



MG WOOD WORKS

March
2020

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Peggy Rogers

We have a fantastic 2020 year planned and I'm so excited to be a member of Texas Master Gardener - Wood County (WCMGA). Thank you so much for allowing me to be your leader. It will take many hours of volunteering to make our association plans a success but I know that you are up to the task!

I read an article that said to be a happy/willing volunteer that we must have a passion for what we are volunteering for. If we have that passion or love for all WCMGA projects/programs, then it will rub off on everyone else and there will be no stopping us. It also stated that our basic need is to feel appreciated and not just used. Just saying "Thank you for your time" goes a long way.

Our By-Laws say that WCMGA was formed "in support of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension to expand their capacity of distributing horticultural information." To me that means to educate, educate, educate! Education is what we have planned for the year!

We also have a new plan in place on our intern's volunteering hours. Volunteer service hours will be performed during activities that are educational in nature, as opposed to maintenance type work, identified as sponsored or co-sponsored by Texas AgriLife Extension Service. MG's and interns should wear Master Gardener name badges or apparel with TMG logo. We may collaborate with other organizations, but our Agri-Life Extension Agency does not supply volunteers to do their work. (Volunteer Service Hours defined in the [Management Guide](#) on TXmg.org website).

We started February with Shaniqua Davis, our lovely CEA, moving her service to Gregg County. And darn, we just about had her trained! She is not far away, and we can call on her if we have a need. We already miss her, but are anxious and looking forward to a new CEA hopefully soon!

Get ready, interns and members for new opportunities to volunteer!

Happy Spring Gardening!

It's Time....

I have a fascination with clocks. Well, one might call it an obsession or an addiction. Clocks of any kind: small, large, table, floor, chiming, or dinging; anything unusual or different or even just one that strikes my fancy! Now what do clocks have to do with gardening?

Well, first the collecting side. If I don't have a certain plant, then I want one. It's the same with my clocks. How many different roses and colors are there? Roses being one of my favorite plants, I want one of each color and each species! If I hear of a new one, then I must take the time to research and go on a hunt until I find it. Talking about roses, now is the time to prune and cut dead branches out of the rose bushes. Some say the time to prune is on February 14th, but anytime in February will work. Just try to be finished pruning before the end of February. Now I have way too many roses to be able to prune in one day, so how could I possibly prune only on February 14th? For me, one day to prune my 50+ roses is not practical.

(Continued page 3)



2020 Wood County Master Gardener Association

2020 Officers – Directors



Jean Croucher Jan Whitlock Ann Fair-Irby Peggy Rogers

Peggy Rogers, President	214.794.2853	peggyrogersc21@gmail.com
Ann Fair-Irby Vice-President	903.571.5802	ladyfaira@aol.com
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Keith Mullinax, Alt Director	903.613-0331	k_mullinax@att.net
Phil Young, Alt Director	903.456.0050	philyoung@peoplescom.net

Wood County Extension Agent

Position pending. Shaniqua has moved to the Gregg County office and is still available if we have questions.

Project Chairs

Mineola Nature Preserve
Hawkins City Park
Extension Office Landscaping

Linda Timmons	903 569-3443	lindtmms@aol.com
Ann Reynolds	903 769-2398	ann@etex.net
Debbie Latham	817.925.3055	latham55@msn.com

2020 Responsibilities

Emails
Facebook
Intern Class
Newsletter
Sunshine
Volunteer Management System
Website

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Nature Watch (Phenology Study)

Melodee Eishen

So, what is Phenology? Phenology is the study of recurring plant and animal life stages, such as leafing and flowering, the maturation of agricultural plants, the emergence of insects and the migrations of birds. It also involves understanding the relationship of these life cycle stages to weather and in the long-term climate.

