

MG WOOD WORKS



Inside this Issue

July 2020

| | |
|--|---|
| Wood County Master Gardeners: Officers & Directors Project Chairs Responsibilities | 2 |
| Battling Slugs Kathy Goodman | 3 |
| Made for the Shade Lin Grado | 4 |
| Prairie Pocket Garden Reggie Askins | 5 |
| Hawkins City Park & Library Ann Reynolds | 5 |
| Perennials or Annuals Ann Reynolds | 6 |
| The New Year's Resolution Ellen Atkins | 6 |
| Online with WCMGA | 7 |

Peggy Rogers

First, let me say, I MISS YOU!

Cancel Are you tired of hearing and seeing this word written across upcoming planned events?

Change Yes, we have had some changes and will probably have more. Some good changes, and some are and will be hard for us to accept.

Courage We all have the resilience to accept the *cancel*s and *change*s that come to us individually and as an association.

So, hopefully, we all will work/volunteer in harmony with the direction that Texas A&M AgriLife is directing us and use the *cancel*s and *change*s for the good.

Our demonstration gardens could all use some volunteers. Our project leaders have, for the most part, been working alone to maintain these gardens during the pandemic!

Linda Timmons has worked weeks by herself at Mineola Nature Preserve.

Ann Reynolds at the Hawkins project worked weeks by herself.

Debbie Latham has been keeping the Extension Office grounds looking good.

Some of us are now volunteering a few hours a week at these projects, but could use others. Yes, it's hot!

Members, to renew your TMG certification, you need 6 education (CEU) and 12 volunteer hours. Although we cannot have meetings with educational programs to provide CEUs,

these hours are still required.

AgriLife has more than enough programs on Facebook to earn your CEUs. Some of them are not the best quality, but they are okay. AgriLife was not prepared for all this teaching on FB and is doing a fantastic job on subjects! (If you do not do FB, let me know and I'll see if I can email CEUs to you).

Our trainees have had to be on their own, and some have reached their 50 CEUs and are working on their 50 volunteer hours. The following trainees have completed all training requirements:

Penny Boice
Kathy Goodman
Susan Lewis
Nancy McDonald
Michelle Musser
Mitzi Pearce

We will have a graduation for the class, *some day!* Just as soon as we can have a meeting, that will be our first agenda.

Twyla Yeager, extension secretary has retired. That position is open. (Another change).

I've spent many more hours on my gardens and had lots more blooms to enjoy.

Stay safe, use good judgement, and practice social distancing!

Educational Opportunities!

Seems like I ALWAYS get sidetracked on the Agrilife Facebook page.... there's so very much to learn! You can learn about new technology, keep current with new developments, or explore something entirely new—earn those CEUs:

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

<https://agrilifetoday.tamu.edu>

2020 Officers and Directors

| | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------|--------------------------|
| Peggy Rogers, President | 214 794-2853 | peggyrogersc21@gmail.com |
| Ann Fair-Irby, Vice President | 903 571-5802 | ladyfaira@aol.com |
| Jan Whitlock, Secretary | 903 878-2795 | j_whitlock@hotmail.com |
| Jean Croucher, Treasurer | 214 738-7671 | jean@crouchercool.com |
| Gayle Mullinax, Director | 806 683-8647 | gcmullinax@att.net |
| Peggy Rogers, Director | 214 794-2853 | peggyrogersc21@gmail.com |
| Keith Mullinax, Alt Director | 903-613-0331 | k_mullinax@att.net |
| Phil Young, Alt Director | 903 456.0050 | philyoung@peoplescom.net |



Jean Croucher Jan Whitlock Ann Fair-Irby Peggy Rogers

Wood County Extension Agent

Position Open

Project Chairs

| | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------|--------------|---------------------|
| Extension Office Landscaping | Debbie Latham | 817 925-3055 | latham55@msn.com |
| Mineola Nature Preserve | Linda Timmons | 903 569-3443 | lindtmms@aol.com |
| Hawkins City Park & Library | Ann Reynolds | 903 769-2398 | ann@etex.net |
| Phenology-Nature Watch | Melodee Eishen | 903 571-2322 | meishen@airmail.com |

