

Peggy Rogers: Reflecting and Looking Forward

Happy Fall ya'll!

Wow! The 2021 year is winding down. But that also means we have some items to get completed.

Why and how do we recertify our Texas Master Gardener (TMG) certification? Last year, there was a little confusion about not recertifying and wanting to stay a member of WCMGA.

To recertify, you must have 6 CEUs and at least 12 volunteer hours recorded by December 31, plus you must be a member of a TMG association. To be a member of the Wood County Master Gardener Association, you must be certified or recertified as a Texas Master Gardener, pay \$20 dues by January 31, 2022, and sign a volunteer form. You can't be one without the other.

Have you recorded your hours?

For 2018 and 2019 TMG graduates, you also need to have a background check. That form is administered through Wood County Extension Agent Emily (Husmann) Castillo's office. Please note that on the volunteer form, one of the items you are signing and agreeing with is that you will have the required background check every three years.

Are you ready for the new year?

So let's reflect on this year. What have you, I, and we accomplished to promote Texas A&M AgriLife? Have we met the goal of their mission statement?

Let's look forward to a new year under new leadership.

Happy Gardening!

Texas AgriLife Extension Service Mission Statement

Working hand-in-hand with its Texas A&M System partners, the state legislature, and the communities it serves, the Texas AgriLife Extension Service mission to serve Texans through community-based education has remained unchanged for almost a century. With a vast network of 250 county Extension offices, 616 Extension agents, and 343 subject-matter specialists, the expertise provided by AgriLife Extension is available to every resident in every Texas county. Reference: <https://txmq.org/contacts/agrilife-extension>

Tip Book Sneak Preview



The tip book committee: Marty DaSilva, Linda Long, Susan Jarrell, Angela Thompson, Elaine Porter, Bobbie McGee, and Charlotte Kettlewell

The tip book committee is planning to have the new version ready for sale early next year. The book will present tips and tasks for each month plus recipes from the garden. Something to look forward to in 2022.

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WCMGA Scheduled Speakers for 2021

Meeting	Speaker
Nov. 18	WCMGA Annual Business Meeting, 2022 Trainee Class Overview, and Program Review
Dec. 16	WCMG Awards, Christmas Luncheon, and Intern Graduation

2021 Officers and Directors



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*Susan Jarrell
Vice President*



*Jan Whitlock
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Emily (Husmann) Castillo

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Ann Reynolds: Meaning of the Herbs of the Advent

The holiday season is upon us. Even though it is winter, I like to think that it is a rather plant-friendly time of year.

We adorn our homes with fir trees, holly, and ivy and hang a ball of mistletoe in the entryway. We bake with cinnamon, anise, rosemary, allspice, and nutmeg. We read a story about gifts of frankincense and myrrh.

Holiday Plants Have Special Meanings

Did you know that many of our holiday herbs, flowers, and plants have their own special meanings?

For centuries, romantics, alchemists, and others have attached symbolic meanings to plants, especially herbs. The language of flowers, floriography, which was developed during the Victorian era, was a means of cryptological communication (secret messages) through the use or arrangement of plants and flowers.

Many of our holiday herbs, flowers, and plants have their own special meanings.



Advent is a time of waiting, hoping, and anticipating for our family and also a time to remind us of the blessings and significance of the season.

The Advent Wreath Reminds Us of the Significance of the Season

During the holiday season, I like to make an Advent wreath. Advent is a time of waiting, hoping, and anticipating for our family and also a time to remind us of the blessings and significance of the season.

Since many plants and herbs hold special meanings and symbolism, I like to include them in my wreath. In fact, these plants are supposed to be a part of every Advent wreath. You would be surprised to find that the herbs of Advent are really rather common, were used during biblical times, and are mentioned in the Bible.

