



# MG WOOD WORKS



July 2019

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## Melodee Eischen

So, taking this *sustainable* angle a little further I'd like to remind us it's summer. We need to keep up with our gardens. Sustaining the energy and focus is sometimes a challenge with the summer heat. I know the feeling of finally getting every plant in the ground. Yeah! Celebrate! Everything is up and growing; it's all mulched, and so far, we've been getting enough rain that we're not worried about watering yet. However, it's not the time to let things slide. There was a time when I kind of forgot about the garden once it's in because it's so easy to get distracted with kids, grandkids, trips, and other projects. Then I went back to harvest and Okay, let me just say, DON'T expect a great harvest. I'm more diligent now in doing the weeding, checking bugs, harvesting every few days and fertilizing when needed. This all takes that sustained energy to keep your gardens going.

I liked Linda Timmons advice pertaining to observa-

tions in the garden. She gets her cup of coffee in the morning or maybe tea, and does a "walk-about" through her gardens to just check and make sure no insect infestations are happening, weeds are behaving, and all of her plants are in a happy place (or something like that). It was very inspiring.

Some of us have mostly flower gardens which need to be fertilized on a specific schedule according to the type of flower grown. Perhaps you have flowers that need dead-headed, like roses. Again, gardeners must be ever vigilant looking for invasions of damaging insects, mold, scale, etc. and then figure out what course of action you will take depending on your views of commercial chemicals or other, more natural options. All this takes time to do the research by internet hunting, asking our local Extension Agent, Shaniqua Davis, or perhaps contacting your fellow Wood County Master Gardeners.

If your garden is filled with mostly natives, you're lucky, they don't need a ton of care. I love natives from the perspective that I think they are much hardier, need less water, and come back year after year.

On the other hand, if you have a vegetable garden because you intend to eat everything you grow, you need to constantly be vigilant and put in the hours to maintain your garden to a productive level. Watching for the presentation of an infestation, fertilizing, watering and weeding are all things we need to stay on top of to keep our vegetables producing. We can't control the weather, but we must deal with consequences, like too much rain or not enough, too hot or too cool, not enough sun or maybe too much for certain plants. It's a constant monitoring that must happen for us to be successful. Isn't this true in so many areas of our life? I'm focused on gardening because this is written for my Wood County Master

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## 2019 Wood County Master Gardeners



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Photo by Elizabeth Neuens

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## Ann Reynolds Hawkins City Park Garden



The Hawkins City Park project is progressing albeit slowly. The Sensory Garden has filled in beautifully and contains a volunteer squash plant! The soil and compost that was added to this newly created bed certainly helped. Several mothers have stopped to tell us how interesting the plants are and that the children love to touch the Lamb's Ears.

The future butterfly garden is taking a little more time. Park Maintenance finally turned on the spigots and we have been able to water newly established plants. In between rains, watering is done by hose. In addition to the Crepe Myrtle and Rose Bushes, this garden contains Lantana, Zinnias, tropical Milkweed (*Asclepias curassavica*), native Milk-

weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*), Autumn sage (*Salvia greggii*), Bee Balm (*Monarda didyma*), Turk's Cap (*Malvaviscus drummondii*), Cosmos, Purple coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*), Black-eyed Susans (*Rudbeckia fulgida*), Blue/Black Salvia (*Salvia guarantica*), Daylily (*Hemerocallis*), Blue Mist Flower (*Conoclinium coelestinum*), phlox, and Wand flower (*Guara*). For seasonal color, pentas have been planted. In the shade of the Crepe Myrtle there are Purple Heart and Ajuga. The flower bed needs a Butterfly Bush (*Buddleja davidii*) and Flame Acanthus (*Anisacanthus quadrifidus*). Hint, hint!



Happy July 4th

## Melodee Eishen, continued

Gardeners Association. On the other hand, if we have the view that “Life” takes constant monitoring and a lot of work, we tend to be successful, whatever the venture.

Okay, it’s a lot of work. But, it’s also very rewarding. I really enjoy having a son-in-law that walked through my garden and got inspired to go home and plant his own vegetables and fruit trees. I think sitting down to a meal where the vegetables were the star clinched the deal. He had two helpings of salad and four large tacos, all with our garden produce.