I know it sounds like it encompasses a lot, and it does, however, we as Texas Master Gardeners in Wood County are going to watch our favorite plants and birds in our gardens and keep ongoing records. In keeping these records every year, we can see patterns emerging, evaluating what we're doing well and what perhaps needs an adjustment. In doing this local observation, we are sharpening our skills and gaining knowledge of how our gardening efforts and Mother Nature work together. Plus, people outside of our association can use our gathered data to give insight to what's happening in other areas of Wood County.

Linda Timmons came up with the name for this project, *Nature Watch*; I think it's a perfect fit. Thank you for your creativity, Linda. In a way *Nature Watch* is very descriptive of what we're doing, watching nature, recording it, keeping track of it, evaluating it, through all the life cycles.

So how does any of the information we're gathering effect you or me? Well, we're all getting ready to plant a spring garden, aren't we? Most of us are sort of waiting on the last frost date before we plant too many plants out that might get bitten by a good frost.

Our last spring freeze in 2019 was on March 6; for 2018, it was February 12; and in 2017 our last freeze was even earlier—January 27. According to records at Tyler Texas Weather website, February 28 is our average last spring frost.

For those who like a few statistics, March 27, 2013 was our latest freeze date this century. Because of this there was only a six-month growing season that year. Guess what? We only had a six-month growing season in 2019. I noticed some of my garden crops didn't do as well last year, my yields were down and overall some crops didn't thrive. There are a few different reasons for this, one of them being fewer Growing Degree Days. I will explain Growing Degree Days and its impact on our gardens in a future newsletter. Keith Mullinax is working diligently to integrate our data gathering with digital accessibility. Thank you, Keith, for your perseverance, knowledge, skills and willingness to help in this area. It is greatly appreciated.

If you have an interest in participating in Nature Watch, we would love to have you. This is something that can be done from home or at a designated project site. If you would like to participate, please contact me. We will be having an orientation meeting so learn how to use the digital/computer-based system that Keith is working on. For those currently working on NATURE WATCH, please put in your hours on the volunteer system routinely and keep on gathering that data. At the end of each month I'll collect your data sheets

It's Time, continued

Peggy Rogers

Yes, gardening is all done on a time schedule. Make sure you know what time zone you are in; frost and freeze time varies with each time zone, and you need to know what planting zone you are gardening in. If you are old school, you plant everything by what the Farmer's Almanac says. It has all the time schedules for planting



written down as to which day and what time of day. Does it really make a difference in planting by the moon? I don't have a scientific answer for you, but you must have some time schedule to plan so why not? Hey, my grandmother would only cut her hair when the moon was in a certain phase!

Planting by the moon, according to the Farmer's Almanac, and by working with the forces of nature, you will have a more abundant harvest. The lunar gravitational pull increases the moisture in the soil at the time of a new and full moon which encourages germination and growth. Plant annual flowers and vegetables that bear crops above ground during the light or waxing of the moon, from the day the moon is new until it is full. Plant flowering bulbs, biennial and perennial flowers, and vegetables that bear crops below ground during the dark, or waning of the moon, from the day after it is full until the day before the new begins.

From Texas AgriLife and the Farmer's Almanac, the time of March 15 through November 15 is frost and freeze free dates. Some may disagree but just remember these are average dates and any year can prove me wrong. If planting early, just be ready with the freeze cover cloth to protect those young seedlings... it might not have been the right time! Remember to set time to plant certain items. Plant English peas on the 1st day of January, plant potatoes on Valentine Day and do not plant after Good Friday. Now who set this time? I'm not sure but my grandfather swore by it. I saw him in the snow planting peas on January 01, and he did have a bumper crop that year.

Yes, it is time and past time to plant your garden. Enjoy!

Linda Timmons: Southern Magnolias

Did you know that the Southern Magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*) is native to east Texas? *Magnolia grandiflora* is a beautiful evergreen tree that can grow massive with branches that reach out and curve down to touch the ground. For this reason and because of the leaf droppage most gardeners don't choose a magnolia for a landscape tree in their yard. After all, a tree that grows to 80 feet tall and 50 feet wide and drops leathery leaves, palm size flower petals or fist sized seed pods almost every day of the year seems to be more of a full-time job than the average hobby gardener is looking for.