Herbs For Wreaths

Some of the herbs I have included in my wreaths are:

- Juniper (*Juniperus virginiana*) – protection, immortality
- Wax myrtle (*Morella cerifera*) – love, marriage
- Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*) – remembrance, love, loyalty
- Thyme (*Thymus vulgaris*) – courage, bravery
- Sage (*Salvia officinalis*) – virtue, wisdom
- Holly (*Ilex opaca*) – foresight, hope
- Ivy (*Hedera helix*) – friendship, patience, fidelity, undying love, eternal life

Other Plants to Include

Other plants to consider adding are:

- Rue (*Ruta graveolens*) – purification, virtue, banishes evil
- Lavender (*Lavandula sp.*) – devotion, purity, virtue
- Boxwood (*Buxus sempervirens*) – immortality, long life
- Mistletoe (in the order *Santalales*) – overcoming difficulty
- Bedstraw (*Galium triflorum*) or Cleavers (*Galium aparine*) – In early times these fragrant plants were used to stuff pillows and mattresses. Christian legend says that it was used in the manger.
- Pennyroyal (*Mentha pulegium*) – wisdom
- Bay (*Laurus nobilis*) – merit, honor, success, glory, reward
- Mint (*Menthe*) – virtue

No Beginning or End – Eternity

Of course, the wreath is a circle, which has meaning as well. Since the wreath has no beginning or end it symbolizes eternity.

Now, when you receive a floral arrangement or plant, try to discern what the sender is really trying to convey. The different meanings of herbs, flowers, and plants will really surprise you.

Happy sleuthing and happy holidays!

Kathy Goodman: Slate of Officers for 2022

The 2022 officer slate is: President: Barbara Williams, Vice President: Susan Jarrell, Treasurer: May Sandison, and Secretary: Gloria Jean Rosewall. Voting will take place at the November WCMGA meeting.

President: Barbara Williams (MG Class of 2017)

Howdy everyone! I'm looking forward to serving ya'll as president of WCMGA for the 2022 calendar year!



I grew up in the Eastern Upper Peninsula of Michigan near Sault Ste. Marie. My family moved to Albuquerque, NM when I was a teen. I worked as an air traffic controller for 24 years and moved just east of Quitman in 2015 when my husband (also a controller) and I retired. This place is beautiful, and I feel like I'm home with all the green, the lakes, and the humidity. However, I'm grateful that we don't have nine months of winter! We have two Labrador retrievers and no plans for any other animals just yet.

Since I completed my Texas Master Gardener training, my plant survival rate has dramatically increased. I love to experiment with different types of plants, techniques, and locations. I have several beds around my place and a veggie garden in raised beds. My husband is building me a timber frame greenhouse near my garden. I hope to plant asparagus near it in January. I really enjoy seeing what others have done and brainstorming ideas for future plans.

Our goal is to assist and educate the public about local gardening research-based techniques. I look forward to getting to know Extension Agent Emily (Husmann) Castillo and finding how we can serve Texas AgriLife and her in the best way possible! I'd like to continue Peggy Roger's goal of every member finding a committee or project that they gravitate to and of course, getting to know ya'll better!

Vice President: Susan Jarrell (MG Class of 2018)

I became a Texas Master Gardener because I love being outside with plants. I love to create, and I enjoy nature's beauty. My grandmother and mother both had "green thumbs." I always had a patch of ground to try to make beautiful even though I had no idea what I was doing!



My husband and I moved to Wood County five years ago from the Beaumont area where we grew up.

I began teaching in 1976. My teaching areas included early childhood, English, special education, and gifted education (K-12). I also taught at the college level and worked as a national and state consultant in the area of curriculum and strengthening low performing schools. I retired in 2016.

My favorite thing about WCMGA is meeting wonderful people. The nicest ladies and men are gardeners!

Treasurer: May Sandison (MG Class of 2017)

I was born and raised in San Angelo, Texas, where cacti and mesquite trees reign supreme. My early years were spent climbing trees and maintaining my parent's acre-sized yard. Although drought was common to west Texas, our yard was filled with mature pecan trees, Virginia creeper, pinkie hawthorn bushes, native and commercial rose bushes, peonies, daylilies, queens wreath, morning glories, honeysuckle, and Lynwood Gold forsythias.



In my late teen years and early twenties, I was employed as an accounts payable and receivable clerk. That position made me financially savvy. I am confident that I can maintain the Wood County Master Gardeners' financial ledger.