I know I’ve heard some of you talking about your grandkids in your garden learning about where food comes from, all the critters that live in the garden and the fun you can have watching them take it all in. Gardening is satisfying on many levels.

Today, my grandkids and I are going to pick green beans, they are four and eight. My plan is to have them snap green beans and if there’s enough, they will help me can them. I call that building family, getting an education, establishing a worthy work ethic, appreciating nature and enjoying the fruits of your labor. Of course, pictures texted to mom will be great confirmation.

I think things like this, that we do with our grandkids and others, is how we inspire others to garden. I love this angle of “Sustainability “. I like the idea of leaving a gardening legacy to our family and friends. When I talk of “Sustainability”, I think of things I can pass on to my children and grandchildren that will enrich their life and they can keep passing that passion for gardening on to their future generations. This is how life works, handing down from one generation to the next. I fully acknowledge that I got my passion for gardening from my grandparents and parents, like they did from theirs.

I really don’t want to see gardening go the way of the dinosaurs. Recent articles on medical websites would indicate that gardening is one of the best things you can do for your health. Gardening helps with getting exercise, out in the fresh air and sunshine, eating nutritious food, building relationships, making us appreciative, helps our mental, emotional and spiritual status. I love how all of this comes together in the cycle of life, keeping us *sustainable*. Happy Gardening!

## Linda Timmons *Plant of the Year*

The Chelsea Flower Show is definitely at or very near the top of garden shows worldwide. So the RHS ‘Plant of the Year’ announced at the show should definitely be a winner. To be considered for ‘Plant of the Year’ new plants are submitted by the show exhibitors. An expert panel reviews all the plants and makes a shortlist. This year’s winner is (drum roll, please) an American.



*Sedum takesimensis* 'Atlantis', won the coveted title from 20 plants on the shortlist. According to the judges, the sedum topped the list because it’s: ‘An attractive, easy to grow, versatile and multi-functional plant.’

*Sedum Atlantis* is drought tolerant and its flowers are attractive to insect pollinators. This sport of a native Korean sedum was discovered in a greenhouse on the banks of Lake Michigan by Dave Mackenzie of Hortech [<https://www.growearthfriendly.com>], who specializes in plants for ground cover, green roofs and walls. Like most sedums, *Sedum Atlantis* is generally evergreen. It grows to about 6” tall and 10-12” wide. This sedum likes bright shade where its wide, white leaf margins really show up. In the Fall the white leaf edges tint pink. If you’re looking for a ground cover or just a little plant to tuck into a container check out *Sedum Atlantis* for three seasons of interest. It thrives in heat, humidity and drought and rabbits and deer won’t touch it!

# Lin Grado

## *Sage Advice for East Texas Gardeners*

If you're looking for reliable plants that bloom in an array of colors through the heat of summer, sages are the plants for you. I'm not referring to culinary sage (*Salvia officinalis*, which deserves a spot in your herb garden), but rather the ornamental plants that are a staple in east Texas gardens. Their blooms provide season-long color in hues ranging from red to yellow to blue to purple to white; their scented leaves are resistant to deer; and their nectar-rich flowers attract pollinators to your garden. You can even enjoy them inside as long-lasting cut flowers in bouquets. Most *Salvias* prefer full sun and well-drained soil to look and perform their best, but there are some that are suitable for the part-shade garden.



Henry Duelberg is a mealycup sage, blooming in early spring with poppies.

Mealycup sage, *Salvia farinacea*, is a Texas native that blooms in blue, blue-violet, or white, depending on variety. They all grow about two to three feet tall and wide, including their foot-tall flower spikes. The foliage tends to be on the grey-green side, which makes a nice contrast in the border. The plants are a little lanky in part sun locations such as my garden, but they still bloom. While you're looking for mealycup sage at the garden center, look for one of its hybrids such as Indigo Spires or the more compact Mystic Spires (*Salvia longispicata* x *farinacea*). These hybrids have similar color palettes – a bit truer blue than mealycup – and texture in the garden. Indigo Spires is suited for the back of the border, as it tends to sprawl, or planted near sturdier companions to contain it. Mystic Spires, at only 18-30", can even be used in a container.



