



MG WOOD WORKS



September 2019

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Melodee Eishen: Phenology Comes to Wood County

I want to tell all my friends at the Wood County Master Gardener Association why I think that our new Phenology Study is going to be very important for each of us, as well as all those in our communities should they choose to access our information.

First, let me discuss what is Phenology. Phenology is the study of periodic plant and animal life cycle events and how these are influenced by seasonal and inter-annual variations in climate, as well as habitat factors. Charles Morren, a Belgian botanist in 1849 coined the word phenology, being principally concerned with the dates of first occurrence of biological events in their annual cycle.

Examples would include the date of emergence of leaves and flowers, the first flight of butterflies, and the first appearance of migratory birds, as well as the date of leaf coloring of fall deciduous trees, dates of egg-laying birds and amphibians, or the timing of the developmental cycles of temperate-zone honey bee colonies. (Wikipedia.org/wiki/Phenology)

Examples of historical phenology studies would include the reconstruction of records for growing seasons of grape harvests in Europe going back more than 500 years. This data is measured against current climatic changes and norms to indicate global warming or cooling or do static temperatures prevail.

Another name for Phenology, particularly in ancient times was

Natural Calendar. This makes sense to me as many ancient people did not have readily available calendars to note dates, etc. Much of the time, events were measured according to agricultural events, like at the corn harvest, or lunar events such as the next new moon. In general people were probably much more seasonally aware of growing conditions and timing than the general population today. Historically it was very important in order to sustain life to know when and what to plant, how to care for those plants and how to harvest and use this knowledge to maintain life. When you think of people hundreds of years ago, I'm sure they could never fathom Walmart. At any grocery store today, you can just go get what you want, when you want, as much as you want.

However, as a society we have lost the connection with our environment and being able to read the signs of nature. Few bother with all this learning when you are not dependent on it for daily life. So much knowledge regarding the old ways of living have been lost.

I think I was raised in a very self-sufficient and sustaining way. Many people around where I grew up had gardens, made their own clothes, cooked every meal from scratch, kept chickens, and canned garden produce for winter use. We were a bit more self-sufficient in that we raised wheat and corn to mill our own flour, cereal and cornmeal. We also

made our own cheese, cream cheese, cottage cheese, marshmallows and soap.

Recently I have taken stock of my life and tried to answer some "what if" questions. The reason I'm taking such an interest right now is because I've recently received some old books from my father's estate. The first such book was a cookbook from 1934. It's very interesting how they viewed food, let alone electricity. I went through a few more books, all extremely fascinating from my perspective, some of them in my grandfather's and great-grandfather's handwriting, ledgers of all farm expenses for years and years. Sorry, I digress. Another cookbook I found was from 1900. Their measurements are not standardized, for instance referring to a handful of this or that, and the use of a wood stove was standard. I've compared both cookbooks, and it's interesting to note one was before the Great Depression and one after, but just after. Neither of them is superfluous, just basic how to make food to eat.

This has prompted me to get a few books about this time in our history. One recent purchase was Clara's Kitchen, it's a wonderful cookbook full of stories about the Great Depression and family living. Another was Glenn Beck and Matt Redhawk's, Droughts and Dreams. Again, stories just a page or two, of people living through the Great Depression and how they survived. I've found both books good reads, and they make you think.

2019 Wood County MGs



Melodee Eishen	Phil Young	Wanda Mischefsky	Joyce Tullis
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Photo by Elizabeth Neuens

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2019 Responsibilities

- Emails
- Extension Office Landscaping
- Facebook
- Intern Class
- Newsletter
- Sunshine
- Volunteer Management System
- Website

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Melodee Eishen, continued from page 1

So, you can tell where my SUSTAINABLE mantra comes from. I feel part of this is the desire to understand how things were, and are now, and where they are going from here in relation to plants, animals and weather. I feel a very strong connection to my ancestors, as I'm sure many of you do too. In looking at my grandfathers' farm ledgers and his meticulous records of planting, harvesting, etc. I can almost view these as his personal phenology records.

I think if we as a group can gather data for Wood County and keep these records compiling year after year, that we can begin to understand and reconnect with nature on a most intimate level and anticipate the next phase in a plant's development.

