

MG Wood Works

July/August 2023



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Wood Works Staff

Kathy Goodman, Editor
Jenna Nelson, Proofreader



Barb Williams: President's Letter

Howdy y'all and welcome to the second half of 2023. Time seems to be passing at lightning speed!

I was blessed to have Holly Ross stay with me this past week. She took the Master Gardener training class in Wood County in 2011 and has accumulated a wealth of knowledge over the past decade.

While here, she spoke at the Quitman Garden Club's meeting about "Mosquito Proofing Your Backyard." Holly graciously contributed an article about it for our newsletter. The article is on page [8](#) in this newsletter.

One of the greatest benefits from joining our WCMGA is the lasting friendships. The camaraderie and joy of sharing plants (as well as our love of plants) is priceless! Since the "too-hot-to-garden-outside" season is upon us, I challenge you to grow your friendships indoors.

Our annual project leader pool party continues this year with a new name—current/future project coordinator training pool party. Your executive board is in the process of creating a new format for project leadership that will take the pressure off of one individual and spread it across many. Many hands make light work; so please be thinking about our different projects and try to get out there and experience each one. You'll be glad you did!

On another note—what do you think of a farm-to-table picnic as an annual fundraiser? There are a few restrictions in play, but it seems as if it would be doable. If

you have experience with catering or putting on an event like this, please contact me. I have a habit of thinking things will be easier and less time consuming than they turn out to be and I'd appreciate a realistic opinion.

Potato Grow Bag

In our March/April newsletter edition, I mentioned trying to grow potatoes in a grow bag with the layering technique for more spuds.



After adding soil several times and still having half the bag to go, I realized my husband and I don't eat a lot of potatoes. In addition, I wasn't sure how or where I would store them. So I stopped adding more soil. I'm happy I tried growing this crop, but it took up too much time, energy, and space for something we don't really use.

What are you experimenting with growing these days?

Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions you may have whenever you'd like. I respond quickest to text messages to (505) 321-2817. Peace, Love and Joy!

Upcoming Events

July 20 WCMGA meeting: Microgreens by Erin and Drew Mason

July 27 Lunch and Learn: How to Attract Pollinators in Your Garden at the AgriLife Extension Office in Quitman, from 12 to 1. Bring your lunch and drink. The public is welcome.

August 17 WCMGA meeting: Food Preservation by County Agent Lindsey Yeager

August 24 Lunch and Learn: Worm Composting at the AgriLife Extension Office in Quitman, from 12 to 1. Bring your lunch and drink. The public is welcome.

2023 WCMGA Officers



Barb Williams, President



Carolyn West, Vice President



May Sandison, Treasurer



Marty Da Silva, Secretary

WCMGA Directors

Gayle Mullinax, Director

Keith Mullinax, Director

Debbie Latham, Alternate Director

Carolyn West, Alternate Director

Note: WCMGA members can find an individual's phone number and email address on the Member Roster under the General Information menu on the Wood County Master Gardener Volunteer Management System. <https://vms.texasmg.org>

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Agent, Wood County



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WCMGA Project Chairs

Emory City Park and Sandy Creek Park, Lannette Beaver

Trainee Class, Emily Castillo

Hawkins City Park and Library, TBD

Mineola Nature Preserve, Linda Timmons

Phenology-Nature Watch, Jessie Mellon

Quitman Public Library, Jan Whitlock

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Office, TBD

Winnsboro Library, Bob Bauerschmidt and Patt Bauerschmidt

Wood County Arboretum & Botanical Gardens, Lin Grado

Support Positions

Emails, Keith Mullinax

WCMGA Facebook Private Group, Linda Timmons

Newsletter, Kathy Goodman

Sunshine, Elaine Porter

Volunteer Management System, Linda Timmons

Website, Keith Zimmerman

Medicinal Herbs Presentation by Holly Ross

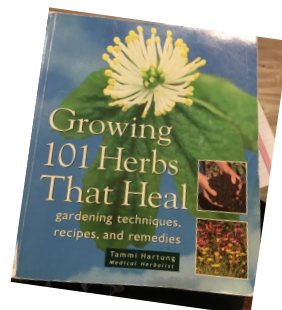
By Kathy Goodman

At the June WCMGA meeting, Holly Ross presented an entertaining and extremely informative talk about her three favorite herbs for medicinal purposes: garlic, rosemary, and dandelion.

The herbs can be used in essential oils, infused oil, vinaigrette, tinctures, teas, salads, or dried. Essential oils carry the most medicinal properties.

Holly offered hints about how to perform each type of process to use the herbs.

In addition, she shared that when she began learning about healing herbs, she used the "Growing 101 Herbs That Heal" book by Tammi Hartung



Celebrating the Class of 2023 Graduation

By *Emily Husmann Castillo*

On Thursday, May 18, the Wood County Master Gardener Association celebrated the 2023 Master Gardener trainee class at the "Growing Our Membership" themed graduation ceremony and luncheon.

2023 Master Gardener Class

To earn the title of Texas Master Gardener Intern, a trainee must complete a minimum of 50 hours of instruction and pass an examination administered by AgriLife Extension.

The following individuals completed 50 educational hours and passed their final exam, thus earning the title of Master Gardener Intern:

- Shauna Chapin
- Dana Childs
- Patsy Davila
- Kathy Durham
- Scott Gilbreath
- Kelly Ann Holden
- Nate Holden
- Connie Holliday
- Nicole Jenkins
- Brian Jones
- Brooke Jones
- Linda Mahony
- Laura Palumbo
- Penney Ryan
- Mimi Turbeville
- Cindy Souser
- Kandice Williamson

When the newly graduated Master Gardener Interns complete their required 50 volunteer hours, they will be recognized at the monthly WCMGA meetings as having earned the title of certified Master Gardener.