Indigo Spires salvia at the Mineola Nature Preserve

Anise sage (*Salvia guaranitica*) is a favorite in my garden, as it's a great performer in my part shade. 'Black-and-blue' *Salvia* has blooms that are a deep cobalt blue with dark, almost black calyxes at the base of each flower. It grows to three feet tall, starts blooming in spring, and doesn't stop till a hard freeze (its blooms repeat better with deadheading). Once established, anise sage will spread, so you'll have plenty to share with unsuspecting

friends and neighbors. Hummingbirds visit my black-and-blue salvia each morning, ignoring the feeder that's two feet away. Another variety of anise sage, Brazilian sage, has the same blue blooms but with green calyxes. You can find anise sage in lighter shades of blue or different color calyxes, as breeders continue to improve this beautiful sage. Friendship sage (*Salvia* 'Amistad') was bred from anise sage but has deep purple blooms and a grander form. In my garden the plants stand 3-4' tall, with lots of upright branching - one plant is easily four feet wide.



The deep rich purple of the Friendship sage (Amistad) can add depth to your summer garden.

For a smaller spot to fill, you might look at Texas sage (*Salvia coccinea*). This *Salvia* has scarlet-red blooms that you can find in garden centers under the name 'Lady in Red', but it's being developed in many colors including a soft salmon pink called 'Coral Nymph', and the white 'Snow Nymph'. These vase-shaped plants stay about one to two feet tall and wide, but they will re-seed to fill a larger area over time. This Texas native really loves the heat and is tolerant of some shade.

Finally, Autumn sage (*Salvia greggii*) is a woodier, almost shrub-like plant, with small fragrant leaves and lots of flowers. This plant comes in almost every color, from white to purple, red to blueish, yellow, coral, and my favorite shade of fuschia. The plants grow three feet wide and tall, and with light pruning stay very tidy. Each spring trim the stems back to about eight inches, and this will give you a gorgeous shrub that is a favorite of butterflies and hummingbirds.



The deep red of this autumn sage draws the attention of visitors and pollinators at the Arboretum.

We have planted most of these *Salvias* at the Wood County Arboretum & Botanical Gardens – ask a volunteer to point them out or look for the plant tags in the gardens. To sum it up, my sage advice is – plant *Salvia*, and you'll have flowers, bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds in your east Texas garden.

## Shaniqua Davis

### *Problems with Tomatoes*

I've read somewhere that tomatoes are the most popular vegetable grown by home gardeners in America. I don't know if that's really true, but I do think of it as one of the most popular vegetables in East Texas.

I've been asked recently about some problems with our local garden tomatoes. Recent rains and our typical humidity are starting to cause problems on tomatoes for area gardeners. Three different types of issues have been brought to my attention so far this season: fungal disease, physiological problems, and herbicide injury.

We see a world of fungal problems in years like this one where we get so much extra rain. Early blight is the fungal problem that I've seen the most. Early blight, like its name suggests starts its appearance on the older leaves at the bottom of the plant nearest the ground. As the disease progresses, the lesions expand, becoming darker in color with concentric black rings giving a bullseye appearance. Left unchecked, this can spread to the cover the fruit and stems to the entire plant.

Blossom end rot is the common physiological problem that we see most years. Often mistaken for a disease, blossom end rot starts just like the name suggests, a rotting of the tomato fruit at the end where the bloom has fallen off. Not a disease at all, this condition is caused by two conditions working in tandem: low calcium and frequent swings in soil moisture.

If blossom end rot is found on your tomatoes, I've had good luck stopping the progression by spraying the plants with "Tomato Rot Stop". This product is readily available at most garden centers and feed stores. It's really nothing more than calcium fertilizer that you can spray on the plant.

To prevent blossom end rot, you can prevent both triggering conditions. First mulch your tomato plants to keep them from drying out. Secondly, be sure to add lime or some other type of calcium containing soil amendment to the soil. Egg shells have a tremendous amount of calcium in them and serves as a slow-release calcium fertilizer.