2020 Responsibilities

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------------------|
| Emails | Peggy Rogers | 214 794-2853 | peggyrogersc21@gmail.com |
| Facebook | Robin Sanchez | 717 645-8778 | ranchez@hotmail.com |
| Intern Class | Linda Bradley | 817 909-6919 | lk_bradley58@yahoo.com |
| Newsletter | Bobbie McGee | 402 926-8215 | MGNewsletter@hotmail.com |
| Sunshine | Elaine Porter | 361 319-7300 | porterpettus@gmail.com |
| Volunteer Management System | Peggy Rogers | 214 794-2853 | peggyrogersc21@gmail.com |
| Website | Keith Zimmerman | 979-299-8047 | keithzim@yahoo.com |

WCMGA Meeting

Third Thursday of Each Month
 (Meetings are currently suspended because of the Covid Virus issue. Please watch your email/messages for updates.)

8:30—9 AM Visitation and Sign-in
 9 AM Meeting
 618 S. Main Street
 Quitman, TX 75783-0968
 903-763-2924

Battling Slugs

Kathy Goodman



Damage caused by Slugs

Since beginning the Master Gardener Class, I have learned to check my plants every morning to see if they need watering or are having pest problems. A couple of weeks ago I found the leaves on my Angel Trumpet plant were being eaten by something that was very hungry. When I looked closer, I noticed the shiny, slimy trails of slugs. I found that slugs are amazing climbers. They climbed three feet to the top of the plant to munch on leaves.

I began researching by checking the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) presentation from our classroom instructions, and it recommended:

- ◆ Sanitation – eliminate hiding places
- ◆ Traps – beer works
- ◆ Barriers – copper
- ◆ Baits – need dry conditions

I did an internet search and found other suggestions that also sounded promising: Coffee grounds, Epsom salts, and Diatomaceous earth.

To get started, I cleaned up several daffodil leaves on the ground near the Angel Trumpet plant. Those leaves seemed like a prospective hiding place. However, rocks are also said to be hiding places and I have those bordering my flower bed. I do not want to remove those.

I decided to perform a few tests to see what worked best to destroy these hungry slugs. All test scenarios were set up in the evening because the slugs come out at night.

Beer Trap: I put out a tuna can full of beer near the base of the Angel Trumpet plant. In the morning, I found 16 drowned slugs. They ranged from large (over an inch) to small sizes (less than half an inch). I left the tuna can with beer there one more night. In the morning, I found 10 more drowned slugs.

Coffee Grounds: I sprinkled coffee grounds around the Angel Trumpet plant. In the morning, there were many shiny, slimy trails that crossed the coffee grounds. So, the coffee grounds did not deter the slugs.

Epsom Salt: I sprinkled Epsom Salt around the plant. To see if the slugs would cross the Epsom Salt line, I put a tuna can full of beer within the circle. In the morning, there were three drowned slugs in the beer. So, slugs will cross Epsom Salt. However, I do not know if the slugs would have survived for long after crossing the Epsom Salt.

Diatomaceous Earth: I sprinkled the Diatomaceous Earth around the plant. Again, I put a tuna can full of beer within

the circle. In the morning, there were two slugs drowned in the beer. Whether the slugs would have survived the Diatomaceous Earth, I do not know. The photo shows the two slugs in the beer trap surrounded by Diatomaceous Earth.

Summary

Slugs are determined creatures. For me, using the beer trap by itself might be deterrent enough. If the number of slugs drowned in the beer diminishes each time, that may be an indication that the slugs will not reproduce in such quantities. I will keep checking for slug trails around all my plants.

The online reference suggests that you need a beer trap every 3 feet. The test described in the online reference said beer traps did not work, but they only put about a quarter inch of beer in the tuna can. I filled the cans to the top and found great success. Also, I used the cheapest beer. Maybe that is more toxic to the slugs.