I have three passions in life. My first is my deep love and admiration for Jesus Christ. I love to share Him with others. My second is to play and joke around with my friends and family.

Lastly, a passion led me to a life-time pursuit of education. So, I taught teens for 20+ years and counseled them (and their parents) as a high school counselor. Now that my latter passion has faded into the sunset, I find fulfillment in family, friends, fishing, and gardening.

Secretary: Gloria Jeane Rosewall (MG Class of 2014)

I was born in Hainesville, Texas on land inherited from my great grandfather McDougald and I live on the same site 78 years later, but not the same house. For 20 years I traveled with my husband who was in the Navy before I come back to Texas.



I worked in banking for 30 years, 3 years for the US Navy NIS as a civilian, and after 5 years at the First United Methodist Church in Quitman I retired.

I come from a line of farmers and gardeners in Wood County. My Dad raised cattle and gardened after he retired, but his and my mother's parents were farmers.

I have three children: Cynthia Lynn a teacher at Hawkins ISD; Carrol Anne a Paralegal District Attorney in Johnson County Kansas; and Christopher US Army retired after 25 years.

I did not know what a Master Gardener was when I went to an event at the Mineola Civic Center, but I knew I wanted to be part of the organization. In 2014 I took the classes, became a Master Gardener, learned so much, and made some wonderful friends. Clint Perkins said, "Beware when people find out you are a Master Gardener they are going to hit you up with all kinds of questions." Is that not so?

I like all types of gardening and I love watching things grow. Propagation is so fun. Let me know if you want a start of Confederate rose. When mine stops blooming I cut it back, because it does not over winter.

Kathy Goodman: Congratulations to Emily and Zach Castillo



Newlyweds Emily and Zach Castillo



Celebrating the marriage of Emily and Zach



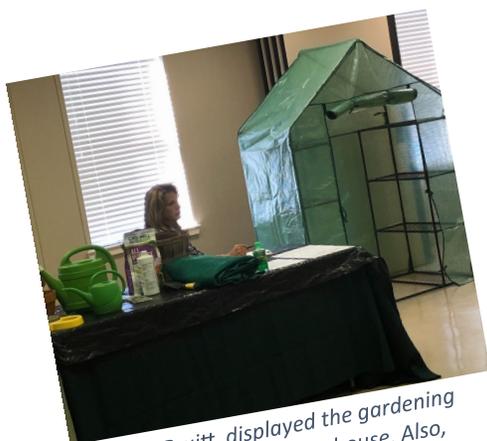
Hosts Michele Musser and Carolyn West

Emily and Zach, the Wood County Master Gardeners wish you a long and happy marriage!

At the October WCMGA meeting, Carolyn West and Michele Musser hosted a lovely presentation of hors d'oeuvres and a beautifully decorated cake to celebrate Emily Husmann and Zach Castillo's marriage.

In addition, the WCMGA members helped grow a money tree for the newlyweds.

Terri Baker: Greenhouse Educational Session a Success



Theresa Pruitt displayed the gardening supplies used in her greenhouse. Also, Barb Williams displayed the temporary greenhouse that she used for hardening off seedlings in the spring.



Keith and Gayle Mullinax and Betty Stark at the Greenhouse educational session.



The October 23rd Wood County Master Gardeners Association Education Series topic was about greenhouses. Despite many fall festivities occurring at the same time in Winnsboro, the session had more than 43 attendees.

Watch for more educational opportunities from the Wood County Master Gardeners Association in 2022.



Linda Timmons: Small Beds at the Wildscape Help Educate Master Gardeners and the Public



New sign at the Wildscape

Over the last three years volunteers at the Wildscape have added or modified three small gardens and four troughs. While a small, dedicated bed or container seems like less of a challenge to install and maintain at the Wildscape, the small beds and containers also answer other needs.

Education is foremost in planning any Texas Master Gardener project. Gardens in Texas also have water issues. Sometimes there is too much water and sometimes there is too little water. Another challenge at the Wildscape has been using the few volunteers available to maintain a garden that appeals to visitors over all four seasons.