Last week a gardener called to ask why her tomatoes had curling, cupped leaves near the top. Commonly, this is from using a broad-leafed herbicide in your garden. The worst case of this that I've heard of happened years ago. A couple new to gardening was sold a "weed and feed" product that was supposed to both fertilize their garden and reduce weeds. Don't ever do this to your garden or you will have a disaster. Weed and feeds are made for your lawn and should only be used in a lawn. Using this product in a vegetable garden would leave only the grassy weeds that typically creep in and would then kill every kind of vegetable you have except maybe corn. You see, everyone of your vegetables is a broadleaf plant.

There is a disease called curly top virus that could also be the culprit of curly leaves at the top of the plant. It affects a number of vegetables such as tomatoes, beans, potatoes, peppers, all the cucurbits, as well as spinach and beets. Curly top and other viruses can only be controlled by stopping the insects that spread the disease. It's a tiny leafhopper insect that spreads the disease in most gardens.

If growing tomatoes is indeed your favorite vegetable to grow, it may hurt you to hear this but one of the simplest and most effective methods to control diseased plants is to simply remove them entirely from the garden to keep the rest of your tomato patch healthy.

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## Ten Reasons NOT to become a Master Gardener

### Ann Reynolds

1. You buy plants. . .lots of plants. . .and put them in the ground only find that they don't grow or grow prolifically. You repeat this cycle until one day it dawns on you, that you should do some research. This leads you to take classes, attend seminars and become a Master Gardener.
2. You sign up for said classes and learn about dirt soil, plant pests and diseases, soil PH, pruning, rainwater harvesting, straw bale and keyhole gardening. This leads to attending every seminar or class within a 90-mile radius of your garden. You are on a first name basis with your local agriculture extension agent. You are accused of stalking him.
3. You learn about poop. . .cow, chicken and rabbit manure, bat guano, worm castings, and frass.
4. Every morning, you HAVE to go to your garden to inspect your plants for growth, blooms, and pests (IPM). This requires you to be out in the fresh air during good or bad weather. This also MAKES you listen to the birds singing.
5. Your spouse notices your success or failure and decides he will garden too. . . without any knowledge of above referenced plants, soil, pests and poop. Said spouse becomes a know-it-all.
6. Your grandchildren will want to "help" in the garden. This leads to dirty clothing, skinned knees and an occasional sighting of a bee or bug which then leads to grandchildren screeching at the top of their lungs. This screeching shatters the experience of quiet, peaceful gardening.
7. The grandchildren will want to pick harvest the fruits of your labors. You will have to supervise because their mommy may find out they eat fruit or veggies straight from the garden (without being washed of above referenced poop).
8. Your success with vegetable gardening may lead to an abundance. This leads to making new friends and talking nice with the neighbors in order to pressure them into taking these unwanted vegetables. When friends and neighbors begin to run away from you when you come toward them with a grocery sack, this leads to depression.
9. You still have an abundance from your garden. This now requires you to learn a new skill such as freezing, canning, and making herbal oils and vinegars. The neighbors and friends think you have retreated back to the 60s and become a reborn hippie.
10. You acquire an entire new wardrobe which includes overalls, clogs, hats and gloves.

Yes, I know I said 10 reasons NOT to grow a garden but I thought of one more!

Growing fresh fruits and vegetables leads to the eating of more fresh fruits and vegetables. This leads to a lower consumption of other delicious foods such as baked goods, desserts, and bacon. Growing a garden leads to searching out others that "make their own" such as farmers markets. You get excited and think you can make your own butter and bread. You begin to think about acquiring chickens. This horrendous cycle of do-it-yourself begins to repeat itself.

*The philosopher who said that a job well done never needs doing again never weeded a garden.-*

—Ray D. Everson

## *The First Nature Preserve: The Forest of Fontainebleau*

Molly Mathis (Excerpted from Veranda magazine, May 2008 by Kimberly Jones.)

Once the domain and hunting ground of kings and emperors, the forest of Fontainebleau in the 1820s became the center of landscape art in France. It held that position for well over fifty years. Located 35 miles from Paris and rich with historical associations, the forest offered a wealth of motifs that attracted painters and photographers alike.