As many of you are aware that we have had weird weather all over the country this year. The cool snap in July was very welcome, but truthfully not the norm. I look forward to documenting rainfall, temperature, cloud cover, etc. to determine prevalent growing conditions for our plants here in Wood County. It will take a while before we can extrapolate hard data to influence our planting dates, so the sooner we get started the better. Gaining the knowledge of ground temperatures so that we can optimize seed germination rates will be great.

Another aspect of doing this phenology study is that it's the first in the state (or any state around) by master gardeners, at least I believe this to be true according to my research. I also think that this could help people other than Master Gardeners, like ranchers and truck farmers. With the knowledge that our Wood County Master Gardeners, especially those with Advanced Training, we can spot certain insects, birds, pests, and/or diseases because we have documented appropriate conditions for these events to occur. We all appreciate a Heads-Up in this kind of situation.

There are sayings passed down through families and friends dealing with cycles of nature and gardening. Such as:

Prune your rose bushes by Valentine's Day.

Don't cut back your daffodil leaves until Mother's Day.

As an added benefit I look forward to coming up with our own unique Wood County Master Gardener sayings. What if we could someday say,

"Look for the bluebonnets when the Redbud's are in bloom", or some such East Texas thing?

In conclusion, I invite anyone interested to becoming a part of this study to let me know. We will meet several times between now and October to discuss and set up criteria for our study. This study is something you can do from home and fulfil your volunteer hours. It will simply be a matter of documenting plant, birds, insects, etc. and what phase of the cycle they are in.

Following are examples of observations that could be recorded in a phenology study.

Today is August 20th, 2019, we've had no rainfall for two weeks and plants are wilting.

The tomatoes have finished and were pulled from the garden and put in compost.

Moringa is doing well and still growing, it's about 8 feet tall now and beginning to flower.

We picked grapes yesterday from the muscadine vines and got about 7 gallons.

The watermelons are ripe, and we picked six today.

The Seminole squash are still blooming and producing profusely, even though they are quite small, about 3 pounds each.

The fall garden is beginning to sprout. The first 2 leaves of the swiss chard are visible and Spinach is just beginning to break ground today.

We have seen a few more hummingbirds today, that makes about a dozen.

As you can see, these are simple observations that we all make, but just don't usually write down.

Have a wonderful rest of the summer.

Melodee Eishen, WCMG President

Garden Visitor



Nessie.

Fruit manually modified.; Japanese eggplant do not have eyes!
Editor

Do you have any interesting or unusual visitors in your garden? If so, send us a picture!

If you know what it is, share your knowledge. If you want to know what it is, ask; and hopefully, one of our readers will be able to identify it for us. Answers will be published in the following issue of *WoodWorks*.

This was labeled as a Japanese Eggplant (*Solanum melongena*) at the nursery. I'm thinking it might be the Chinese Eggplant instead.

Japanese eggplants belong to the Solanaceae, or nightshade family, sharing ancestry with tomatoes, potatoes, and peppers. Japanese eggplants are also known to maintain their skin color when cooked which is a quality that makes them unique among many other

Ann Reynolds Hawkins City Park & Library

We are suffering through the heat as are all gardeners in August. But the good news is that Irrigation Specialist (and sometimes saint), Phil Young solved 99% of the sprinkler problem at the Hawkins City Park. Zinnias, *Salvia greggii*, *Salvia guaranitica*, Blue Mist Flower, and *Asclepias tuberosa* are blooming with wild abandon. The volunteer squash plant in the Sensory Garden has provided the workers with one squash each.

The big push was at the Allen Memorial Library in Hawkins. We worked feverishly (well, maybe that was the heat) to spruce up the flower bed there before a ribbon cutting and open house. The



Another beautiful project by the Wood County Master Gardeners.
Allen Memorial Library
189 Blackburn, Hawkins, TX

library received a grant and recently added a new children's reading/activity area. Library Director, Norma Hallmark asked us to showcase native plants but she wanted to keep some of the *Nandina*. We planted *Rudbeckia*, *Salvia guaranitica*, *Phlox*, *Echinacea*, tropical Milkweed, Mexican Petunia, and *Buddleia* (all donated by Master Gardener volunteers).

Because of our efforts Wood County Master Gardeners were featured twice in the Big Sandy/Hawkins Journal newspaper and on KLTV on August 10th. Next year we will be involved in the library summer reading program.