David Raines installing new signs at the Wildscape

Small Beds Show Mini-Landscape Possibilities

From an educational angle, the “pocket prairie” bed is ideal because it gives visitors a concentrated area to view native plants and pollinators. The first small “water diversion” bed was designed around a berm and swale that were used to slow and divert water runoff from the upper areas of the Wildscape.

The newest “mini-meadow” bed was an attempt to replace the larger wildflower meadow that during most seasons looked too

wild and unkept to appeal to visitors. The troughs provide both education and ease of care. Visitors can view these low-maintenance containers, which feature perennial and native plants.

Troughs Make Good Raised Beds

For busy, older, or physically challenged gardeners, the smaller dedicated or raised beds are much easier to tend.



Troughs are labor intensive to create, but easier to maintain.

For us at the Wildscape, the troughs were labor intensive to start but now require minimal maintenance. Besides regular watering and annual soil and mulch renewal, the perennials we chose to fill the troughs only need an occasional “haircut” in fall or spring.

Water Diversion Bed Creates Beauty

The water diversion bed also required time and effort to dig the eight-foot swale and build the berm. The berm was based with layers of cardboard topped with wood chips, soil dug from the swale, compost, and leaves.

Then, the mix was left to compost over the winter and planted in the spring with a Carolina jessamine vine (*Gelsemium sempervirens*), Stoke’s dwarf yaupon holly (*Ilex vomitoria*) shrubs, and various perennials.

Small Beds at the Wildscape, Continued from page 6



Pocket prairie before planting



Pocket prairie after the plants matured

Pocket Prairie Bed Provides Seasonal Interest With Native Plants and Pollinators

The pocket prairie bed required more time researching appropriate plants and designing the bed to provide seasonal interest. Much of the harder work of preparing the area, adding rocks, and creating a runoff “dry bed” was done during the cooler fall and winter time.

Mini-Meadow Bed Displays Wildflowers

The only bed we started working on in the spring was the mini-meadow. This bed was designed in response to the ragged appearance of the wildflowers after blooming. To make the area look neater, we doubled the size, edged it with rocks and a cedar log, and added mulch. Summer blooming annuals and perennials were added to extend the seasonal color. This fall we are sowing more wildflower seeds. So, this bed is still in development. It will be interesting to see what works and what doesn’t work.

Learning What Works

Over the years since the water diversion bed was installed the plants have decided who’s happy and who’s not. One example, cowpen daisies, also called golden crownbeard, (*Verbesina encelioides*) are an easy-care annual that self-sowed in the bed. They make a wonderful splash of yellow in the fall and provide nectar for migrating monarchs and other butterflies.

Wildflower Bullies Try to Take Over

In small beds, flower bullies have to be dealt with severely. One such bully, the showy pink evening primrose (*Oenothera speciosa*) volunteered in the bed. Although it is native and is a great early spring pollinator plant, it has tried to take over. As a result, volunteer workers had to spend extra time removing most of the showy primrose from this bed. Alternatively, it is allowed to grow in larger areas where it has more room to spread.

Time to Plan Your Mini-Beds

For many gardeners, smaller intensely planted beds or containers provide low-maintenance gardens. Now is the time to plan your mini-bed. Review your gardens, make plans, and use the cooler fall and winter weather to do the heavy preparation work.

Come visit the Wildscape at the Mineola Nature Preserve for inspiration.

Kathy Goodman: New AgriLife Banners and Signs for Events



Gloria Jeane holding the new table runner

At the WCMGA October meeting, Gloria Jeane Rosewall showed the new AgriLife signs that can be used at Master Gardener events.

These signs have the new AgriLife logo and wording. The signage includes two banners and two table runners. The signs are stored at the AgriLife Extension Office.

The signs have been used at the October Garden Educational Workshop about greenhouses and at the Hawkins Oil Festival.

Thank you, Gloria Jeane, for taking care of ordering the signage. Well



Gloria Jeane and Carolyn West showing the new AgriLife banner

Melodee Eishen: Nature Watch Musings

It is fall ya'll! As I'm writing this article, the weather man said we were getting a cool front today (currently in the high 80's). Then he had the nerve to say, that if you live north of I-20 (which I do) some could expect to have temperatures down in the 30's next week. Okay, it's only the middle of October, we are in Texas, and it's way too early for temperatures that low! I'm in the middle of drying lots of herbs, carrots, celery, onions, making vinegar, and foraging. I'm NOT ready for a frost. However, if I'm done in the garden, I have three quilts to make and five stuffed animals to sew.

