Training Project Group led by Linda K. Bradley. If past years are any indication they have a fun and greatly engaging schedule for 2018. We take this opportunity to welcome the new trainees to our great Association. These classes add on average 20 members to our Associations each year. Classes for 2018 are full but new applications will be accepted July–November 2018. Please call the AgriLife Extension Office (see page 15).

We also remind all current WCMG Associates these classes are a great way to recertify on your yearly CEU requirements. "Each year to maintain certification as a Texas Master Gardener, you will be required to donate a minimum of 12 hours of volunteer service and attend 6 hours of continuing education." says Clint Perkins, former Wood County AgriLife Agent. Each year we learn something new and understand even more than we have before about gardening. After all, gardening is not a static subject. New ideas, ways and means for gardening are discovered every day. So, come to class and learn something new! For the latest schedule and times call or e-mail Linda or the AgriLife Office. Classes will be held every Tuesday starting January 9 thru April 2018.

See you there for knowledge, fellowship, and fun,

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Photo by: Elizabeth Neuens

2018 WCMG Officers

President – Reggie Askins

Vice-President – Melodee Eishen

Secretary – Phil Young

Treasurer – Tracey Snow Murphy

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Online with WCMGA

—**“MG Wood Works” Newsletter:** mgnewsletter@hotmail.com You are all invited to submit your thoughts, lessons, new suggestions or perceptions 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> 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.

—**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 or our Association, send a message to **Lynn Arron-Speer**. 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 WCMG E-mail or on the Member Roster on the Volunteer Hours Website site above.

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

-SJ Editor-

Interested in becoming a Master Gardener and contributing to your county? If so, call the Wood County AgriLife Extension office for more information.

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