Children enjoying summer reading
2019 "Things that Fly."



The volunteer squash in the Sensory
Garden is a big hit with the kids!

Photos by Ann Irby

Peggy Rogers Texas MG Meeting Report

TMGA Directors meeting was Saturday, August 03, 2019 at College Station. Directors Peggy Rogers, Gayle Mullinax and alternate Keith Mullinax attended.

The current State Awards Committee has served four years, and we have now trained a new committee to begin with 2019 awards.

For 2019 entered in 2020, the only changes to the Awards Handbook are the dates to coincide with the year.

For 2020 entered in 2021, the Youth category will have Youth JMG only and Youth non-JMG. Handbook will be updated with criteria explanation.

2020 Master Gardener Conference will be in Waco May 12-14, 2020 at the Waco Convention Center. Many Motels taking reservations, and registration will be open soon. Conference website should be live shortly. Extension is talking to Denton to host the 2021 Conference. Not confirmed at this date but highly probably.

It was restated if Associations are late paying state dues (must be in Treasurer's hand on March 01) the Association is not eligible to enter awards for that year. \$2 per Association member as of December 31 of previous must be paid January 01 to March 01 to be in good standing. The new Trainee Handbook should be re-released this week. It is a larger book with more colored pictures and a higher price.

Nominations for 2020 TMGA Executive officers are:

President - Louie McDaniel, McLennan Co.

1st VP - Robin Collins, Galveston Co.

2nd VP- Elisabeth Castro, Montgomery Co.

Secretary - Jane Bowman, Williamson Co.

Treasurer - Judy Ratzlaff, Tarrant Co.

Bexar County concerned with trainee retention; stated they were interviewing each applicant for the class asking eight questions. The only question not on WCMGA current form is "What can you offer Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and County Master Gardener program?".

Gayle Mullinax will be serving on the Outreach Committee for Region, 5 and Peggy Rogers will be serving as Chair of Outreach Committee.

All websites under AgriLife (WCMGA) have experienced some format changes. Web masters stay tuned; there are more changes to come. Reported by Nicky Maddams.

TMGA does not furnish E&O (Errors and Omissions) Liability Insurance. Interim President Louie McDaniel stated if you are interested in this type of insurance to check with personal insurance company or homeowner's insurance.

Gayle Mullinax and Peggy Rogers - Directors

[Click to return to index](#)

Suzanne Whitsell

Wood County Extension Office Gets a Facelift from the 2019 MG Classmates



Planning Meeting: Melodee Eishen, Debbie Latham, Elaine Hall, Shaniqua Davis, Sandy Hayden, Janet Judkins, Bev Ray, Victoria Settle (photo by Suzanne Whitsell)



You may have noticed the front (east) side of the Wood County Agrilife Extension Office looks much different than when the 2019 Wood County Master Gardener Intern Class started meeting in January of this year.

After completing our CEU and volunteer obligations, members of the Class decided on revitalizing the front of the Ag office as our Class Project. We held a few meetings, some planning was done, purchases were made, items were donated, free things were gathered, we shared a few lunches at DQ, and even more volunteer hours were accrued. Now we now have a great new look!

There were participants from our 2019 class and former classes, too (not to mention husbands and grandkids). We learned about landscaping design, plants that work best, hard work, (mulching, mulching, mulching), and best of all, made wonderful new friendships! Thanks to everyone for helping with this effort!

With gratitude,
The 2019 Wood County Master Gardener Class



Unloading the (FREE) rock: Mike Narkiewicz, Ron Latham (w/grandsons Talyn & Reece), Steve Judkins



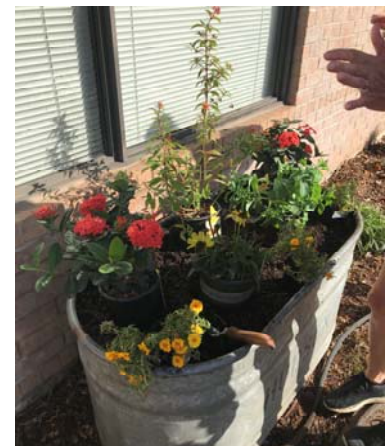
Melodee Eishen starts with a clean slate—tank, that is.