But they're beautiful, the flowers smell wonderful, and the pollinators love them. So, we want to grow them, just smaller. One answer is "Little Gem". Growing to only about 25 feet tall and 10 feet wide "Little Gem" will easily fit even a small landscape. Another small *Magnolia grandiflora* cultivar is "Teddy Bear". "Teddy Bear" grows to almost the same height as "Little Gem" but is a bit wider. It also prefers full sun while the "Little Gem" will bloom in partial shade. The back of the "Teddy Bear" leaves are very fuzzy, like a teddy bear. "Teddy Bear" usually flowers spring and fall while "Little Gem" blooms spring and summer. These smaller cultivars still display the deep green leaves and large fragrant flowers of the Southern Magnolia.

If you're interested in adding a small Southern Magnolia cultivar to your landscape, they prefer rich, moist, well-drained acidic soil, and full sun. Once established the trees will be drought tolerant. According to the USDA Southern Magnolias should be planted 2 inches above the surrounding soil to encourage roots to grow directly down. The roots respond to planting depth, so if the roots are planted too deep, they will grow toward the soil surface or laterally. This may cause your tree to be less stable.



One of three *Little Gem* Magnolias recently planted at the Wildscape.

The Southern Magnolia is an ancient genus, one of the world's oldest flowering plants. The new smaller cultivars make it easy to add this southern beauty to your landscape.

Elaine Porter: Sunshine Committee

The Sunshine Committee (Elaine Porter) mailed more than 35 cards last year.

My record keeping will be more accurate this year. I had no idea so many cards would be requested. Members are very concerning for one another and they ask cards to be sent for: *thinking of you, get well, sympathy when a loved one dies, and a job well done* to Shaniqua. I pray for every need of the person receiving the card.

"Greeting card sales have gradually declined since the advent of digital modes of communication. Americans still buy 6.5 billion cards each year. The most popular card giving occasions are for birthdays and Christmas. Women buy 80% of all greeting cards, according to the Greeting Card Association."

Debbie Latham: Wood County Extension Office

Preliminary work has been done: the beds have been weeded and the yard area has been mowed. Steve Judkins, class of 2019 has volunteered to keep the yard area mowed and maintained for us!

Starting early March we will begin Spring perennial planting of shrubs and flowers; we will weed and lay down new mulch; and we also will take on a project to label the plantings.

A schedule will be passed around to sign up for maintaining the area for the rest of the season.

You want to know the
difference between a
master and a beginner?
The master has failed
more times than the
beginner has ever tried.



From a Facebook Post

—Quote attributed to Stephen McCranie

—Yoda a character from Star Wars movie series

Lin Grado: Fill Your Garden with Love

Gardening is a labor of love. At least, that's what I tell myself when I've spent a day pulling weeds or spreading fertilizer or trimming brambles. It only makes sense to reward your labor with plants that you love.

Take, for example, a vegetable garden. Why would you grow a vegetable that you don't love to eat? I mean, who wants a bushel basket of zucchini when they don't like the taste of zucchini? I have to admit, I'm not that great a fan of beefsteak tomatoes - I don't really eat sandwiches. I can get superb flavor from cherry tomatoes, and they're perfect in my salads, so that's what I grow. I like fresh lettuce, and cucumbers, and green beans, so that's what you'll find in my vegetable garden. Grow what you love.

Some of my absolute favorite flowers are the early spring bulbs. One of my big disappointments when I lived in Florida is that I couldn't grow daffodils - how would I ever know that it's spring without daffodils? So now that I'm in a cooler-winter climate, I once again mark the end of winter with my beloved daffodils.



'Sweeties' will grow forever along the roadside with no care.

I'll never forget the first time I happened across a field of jonquils - I was driving to Tyler when I saw a cloud of yellow on the side of the road. I pulled over and rolled down the passenger window for a better look - and was greeted with the sweet scent of Juicy Fruit gum. Daffodils!