Epsom Salts and Diatomaceous Earth seem to work to some extent; however, they need to be reapplied after a rain. I believe that I will keep applying the Diatomaceous Earth. Applying Epsom Salts too often could be harmful to the plants.

I did not try applying copper. That sounded too expensive and did not deter slugs in some demonstrations on the internet. They climbed right over it.



Slugs Drown in the Beer

References

Epsom Salt and Garden Pests – How To Use Epsom Salt For Pest Control, Pesticides; By: Mary H. Dyer, Credentialed Garden Writer <https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/plant-problems/pests/pesticides/epsom-salt-for-pest-control.htm>

How to Get Rid of Slugs with Beer; Garden Myths - Learn the truth about gardening <https://www.gardenmyths.com/how-to-get-rid-slugs-with-beer/#:~:text=If%20you%20take%20a%20small,least%201%E2%80%B3%20above%20soil%20level>

All About Slugs <http://www.allaboutslugs.com/how-to-identify-slug-or-snail-damage/>

All About Slugs; Slug and Snail Resistant Plants <http://www.allaboutslugs.com/slug-and-snail-resistant-plants/>

Natural, Non-Toxic Slug Control for Your Garden; <https://learn.eartheasy.com/guides/natural-slug-control/#:~:text=A%20powdery%20granular%20material%2C%20it.and%20reapply%20after%20it%20rains.>

Made for the Shade Lin Grado

Shade in your garden is a welcome respite during an East Texas summer, but it can also be a source of beauty throughout the spring. May brings blooms on some of my favorite shade-loving plants.

Most shady areas in the garden receive some sunlight during the day, but garden areas such as the north side of the house are almost total shade in the spring. One of the best spring-flowering shrubs for full shade is the old-fashioned bigleaf hydrangea (*Hydrangea macrophylla*), which includes both the mophead and lacecap flower forms. Bigleaf hydrangea generally grow from three to six feet tall, and bloom on old wood (last year's growth) – so don't prune any living stems in the spring or you risk cutting off this year's flower buds. You can change the color of many hydrangea blooms from pink to blue by adding aluminum to our East Texas acid soils; water throughout the growing season with a solution of one tablespoon of aluminum sulfate per gallon of water. It's harder to change the bloom color from blue to pink – you'd have to raise the pH level of the soil to block absorption of aluminum. It might be easier to grow pink hydrangeas in pots, or buy a variety that isn't sensitive to aluminum levels.



Indian Pink is a native plant with an exotic bloom.

Sweetshrub or allspice (*Calycanthus floridus* and hybrids) blooms in full to part shade. These shrubs, also called Carolina allspice, grow six feet or more tall, and will bloom for several weeks in the spring. The blooms are like small fragrant magnolia blossoms, with colors from

chocolate brown to maroon and even to creamy white. There are several hybrids on the market that have much

larger flowers than the species, such as *Aphrodite*, one that we grow at the Wood County Arboretum. While the blooms can be extremely fragrant, the dark green leaves and twigs are, to my nose, more consistently fragrant, with hints of clove or camphor. Sweetshrub makes a wonderful specimen plant in your shade garden.



Aphrodite calycanthus is new to the Arboretum shade garden

A third shrub for May blooms in deep shade is weeping butterfly bush (*Buddleia lindleyana*). The shrub itself has fine-textured leaves on cinnamon-barked branches. Each arching branch ends in pendulous lavender flower clusters that are a hummingbird favorite. What makes this shrub unique is that it thrives from full sun to deepest shade. Unlike other butterfly bushes, it does not require spring pruning to bloom, which moves it up on my list of carefree plants. I have not seen this *Buddleia* offered locally in nurseries; mine was a start from a friend, and I have shared it with many others since it spreads at the roots.

While my spring shade garden is dominated by shrubs, there is one underused native perennial that adds an exotic look each May. The Indian Pink (*Spigelia marilandica*) grows to about a foot or so tall, and each stem is topped with red upward-facing flowers with a yellow "star" inside each bloom. Give Indian Pink a spot in a moist woodland garden, and the clump will get larger each year.