Mike Narkiewicz and Susan Jarrell



Proud Mary
(Williams)



All done.... And Beautiful!

Shaniqua Davis: Transitioning Lawns

Cooler weather and fall activities bring an end to your lawn maintenance chores. While you'll soon be stopping all mowing of your lawn, there are still some chores to do that will ensure a good transition of your lawn into winter months and a stronger lawn come next spring.

You can (and should) treat for weeds. One of the more difficult weeds that have many homeowners complaining about is Virginia Buttonweed. This creeping perennial lays low, making knotted stems and a white flower that appears as this time of year. It is most difficult to control. Treatment of it needs to be with a stout. Don't even try a weed and feed product. Go for something with Atrazine. There are many products on the shelves at lots of stores that contain this active ingredient. It is very safe to use on our most common turf grass, St. Augustine. If you have a Bermuda lawn, go for a 2,4-D product or a really stout product such as MSM (available at many feed stores).

The cooler weather also allows many fungal diseases that got their start in the spring, struggled in the summer, to then run amuck in the fall. If you see significant fungal problems, I recommend a product called F-Stop.

When you over-fertilize and over-water lawns, you spoil it and set it up for problems. Water lawns only once, maybe twice, each week. And when you do water, water deeply to encourage

deeper roots and allow the top inch to dry out, thus hampering any fungal spores. Should you water during the winter months? It's true that your lawn and shrubs and other perennials need moisture year-round, but our climate typically provides enough moisture in our winter not to water.

Fall fertilizer applications are a good idea, however most applications are done at the wrong time in the fall. Giving your lawn a good dose of fertilizer when it's getting ready for a winter slumber doesn't make much sense to me. Instead, do a fall application in September, because you have more time before the first frost. Or simply using a fertilizer high in phosphorous or potassium would be good. Not a heavy dose of a high nitrogen (the first number on the bag).

If you have a Bermuda lawn, feel free to give it 2-3 lbs. of 0-0-60 per 1000 sq. ft. That straight potash fertilizer applied in the fall is a secret of good hay growers. Bermudagrass loves potash (another name for potassium) and it won't stimulate vegetative growth or fungal problems.

If you need to add lime, add lime now to your lawns. Lime helps to neutralize the pH in our commonly acidic soils. Lime isn't really a fertilizer although it does contain Calcium, a secondary nutrient for plants. So, do you need to lime? I'm not sure, but with a \$12 soil test, you can find out exactly how much lime you need to apply.

Shaniqua Davis is the County Extension Agent for agriculture and natural resources for Wood County. Her email address is Shaniqua.davis@ag.tamu.edu

The members of Texas A&M AgriLife will provide equal opportunities in programs and activities, education, and employment to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation or gender identity and will strive to achieve full and equal employment opportunity throughout Texas A&M AgriLife.



Joyce Tullis: Future Programs

I believe the main priority for us gardeners right now is just coping with the Texas heat. There are plenty of gardening chores waiting for us, and the challenge is completing those tasks in that tiny window of opportunity that exists at daybreak and after sunset. But in our ever changing world of gardening, we know that autumn is just around the corner. Nature's cycles continue.

August: Lin Grado was our speaker for August and gave a colorful presentation on butterflies and plants that attract them.

September: A demonstration on 'Fermenting Foods' by our favorite food preservationist/guru, Melodee Eishen.

October: Plant Swap at Mineola Nature Preserve Pavilion area. Bring plants you have divided, dug up, or propagated; seeds you have collected and anything else (plant related) that you wish to swap with other gardeners. It's always interesting and fun to see the different plants and other things people bring. We have so

many creative and talented people in our group. Actually, all of us qualify for that!

November: A report from the Project Managers with a recap of the year's activities and accomplishments. Election of officers for 2020.

December: WCMGA Christmas party, a potluck luncheon hosted by Tracey Murphy.

More on these plans will be coming as each event approaches.

Jacque Hilburn-Simmons: Arboretum—Fall Yard/Plant Sale & Activities

A hot Texas summer may be winding down, but the fall activity calendar at the Wood County Arboretum and Botanical Gardens is just heating up, starting with this month's annual yard sale.