On to the Phenology Nature Watch. I know in my last report I mentioned the sad lack of hummingbirds at my place. The most I counted was six and that was in August. Just yesterday, sitting on my back porch gathering chive seeds, I counted only one lonely hummingbird. In the past, it was not unusual for me to have 40 to 50 birds in September and into October.

As for my elderberries, I've gathered and dried a couple of gallons of berries, to be used later for elderberry syrup. My Turks cap, comfrey, strawberries, and sage are all doing quite well. The golden rod close to the house has finally reached full bloom, and I'm leaving the blooms for the bees—they are all

over it. I understand from a beekeeper friend that golden rod is the last abundant plant for the bees to harvest pollen from before winter. However, I'm drying quite a few leaves from the golden rod for tea this winter.

So what's new you ask? We have a new weather station! Yay! It's only been installed for a couple of weeks, but I've enjoyed keeping up with the accumulation of our showers (.76 inches so far for October). It also keeps track of wind direction and speed, as well as humidity, shower forecast, and cloudy or sunny days. I think it will be a great tool to use going forward.

With all this said, it is time to clean up the garden, mulch if you have a fall garden, and start putting your flower beds to sleep. Speaking of fall gardens, my broccoli, cabbages, Swiss chard, onions, and garlic are all looking good. My carrots and beets have come up, but it's a little early to tell how well they will turn out.

I've been reading several forecasts for this winter. In general, the forecasts say that the weather will be wet and cool. They are not predicting a severe winter. Here's hoping we don't have a horrible long freeze like last year.

Happy gardening!

Pat Johnson: Horticultural Mania Test

Are you a horticultural high-achiever or one of the gardening-impaired?

Check off the following statements that are true for you.

(Give yourself three bonus points if you had to remove your gardening gloves before starting.)

You know you are a hard-core gardener if:

- Your bumper sticker reads: "I brake for worms," "I'd rather be weeding," or "Have you hugged your cactus today?"
- You photograph your flowers more often than your family or friends.
- You'd rather cut the grass than vacuum the carpet.
- You're disappointed to learn that you can't order vegetable seeds from L.L. Bean.
- After a terrific out-of-town vacation, you still regret missing the peonies in bloom.
- You would turn down a job transfer to a city with a shorter growing season.
- You rank *The Secret Garden* above *Citizen Kane*.
- You'd choose a fish pond over a swimming pool.
- You'd prefer a leaf shredder to a food processor.
- You'd rather water your garden than wash your car.
- Your hedge-clipper blades are sharper than your kitchen knives.
- You say, "garden soil" never "dirt."
- You deadhead flowers in other people's gardens.
- You enjoy rain but go ballistic over hail.
- You garden in the rain and only stop when it thunders.
- After a thunderstorm, you check for tree damage before basement flooding.
- After a snowstorm, you brush off ornamental trees before shoveling the walk.
- You can state your hardiness zone faster than your ZIP code.
- You buy beer for slugs.
- You sport trowel earrings or a wheelbarrow belt buckle.
- You actually appreciate cow manure as a birthday present.
- You dream of compost.

How you scored:

If you checked:

Under 5: No headaches for you if there's a frost.

5 - 10: You spend more time in the hammock than in the humus.

11 - 20: You know which end of a corm is up.

Over 20: You need some horticultural withdrawal. Time to close the garden gate.

Attribute: Sue Careless, journalist in Toronto, Ontario

Betty Stark: Orchids are Easy to Grow

Fall is here, and the days are getting shorter and darker. A way to brighten your day is having a blooming orchid. There is something mysterious and exotic about orchids. Who isn't drawn to the great display of orchids at Lowes, Walmart, or even Brookshires?

You probably think, "I'd love to buy one, but I'll either kill it or it will die; either outcome is not a good."