Spring is a great time to enjoy the outdoors, and spring blooms will delight everyone. These plants provide color in the shade in my East Texas garden:

| Common Name | Botanical Name | Notes |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Blue or purple color | | |
| Bigleaf Hydrangea | <i>Hydrangea macrophylla</i> | Blue blooms soil-dependent |
| Spanish bluebells | <i>Hyacinthoides hispanica</i> | Woodland bulb – blue flowers |
| Weeping butterfly bush | <i>Buddleia lindleyana</i> | Lavender/gray blooms |
| Silver or white color | | |
| Japanese fleecflower | <i>Fallopia japonica</i> 'Variegata' | White variegated leaves |
| Oakleaf hydrangea | <i>Hydrangea quercifolia</i> | Large white blooms may fade to pink |
| Virginia sweetspire | <i>Itea virginica</i> | White, sweet-scented blooms |
| Red or pink color | | |
| 'Aphrodite' sweetshrub | <i>Calycanthus</i> x | Large maroon blooms |
| Bigleaf Hydrangea | <i>Hydrangea macrophylla</i> | Pink blooms soil-dependent |
| Indian Pink | <i>Spigelia marilandica</i> | Red flower with yellow star |
| Red dragon persicaria | <i>Persicaria microcephala</i> | Lance-shaped burgundy leaves |
| Yellow or orange color | | |
| 'BananAppeal' Florida anise | <i>Illicium parviflorum</i> | Bright golden leaves |
| Hinkley's columbine | <i>Aquilegia chrysantha</i> | Yellow, long-spurred flowers |

Prairie Pocket Garden Reggie Askins

Increasingly, many of us are incorporating Texas natives into our traditional landscape. I have planted several in my hard sun areas. Those of us who have acreage have possibly tried to create wildflower meadows yet have been discouraged by their messiness.

Linda Timmons has researched a solution which might be of interest. She follows Greg Grant's posts which suggest planting prairie pocket gardens. These gardens can be created in a simple home bed, at a school, hospital, commercial, or any other setting.

So, thanks to Linda and under her direction, we have begun a pocket garden bed at the Mineola Nature Center Wildscape Garden. We are starting small in an area approximately 20X20 feet. Linda's vision of the pocket prairie will feature nine irregular plots of Texas natives for every season. Late winter and early spring blooms of Bluebonnet and Drummond Phlox will be featured. For structure and year-long interest, the feathery blue flowered Amsonia (*Amsonia Hubrichtii*), Mexican Hat (*Ratibidia columnifera*) and silvery Texas Sage (*Leucophyllum frutescens*) will be planted. As summer arrives, there will be dark blue Salvia (*Salvia farinacea* 'Henry Duelberg'), pink coneflower (*Echinacea Purpurea*), Texas Super Star 'New Gold' trailing Lantana, and flame Acanthus (*Anisacanthus quadrifidus*).

Charlotte Kettlewell, Susan Jarrell, and I, under Linda's direction, have begun preparing and planning for this fun and educational project. We are excited to see the idea develop and hope others will be interested in joining us on Tuesday mornings at 8:30 am for an amazing adventure in gardening!



The Wildscape Gardens are designed to highlight native plants for Texas and better gardening practices, including rainwater harvesting and composting.



Hawkins City Park & Library Ann Reynolds

Just like gardens, things change. In the midst of a pandemic, Master Gardeners still find a way to learn and apply. We accept change and move on.

For three months, the gardens were maintained by one person on Sunday afternoons. As restrictions lessened, a few more Wood County Master Gardeners (Kathy Goodman, Mitzi Pearce, Michelle Musser, Peggy Rogers and others I just bet I have forgotten) began to show up and help. Hopefully we will get to a time when all can come out and enjoy all the projects of the Wood County Master Gardeners.