An excursion to Fontainebleau was something of a grand adventure for its earliest visitors. Corot was among the first artists to discover the allure of the forest of Fontainebleau, traveling there in 1822. Renowned for its gnarled, twisted limbs and its seeming indestructibility in the face of the ravages of nature, an oak tree nicknamed “Le Rageur,” or “The Raging One,” was a favorite motif of artists. Several French artists who had traveled to Italy found that the topography of Fontainebleau echoed the rough-hewn terrain they had encountered abroad – stark and sun-drenched, lush and verdant by turns.

It was not, however, merely a pale imitation of Italy. Much of the forest’s charm stemmed from the remarkable variety of its topography. With its vibrant blue sky, sharp light and rocky terrain, the forest was both exotic and yet quintessentially French.

The forest of Fontainebleau was the perfect sanctuary, accessible yet large unspoiled – qualities that made it an ideal locale for a burgeoning artist’s colony with the village of Barbizon as its center. Theodore Rousseau, long a regular visitor, took up residence there in 1847. He was soon joined by other artists; these artists formed the nucleus of what would become known

as the Barbizon school. Centered in Fontainebleau, its constituents embraced a new sense of naturalism in art. Some of the artists took inspiration from the local villages – depicting familiar scenes with restraint and simplicity. Others, like Rousseau, focused on nature painting it in all seasons and at all times of day.

In addition to being a devoted chronicler of the forest, Rousseau was also its greatest champion. Alarmed by the threat of deforestation and hoping to protect the trees for future generations, he petitioned Emperor Napoleon III in 1852, asking him to set aside part of the forest as a nature preserve. Nine years later, a decree was passed, establishing Fontainebleau as home to the first nature preserve in history.

### **Native Flowers of Fontainebleau**

Tor-grass (*Brachypodium pinnatum*)  
 Service Tree of Fontainebleau (*Sorbus latifolia*)  
 under national protection  
 Snowy Mespilus (*Amelanchier ovalis*)  
 under national protection  
 Common Juniper (*Juniperus communis*)  
 Orchids  
     Violet limodore (*Limodorum abortivum*)  
     Red Helleborine (*Cephalanthera rubra*)  
     under national protection

Meadow Rue (*Thalictrum minus*)  
 under national protection  
 Peach-leaved Bellflower (*Campanula persicifolia*)  
 Wild Madder (*Rubia peregrina*)  
 Burnet Rose (*Rosa pimpinellifolia*)  
 Cranesbill (*Geranium sanguineum*)  
 Vincetoxicum (*Vincetoxicum hirundinaria*)  
 Red Feather Clover (*Trifolium rubens*)  
 under national protection

### **Native Birds of Fontainebleau**

Great Spotted woodpecker (*Dendrocopos major*)  
 Lesser Spotted woodpecker (*Dendrocopos minor*)  
 Great Tit (*Parus major*)  
 Blue Tit (*Parus caeruleus*)  
 Chiffchaff (*Phylloscopus collybita*)  
 Willow Warbler (*Phylloscopus trochilus*)  
 Bonelli’s Warbler (*Phylloscopus bonelli*)  
 Blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*)



**The Gleaners** by Jean-François Millet, 1857. ... Millet was one of the founders of the Barbizon School of art at Fontainebleau.



## Jacque Hilburn-Simmons

### *New Monarch Garden Takes Flight at Arboretum*

Efforts to protect and preserve the wonders of the Monarch are under way at the Wood County Arboretum and Botanical Gardens, thanks to a state grant and capable hands of devoted volunteers. The arboretum is among the newest recipients of a \$400 grant awarded by the Native Plant Society of Texas as part of its *Bring Back the Monarchs to Texas* project.

“We’re creating a Monarch way station,” said garden manager Lin Grado, who is helping spearhead the project. “This is something we’ve been wanting to do for a long time. We think this will be a tremendous asset for the area.” The grant is intended to promote monarch conservation and education, while at the same time promoting the use of a diverse collection of Texas native plants, she said.