The greatest myths are that orchids are expensive to buy, difficult to grow, and need expert greenhouse care. Not anymore! If you can grow African violets, you will have few problems growing and enjoying orchids.

The greatest myths are that orchids are expensive to buy, difficult to grow, and need expert greenhouse care.

Many varieties make great houseplants and will faithfully bloom year after year. You need to start thinking like an orchid and their special needs will be logical. If you think about where orchids grow naturally by clinging to tree trunks high in the rain forest. They get an abundance of bright, filtered light but they are sheltered from blazing tropical sun. Other orchids live in shadier spots near the jungle floor.

Lighting

In other words, orchids will thrive in a variety of light situations; but I find mine do well on windowsills. A southern or eastern window with a wide sill to prevent the leaves and roots touching the glass works well. To check if your plants are getting the right amount of light, examine the foliage. Dark green leaves, spindly growth, and no flowers are a sign of too little light. White or scorched leaves indicate too much light. Orchid leaves getting the right level of light will usually be a light, grassy green. I tried putting my orchids in the greenhouse, and they didn't like that. I'm not sure if it was too dry or too hot, but I brought them back in the house and back to their southern window sill.

Watering

Please do not put ice cubes on the soil of your orchid. They are tropical plants and do not grow on icebergs. I have found the best way to water is to put a large bowl in the sink and fill it with tepid water. The bowl sides need to be higher than the pot height. Submerge your orchid pot gently until it is fully filled with water. Some of the potting medium, if it is pieces of bark or orchid potting mix, will float around in the bowl and that's



To water an orchid, gently immerse the pot into tepid water.



okay. Soak the plant for about 20 minutes and then gently lift the plant out of the water. Repack any potting material and drain the orchid well. I do this about every five to seven days depending on the house temperatures and how much sun or light they are getting in my south facing windows. I use tap water but filtered or rainwater is great. Try not to get the leaves wet, but if they get wet dry them with a paper towel.

Fertilizing

I use ESPOMA brand organic orchid bloom booster, which I purchase at Lowes. Follow the directions on the bottle. I use this once a month and put the fertilizer right in with my soaking water. However, I think any type of liquid orchid fertilizer would work.

Potting

I pot the orchids in Miracle Grow orchid potting mix, which I also purchase at Lowes. If your orchid looks like it is pushing itself out of its pot you may want to repot it. When you repot, examine the roots. If some seem dead, dry, or brown, cut them off. You only want healthy green roots. Put your plant in its new pot and sprinkle and pack the orchid potting medium around the roots. Don't be afraid to cut your orchid, as it isn't as delicate as you think. Treat it like any other house plant.

I hope this information helps to convince you to get an orchid that you can enjoy for many years.

Ann Reynolds: Hawkins Volunteers Sharing With the Public

We knew he didn't die. . . Elvis Presley, that is. How fortunate we were to be working at the pavilion at the Hawkins City Park when he showed up! Of course, we were "all shook up" when we stood up from our maintenance duties to find him standing there.



Ann Reynolds, Suzanne Whitsell, Elvis, and Sandy Hayden at the Hawkins City Park flower bed.

The flowers in the pavilion are putting on quite a show now and blooming profusely. The Gregg's mistflower (*Conoclinium Greggii*) continues to draw the monarch (*Danaus plexippus*), Gulf fritillary (*Dione vanillae*) and cloudless sulphur (*Phoebis sennae*) butterflies.



Monarch on zinnia and Gregg's mistflower in the background.

Handing out Information at the Oil Festival

The Hawkins Oil Festival brought hundreds of folks to the pavilion and Meleena Byram, Sandy Hayden, and Suzanne Whitsell had the flowerbed looking fabulous. Small packets of



Meleena Byram and Ann Reynolds passing out information and seeds at the Hawkins Oil Festival.

seeds and copies of Agrilife gardening information were distributed to interested folks. In addition, two people were interested in the Master Gardener program and we referred them to the Extension office.

Another "arresting" incident was a visit with the Hawkins Chief of Police, Manfred Gilow, when he stopped by to take a look at our handiwork. He is a gardener as well and keeps hanging baskets of plants blooming throughout the summer at the police station.