Due to the spring rains and cool weather, the beds have flourished. Gone are the Daffodils and Tulips; here to stay for the summer are Greg's Mistflower, Turks Cap, Ageratum, Rubekia, Lantana, Gaillardia, Phlox, Day Lily, Zinnias and that's just in the pavilion bed.



In the sensory garden, it is all about thinning. Herbs galore abound. The Inland Sea Oats and Powis Castle Artemisia are happy plants. The Bronze Fennel has multiplied. So many exciting scents, sounds and touches.

And, there is good news to report. Robin Edwards of Holly Lake Ranch, who is a licensed irrigation person, volunteered his time AND materials to replace all the sprinkler heads in the pavilion bed with 12" pop-ups.

The library gardens, which highlight specimens (mostly native), are blooming profusely too. We discovered the purple blooming plant is Vining Heliotrope. This plant was here when the WCMG took over the maintenance of the beds. The roses are blooming well and we are keeping an eye out for Rose Rosette disease. Salvia guaranitica, Turks Gap, Buddleia, Echinacea, and Amaryllis all started blooming when the Bluebonnets went to seed. We are looking for some metal identification signs to label the plants for this area.

Speaking of labels, which can be a touchy subject, Hawkins, known as the home of Lillian Richard (Aunt Jemima) and the Jesus sign, is now known as a city with beautiful flower beds. Many visitors to the first farmers market, drove by and complimented the works of the WCMG. As gardeners, we know labels are only need to identify plants. After all, you don't want to mistake Queen Anne's Lace for Poison Hemlock or Fool's Parsley!

Garden on!

Perennials or Annuals: What is Right for You?

Ann Reynolds

Once you have learned the difference between an annual and a perennial and assessed your gardening style, you can decide which type of plants are right for you and your location. Perennial plants are those that come back from their roots and bloom yearly while annuals are those that live and bloom in only one season. I once heard that taking care of your garden is like taking care of a big green pet; after all, it is alive. It requires attention, food, and water.

I personally like perennials and especially Texas native plants. I always thought it was because I was lazy and did not want to plant annuals each season year after year. After all, gardening should be a way to relieve stress. After taking the Texas Master Gardener curriculum, now I buy fewer plants and propagate more often. Non-native plants require large amounts of water and fertilizer and are susceptible to pests and diseases. Texas native plants require less water and are better adapted to our area.

Texas native plants are adapted to our soils, temperatures, and rainfall (or the lack thereof). When Texas natives are planted in the correct area of the garden, these plants require no additional watering except during extreme drought. As Master Gardeners we know that plants should be watered

on a basis of need not on a regular schedule. Watering deeply and infrequently encourages a sturdy root system thus a healthier plant.

Perennials including Texas natives are great pass-along plants that can be shared with neighbors and friends. Be aware of terms like *takes off*, *fast growing*, *happy plant*, and *aggressive*. Non-native species that escape the garden often become aggressive weeds and often vie with native plants for resources. Kudzu, Japanese Honeysuckle and Privet are good examples of a good thing gone wild.

Am I against annuals or plants not from our region? Not at all! Many tropical plants grace my garden for many reasons. The tomato, which is in the night shade family, comes from Africa. The deer don't eat my Marigolds. But, if I had my choice (and I do), I would choose a Texas Star Hibiscus or hardy Hibiscus over an annual Hibiscus any day.

That's just my opinion. Gardeners, like gardens, are like quilts. Each made up of special pieces, parts, likes and dislikes. We all need to remember that during this unique time in our history. In the meantime, have fun, feed the birds, enjoy the flowers and, as always, garden on!

The New Year's Resolution

Ellen Atkins

I suggested to my husband on January 1, 2020, that we resolve to enjoy our lovely property more this year. We are blessed to live on Lake Fork outside of Emory. The lake is always interesting whether it's the weather changes or the wildlife that frequent its shores. As a Master Gardener, I spend a lot of time working on various areas of our property. My husband must spend lots of time mowing. We have a vegetable garden, an orchard, several flower gardens, pecan trees and a field of wildflowers. All the areas of the yard are beautiful to me, but maintenance of five acres is an almost daily job. I tell my family and friends that God sends rain so I will clean the house or cook, otherwise I prefer to be outside.