Oodles of good buys for the value-minded consumer are expected to appear in the popular sale, set for September 28 at in the historic 1869 Stinson House that serves as the cornerstone of the arboretum (175 Governor Hogg Pkwy, Quitman). "We're accepting donations now," said Deanna Caldwell, president of Friends of the Arboretum, who oversees the grounds. "Proceeds help support the arboretum."

An array of merchandise is stockpiled for the sale, but Caldwell said more are needed to help make the beloved sale a success. Household items, outdoor furnishings, art, sporting equipment, garden supplies, outdoor items, children's toys, furniture, linens, tools, electronics (except console televisions), jewelry, collectibles and similar goods are being collected now for the effort. However, the organization is unable to accept clothing and shoes.

Donors are welcome to drop off their goods at the arboretum between 8:00 and 11:00 a.m.. every Wednesday or leave on the front porch of the Stinson House. Tax receipts are available.



Oodles of good buys await savvy shoppers when the Wood County Arboretum and Botanical Gardens rolls out its annual fall sale on September 28. Public Domain Photo

A good sale is not the only thing in the works for this season's cooler months. The annual fall plant sale is set for October 19, followed by a holiday open house on Dec. 19. "We'll be having a pre-order for members as we did in the spring for the fall plant sale," said Lin Grado, garden manager. "There will also be a pre-sale day for members." Details regarding pre-order and sales events will be shared as the sale draws closer.

The fall calendar follows a busy summer around the arboretum.

In May, the Arboretum gardens were registered as a Monarch Waystation through the University of Kansas *Monarch Watch* program. Volunteers braved the heat to establish a new garden featuring a sunny selection of Texas native plants. The Texas natives garden is funded by a grant from the Native Plant Society of Texas as part of its *Bring Back the Monarchs* to Texas project.

In other summer endeavors, a host of new shrubs were added to the gardens, including a vast planting of shade-loving specimens around the pergola, Grado said. In a sunny area of the grounds



A new peace garden, featuring an array of white bloomers, is expected to offer a soothing complement to the bold colors of summer. Photo by Lin Grado

closer to the entrance, volunteers helped create a new type of peace garden, featuring a serene collection of white blooming plants as a soothing complement the surrounding beds of bold warm weather color.

A July Fun Run and 5K race celebrating the birthday of Ima Hogg attracted dozens of runners of all ages and abilities.

Workers anticipate all the gardens will help the 23-acre arboretum, which features a walking trail and tribute plantings, remain a go-to paradise for nature enthusiasts and education leaders. For more information about supporting the arboretum and its many projects, call 430-235-5461 or email woodcountyarbo@gmail.com.



Working with guidance from Jan Whitlock, Cub Scout Pack 36 plucked all the weeds around the new Monarch demonstration garden.

Upcoming Events

Lunch & Learn	4 th Wednesday of Each Month	Wood County Extension Office 618 S Main; Quitman
August 28th-	Greenhouses	
September 25th	Fall Gardening	
October 23rd	Homemade Suet & Birdfeeders	

Advanced Learning Classes:	https://txmg.org/master-gardener-training/training10/training5/specialist	
Entomology	September 9—12	Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Office Williamson County , Georgetown
Rainwater Harvesting	September 26—28	Resource Connection of Tarrant County, Tarrant
Greenhouse Management	October 17—19	Water Works Learning Center, Ft. Worth

As you read our WCMG newsletter and learn of all the educational seminars and classes we hold, garden projects we plan and execute, advanced training speakers we share with the public in educational forums, the class room instruction we provide to 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

Online with WCMGA

MG Wood Works Newsletter:

- ♦ You are invited to submit thoughts, lessons, suggestions, or perceptions; if you are planning or know of an upcoming event of interest to MGs, please be sure to send that information to me. You are permitted to count time writing articles as volunteer hours. Articles may be edited.
- ♦ 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: bmcgee@froco.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

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

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

MG Advanced Training through Texas A & M AgriLife Extension

Sunshine: Know of a member who needs a get well, warm thought, or sympathy card? Contact Elaine Porter (361 319-7300; porterpettus@gmail.com). She will ensure one is sent from the Association.

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.

Associate Roster: You can find all e-mail addresses and contact information for other Master Gardeners Available 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

Become a MG!

Contact the Wood County Extension Office: **Phone: 903-763-2924**