New plants were installed at the sensory garden and now color needs to be added. The specimen garden at the library received a donation of a bird bath from Sandy Tibbs. This garden had a resident hummingbird (a first) all summer long.



Meleena Byram, Chief Manfred Gilow, Sandy Hayden, and Suzanne Whitsell at the Hawkins City Park flower garden.

Jessie Mellon: Garden Lessons Learned for 2021

November and December are great times to reflect on Mother Nature's lessons. Since moving to Wood County in the spring of 2020, we have learned quite a lot and have had a few success stories as well as a few tales of failures.

Dealing With Pocket Gophers

Pocket gophers are a problem in our sugar sand. To keep the pesky rodents from eating my vegetables, I garden in containers or make life so unpleasant that they stay away. Deterrents included, sprinkling fox urine granules in their tunnels, banging on T-posts that support trellises, and supervising a terrier and a dachshund who love to dig into the gopher runs. (The downside of the dogs digging could be a turned ankle.)

Unfortunately, not all of last year's gardening practices yielded bountiful results. We grew last year's tomato transplants in 3-gallon pots containing a 1:1 mix of commercial potting soil and native sand. We buried these pots halfway in the soil to keep the roots cool. Thus, the transplants were protected from the gophers. In addition, water and nutrients were directed to the roots. I thought, "Ah ha, this is what will work!"

This spring, though, Mother Nature surprised us with cool, wet conditions and I nearly drowned my tomatoes. By the time I realized my error, the plants were stunted. Although I removed them from the pots and planted them directly into the soil, their recovery was slow. As a result, the tomato yield was diminished by at least half.

Lima Bean Failure Inspired a New Pollinator and Hummingbird Bed

Lima bean production was a bust this year. I started a new bed, amended the soil, and planted my lima beans with a smile on my face. However, only 2 out of 20 seeds germinated. So, I performed a viability test on the seeds. The test resulted in a 95 percent germination rate. Again, I planted the lima bean seeds and unfortunately got the same result.

However, zinnias grew vigorously and bloomed profusely in that spot as did native cypress vine. So, now this is my new pollinator and hummingbird bed.

Hügelkultur Bed Was a Success

Our garden news isn't all bleak though. Our year-old hügelkultur bed produced summer squash, asparagus (planted on the crown), onions, and tomatoes. This winter it is planted with broccoli, Brussels sprouts, onions, and salad greens. However, the angle on the sides was so steep that to direct seed, it was necessary to create a flat spot or plant into a pocket.

Straw Bale Bed Was a Success

Another success story is our straw bale bed. Last year, we placed straw bales over hardware cloth and conditioned it with 21-0-0 commercial fertilizer to start decomposition. In the space between bales, we filled in with soil and seeded it with a cover crop of stir fry greens. A year later, the bales have



The straw bale bed yielded a bumper crop.

substantially decomposed and yielded a bumper crop of summer peppers and stir fry greens. We planted more broccoli, Brussels sprouts, and New Jersey Wakefield cabbage for the winter months. Again, we filled any voids with garden soil and compost.

Lessons Learned

The lessons I have learned this year are:

1. "Don't put all your eggs in one basket." Plant transplants using at least two different methods and in two different places in the garden.
2. Sow seeds in succession a week apart.
3. Pay close attention to transplant health and weather conditions.
4. Be patient, a hügelkultur bed requires time to mature.
5. Control is an illusion.

I thank my mentor, Melodee Eishen, Wood County Master Gardeners, and all my neighbors for their help and counsel this year.

***Gardens are not made by singing 'Oh, how beautiful,' and sitting in the shade.
– Rudyard Kipling, 'The Glory of the Garden' (1911)***

Ann McKelroy: Food Pantries for Vegetable Donations

Thank you for helping feed the hungry! Please track the number of pounds that you donate for the year.

All the pantries that we contacted are pleased to accept donations of fresh vegetables. There may be other programs that are not widely published. So, if you discover a program that is not on this list, please let me know so that I can update the list. Ann's email: damckelroy@gmail.com.