I later learned that they were jonquils, appropriately dubbed 'sweeties' for their fragrance, and they naturalize in east Texas. In near-blasphemy, I decided that central Texas could keep their bluebonnets, and I'd grow sweeties. There are many other daffodils (narcissus species) that perennialize in east Texas, and I grow many of them (email me for a detailed list of those that do well year after year).

However, I sometimes plant bulbs that I know aren't suited for the long term in east Texas: big double pink daffodils, or vivid tulips. The bulbs are inexpensive, simple to plant, and I love the show they put on when they bloom.



Tulip bulbs aren't long-lasting in Texas; they are beautiful .

One January, the Wood County Arboretum received a donation of 5000 tulip bulbs, so we planted them. We knew they weren't a permanent planting, but two months later (and the following spring) we had a knock-out display of colors outside the picket fence in front of the house. That's when I found that I could plant something just to enjoy its blooms, without worrying about its longevity.

It doesn't matter what tree, flower, or vegetable brings you joy - grow it. If you love what you've planted, you'll love spending time in your east Texas garden.



These double pink bulbs are striking, but they won't return the next year.

Kathy Goodman: Interns Learn How to Implement Lasagna Gardening



At the Mineola Nature Preserve Wildscape workday on February 4, Deena Taylor energetically instructed the interns about how to fill a trough using the lasagna method. She also showed us how to make Mel's mix to top the trough off so we could plant immediately.

Deena had asked that everyone bring some brown and green matter to add to the lasagna layers. As an incentive, the two who brought the most unusual items to add to the mix received a gift. The gifts went to Michele Musser who brought dog hair and M. J. Lamborn who brought dryer lint.

We all enjoyed the hands-on instructions. Several interns stomped the lasagna mixture and others helped mix the Mel's mix. It was quite satisfying to add the plants to the trough and see the project through to completion. Thanks to Deena Taylor and Linda Timmons for helping us learn a new gardening method.



Upcoming Events

WCMG Meeting

Third Thursday of Each Month 9:00 AM–12:00 Noon
618 S. Main Street Quitman, TX 75783-0968
Tel: 903.763.2924.

March 19	June 18	September 17	December 17
March 19	July 16	October 15	
May 21	August 20	November 19	

Wood County Texas Master Gardeners Garden Educational Series: See Flyer on last page for session topics, dates, and locations.

Advance Training: Visit the [Texas Master Gardener](https://mastergardener.tamu.edu/) website (<https://mastergardener.tamu.edu/>) for information about advanced training topics and opportunities. The *Master Gardener On-Line Training* programs offers modules on: Landscape Water Conservation, Low-Volume Irrigation, Irrigation System Auditing,, Safe Use and Handling of Pesticides, Safe Use and Handling of Fertilizers, Reducing Landscape Waste-Composting, Designing an Earth-Kind Landscape, Landscaping for Energy Conservation, Creating Native Habitat, Earth-Kind Roses, Integrated Pest Management, Pet Management for Crape Myrtles, and Rainwater Harvesting.

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 in Wood County, Texas.

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.
- ◆ Submit articles, ask questions, make comments, and report corrections to B.J. McGee:
mgnewsletter@hotmail.com or 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 your 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**





**Texas Master Gardeners
Wood County
will host a FREE
Garden Educational Series**

From 1:00 – 2:00 pm on the following days.

Thursday, March 26, 2020 at the Mineola Nature Preserve

“Landscape Design”

Susan Jarrell, Presenter

Fifth Thursday, April 30, 2020 at the First United Methodist Church Quitman

“Edible Landscape”

Melodee Eishen, Presenter

Fifth Thursday, July 30, 2020 at the Quitman Library

“Weeds vs Flowers”

Victoria Settle and Debbie Latham, Presenters

Fifth Thursday, October 29, 2020 at the Ag Office Quitman

“Propagation”

Katie Carter, Presenter

The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating. 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.