I was reading recently about those who have great wealth but are unable to enjoy it. The gist of the article was to slow down! As I thought about the article and my resolution, it seemed to me that the answer was the same. Slow down, stop, and smell the roses, as the saying goes! My problem is that I want my place to look a particular way. I don't tolerate weeds well and will always stop to pull any that I see believing that it is easier to pull a few weeds when small rather than lots of big weeds! I guess I just want my homestead to be as pretty as I can make it.

So, getting to a place of satisfaction—a time when I can just relax and enjoy has been a learning experience for me. And,

interestingly, this winter and spring has brought a "forced" time of relaxation and enjoyment. Since I'm "that age", I have been politely required to stay home for the last few weeks. Isn't it funny how many places you can think of to go when you are asked to stay home? Fortunately, I had started my vegetable seeds in the greenhouse, so I didn't need to shop for those. My husband and our neighbor had gotten a trailer load of raised bed soil. I have a large pile of mulch that is begging to be used. All I needed was time! I never expected a virus to supply the incentive and time I needed to begin to truly enjoy the beauty around me.

Now there is no need to hurry. I'm not going anywhere. I have no schedule to keep. I have time to sit on the side of the raised bed and watch the mockingbird chase a squirrel. I notice the fox making several trips back and forth at the lakefront perhaps awaiting the hatching of the wood ducks. I take note of the chicken announcing her latest achievement, a good-looking brown egg. The color of the water reflects the sky's deep blue hue. The sunset turns each cloud red, then orange and finally pink. It seems that every field of grass is a more vibrant green this year. The azalea, rose and clematis blooms are effervescent shades of pink and red. I'm looking forward to the colorful and delicious vegetables that are to come. I think I'll choose to be thankful for the quarantine!



As you read our WCMGA newsletter you learn about:

- Educational seminars and classes
- Garden projects
- Advanced training speakers at educational forums
- Classroom instruction for County ISDs
- Newspaper educational articles written Master Gardeners
- Community outreach events
- Resources such as our website and Facebook pages

Please send newsletter articles, suggestions, and interesting information to B.J. McGee at mgnewsletter@hotmail.com or bmcgee@froco.com. The time you spend writing articles qualify as volunteer hours. Before you submit your article, please check the spelling, especially for proper names, botanical names, etc.; it's always appreciated if you can include the botanical names for all plants you mention. Articles may be edited.

Online with WCMGA

MG Wood Works Newsletter

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

Website

<http://txmg.org/woodcounty> up-to-the-minute news and scheduled events, back issues of the newsletter and seasonal videos. Send new content for the website 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/>

Advanced Training

Visit the **Texas Master Gardener** website (<https://mastergardener.tamu.edu/>) for information about advanced training topics and opportunities. The *Master Gardener Online Training* programs offer modules about various subjects, such as Landscape Water Conservation, Low-Volume Irrigation, Safe Use and Handling of Pesticides, Safe Use and Handling of Fertilizers, Reducing Landscape Waste - Composting, Designing an Earth-Kind Landscape, Creating Native Habitat, Earth-Kind Roses, Integrated Pest Management, and Rainwater Harvesting.

Sunshine

Know of a member who needs a get well, warm thought, or sympathy card? Contact Elaine Porter at 361-319-7300 or porterpettus@gmail.com.

Volunteer Hours

<http://texas.volunteersystem.org> Click the link and the sign in page for the Volunteer System opens. Before logging in, right-click on the page and save it to favorites, bookmark it, or create a shortcut to your desktop. Please enter your hours. If you need help contact Peggy Rogers.

Associate Roster

You can find all email addresses and contact information for other Master Gardeners in the Volunteer System.

Please update your profile in the Roster! Check your listing to be sure your contact information is up-to-date. Have you uploaded your photo?