Note from Kathy Goodman: Please also copy me on updates to this list of donation sites. For convenience, I plan to post this list as a regular part of the newsletter. Kathy's email: kmgoodman0807@gmail.com

Tracking Vegetable Donations

Please include the following information when you donate vegetables to a program:

Your name

Texas Master Gardener-Wood County

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension System

Also, please create a vegetable donation record by tracking how many pounds of fruits and vegetables you are producing per square foot or acre of your garden and track every time you harvest or donate. For Emily (Husmann) Castillo's reports for the year, she needs to know the total pounds of produce grown by Wood County Master Gardeners as well as the total pounds of produce donated.

So, each time you donate, please record:

- Estimated pounds harvested during that donation period
- Estimated pounds donated

Then, at the end of the season, total each amount and give that information to Wood County Extension Agent Emily (Husmann) Castillo.

emily.husmann@ag.tamu.edu

Extension Office: 903.763.2924, FAX: 903.763.2092

WCMGA Meetings

Third Thursday of Each Month

8:30 - 9 AM Visiting and Sign-in
9 AM Meeting

First Assembly of God Church
909 E Goode St., Quitman, Texas

Area Food Pantries

Bread of Life Ministries (Pantry)

1001 E. McDonald, Mineola
First and third Tuesday 8:30 AM - 4 PM
(903) 405-0064
Service Area: Wood County

First United Methodist Church (Senior Box)

406 E Lane St, Quitman
Second Friday Participating Clients: 9 AM - 10 AM
Waiting Clients: 10 AM - 11 AM
(903) 597-3663
Service Area: All counties
Note: Enter on N. Goldman St.

Alba-Golden Food Pantry

245 E. Holley Street, Alba
Friday 9 AM - 11 AM
(903) 765-2471
Service Area: Alba-Golden School District

Lake Fork Baptist Church Feed My Sheep (Pantry)

9483 W FM 515, Alba
Second Tuesday 1 PM - 3 PM
(903) 473-9523
Service Area: All counties

Hawkins Helping Hands (Pantry)

320 W. Front St., Hawkins
Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday 9 AM - 12 PM
(903) 769-4357
Service Area: Hawkins ISD

Kindness Kottage (Pantry)

316 E. Broad St, Mineola
Monday - Friday 9 AM - 3 PM
(903) 569-9197
Service Area: Mineola ISD

Rose Hill Food Pantry

1420 CR 2460, Mineola
Second and fourth Wednesday 10 AM - 12 PM
903-312-3256
Service Area: Wood County

Mercy Mall (Pantry)

104 Bermuda, Quitman
Every Saturday 10 AM - 12 PM
(903) 497-0684
Service Area: All

Winnsboro CRC (Pantry)

115 W. Broadway, Winnsboro
Tuesday & Thursday 10 AM - 2 PM
(903) 342-3287
Service Area: Winnsboro ISD



As you read our WCMGA newsletter, you can learn about:

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

Please send newsletter articles, suggestions, and interesting information to newsletter editor Kathy Goodman at kmgoodman0807@gmail.com.

Note: You can count time spent writing articles as volunteer hours. Please understand that all articles will be edited to fit the newsletter style or for spacing needs.

Online with WCMGA

MG Wood Works Newsletter Photos

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

Texas Master Gardener, Wood County 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

Wood County Master Gardeners Inc. Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/Wood-County-Master-Gardeners-Inc-205733709448425/>

WCMGA Private Facebook Group

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

Volunteer Management System

At this time, VMS is accessible by phone, but not all features are accessible by phone. It is most user-friendly when using a computer, iPad, or tablet. The system has some nice features, such as copying a previous entry and changing the date and hours. Please add your photo, volunteer hours, mileage, and CEUs. <https://vms.texasmg.org/> If you have problems entering your hours, please contact Linda Timmons at 903.569.3443 or lindtmms@aol.com.

Associate Roster

You can find 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? <https://vms.texasmg.org/>

Advanced Training

Visit the **Texas Master Gardener Advanced Training** website (<https://mastergardener.tamu.edu/master-gardener-specialist/>) for information about advanced training topics and opportunities. The Master Gardener Advanced Training programs offer modules about various subjects.

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.

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.