Creating a safe harbor for the butterflies is not an easy task, it seems. Friends of the Arboretum volunteers spent months brainstorming about how to transform land located north of the George Bridge into a destination for conservation and education. Work on the project took flight in early spring, starting with acceptance of the grant award and kick off-of labor-intensive cleaning.



Clean up begins as volunteers converge on the new garden area to transform the space into one devoted to conservation and education.

Texas plant expert Sonnia Fajardo Hill helped identify plants native to the area, helping arboretum volunteers label and preserve specimens that will contribute to the final product. “This is just a really wonderful opportunity,” she said during a recent visit. “It’s a great project.”

Workers anticipate the completed garden will be a favorite destination for butterfly and nature lovers alike. “At this time, there is no public garden in Wood County that features only native plants,” Grado said. “This will be an exclusive opportunity to educate visitors in the use of native plants in the landscape.” The area was chosen in part due to its high visibility to the gazebo and pony bridge that leads to the walking trail, typically a popular destination for amateur and professional photographers.

When completed, the monarch garden is expected to feature a vast array of blooming, nectar-rich Lone Star favorites, such as Cowpen Daisy, Texas frog fruit, autumn sage, mistflower, butterfly weed, black-eyed Susan, and many more.

The garden features a star-fished shaped main planting area, plus a smaller area for children, a keyhole garden, and large bed for wildflowers. Long range plans call for the addition of concrete benches and increased access to the area. Educational signage is planned to document the life cycle of the monarch and identify certain plants, providing a sort of outdoor classroom for students to engage with nature.

Texas Master Gardeners, scout troops, schools and civic organizations already look to the arboretum as a source of information and enjoyment, and Arboretum supporters look forward to continued community interest and involvement.

Volunteers plan to celebrate publicly the opening of the Monarch garden later this year with an open house set for October, generally migration time for the butterflies. The arboretum plans also to feature photos of the garden area on note cards and information cards offered for sale in its gift shop.

*Follow the transformation of the garden on the Wood County Arboretum and Botanical Gardens Facebook page.*

## Upcoming Events

View details and schedule for [Wood County Master Gardener Events](#) by logging in.

### Lunch & Learn Wednesday of Each Month; Noon—1:00 PM

Wood County Extension Office 618 S Main; Quitman

July 24th- Pollinator Bed

August 28th- TBD

September 25th- TBD

October 23rd- Homemade Suet & Birdfeeders

Date	Event	Location	More Information
7/20/2019	<b>Miss Ima Birthday Celebration</b> 5K Run Stinson House Tours Garden Tours	175 Governor Hogg Parkway Quitman	<a href="https://www.quitmanarboretum.com/events">https://www.quitmanarboretum.com/events</a>
8/13/2019 Multi-Day Event	<b>Vegetables</b> (Advanced MG Training)	Bexar A & M Extension San Antonio	<a href="https://txmg.org/events/advanced-training-vegetables">https://txmg.org/events/advanced-training-vegetables</a>
10/14/2019 Multi-Day Event	<b>Greenhouse Management</b> (Advanced MG Training)	Water Works Learning Center Ft. Worth	<a href="https://txmg.org/events/advanced-training-greenhouse-management">https://txmg.org/events/advanced-training-greenhouse-management</a>

## Online with WCMGA

### MG Wood Works Newsletter:

- ◆ You are invited to submit thoughts, lessons, suggestions, upcoming events, or perceptions. You are permitted to count time writing articles as volunteer hours.
- ◆ Unless otherwise annotated, all photos in this publication were taken by the author of the article in which they appear.
- ◆ If you have questions please contact the editor: B.J. McGee: [MGNewsletter@hotmail.com](mailto:MGNewsletter@hotmail.com)

**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**: [keithzim@yahoo.com](mailto:keithzim@yahoo.com)

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

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

**Master Gardener Advanced Training** through Texas A & M AgriLife Extension

**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 your desktop.

**Associate Roster**: You can find all e-mail addresses and contact information for other Master Gardeners after logging into the Volunteer System.

**Update your profile in the Roster!** Is your phone number up to date? Have you changed your email address? Did you move? Have you uploaded a photo? Please check your listing to be sure your contact information is up to date