Congratulations to our New Certified Master Gardeners

To further earn the title of Texas Master Gardener, a trainee or intern must volunteer a minimum of 50 hours of service in a year following the end of class.

At the time of graduation, Shauna Chapin, Brian Jones, Brooke Jones, Laura Palumbo, and Mimi Turbeville completed their 50 volunteer hours, so they were also recognized as certified Master Gardeners!



Thank You to All Who Helped with the Class of 2023

Special thanks to Carolyn West and the Graduation Luncheon Committee for all of their work in organizing a wonderful celebration for the Class of 2023. Also thank you to every Wood County Master Gardener who created a centerpiece, contributed to the meal, and helped celebrate this new class!

Thanks again to Linda Long and Gayle Mullinax for all of your help behind the scenes that made putting on another Wood County Master Gardener Training Class possible!



All photos by Terri Baker



Name That Plant

By Linda Timmons

"Hey, (insert name here), you're a Master Gardener, what's this plant?"

You've probably been asked this question more than once. Sometimes it's easy to answer because you've grown the plant or seen it used in many gardens. But sometimes it's new to you or you just can't recall the name so you grab your phone and go to your plant ID app.

I think it was around 2016 that I first tried a plant ID app. I submitted pictures of plants that I was familiar with to LeafSnap. The app failed miserably. I didn't even think about plant ID apps again until 2021.

Because I volunteer at the Wildscape I have been trying to get more knowledgeable about native plants. I was introduced to iNaturalist. I tested it and liked the results. It's different from other apps in that it not only uses photo recognition, but it also asks for confirmation identification from the community because your observation can become research grade and be used by scientists around the world. According to Wikipedia as of January 2022, more than 2,000 research results have been published that used iNaturalist research-grade observations.

At the Wildscape, more and more I see folks whipping out their phone when they want to identify a plant. But how accurate are the results?

Between the years 2018 and 2022 the Michigan State University Extension had students evaluate 14 apps using photo recognition software to identify plants.

The pictures submitted to the apps were random plants in different stages of growth in a botanical garden and were labeled with common and scientific names. Plants ranged from ornamentals to grasses to weeds.

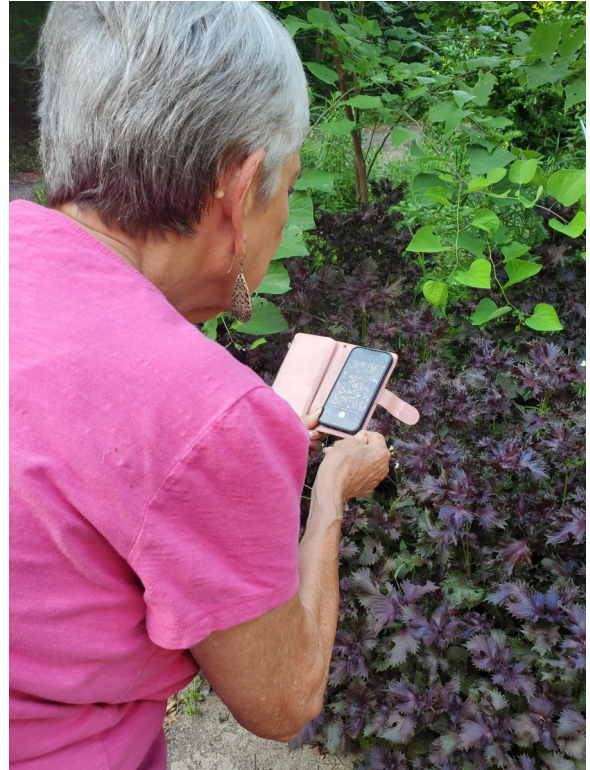
In 2021 eight apps were tested about 100 times each and then ranked based on percentage of correct identification. PictureThis and Planted placed first and second.

It's interesting to note that first place was only 67 percent accurate and the second, third, and fourth place apps were only about 50 percent accurate.

Plant ID apps appear to have the most problem with identifying grasses. They have the most accuracy with ornamentals.

Another study done by the National Institute for Health only tested the apps on 17 commonly encountered toxic plants. PictureThis was the most accurate with only 59 percent. PlantNet was second with 47 percent.

I did a very unscientific poll of gardening friends and asked for their favorite plant ID app. In addition to iNaturalist, PictureThis, and PlantNet; Google Lens, Google Image, Plantsnap, LeafSnap, PlantID, Plantin, and Seek were mentioned.



Many of the gardeners said they use multiple apps to verify results. All of the apps mentioned are either free or have some free accessibility.

Both iNaturalist and PlantNet participate in citizen scientist projects and ask for the GPS location of pictures submitted. Because they can track locations, iNaturalist does not allow children to use the app.

For children, they offer Seek as an alternative. Seek uses the same data bank as iNaturalist but without location tracking, you don't have to register and you don't even have to take a picture. Just point the Seek camera at the plant to get identification. Seek and iNaturalist will also identify mushrooms, insects, and birds.

For quick results, Google Lens is simple to use. Google Image is the web-based version of Google Lens and can be used on your computer. PictureThis, in addition to identifying plants, provides information about preferred habitat, sunlight, and watering requirements, information about pests, and more.

With advancements in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and photo recognition, plant apps have been getting more accurate. But maybe more important than identifying plants is that the apps allow more people to get involved in nature.

The more we know about plants in the world around us, the more we understand our place in nature and maybe we can do a better job of taking care of our little part of this world.

Observations of a Pollinator Party

By Martha Maurits

There's a lot to like about our East Texas home, especially the garden. Simply put, there's never a dull moment. There are so many things to learn, to try, and to enjoy in our seasonal growing experiments that my head is on a swivel going from one study to the next. Shared stories often turn into inspirations for fresh projects...such as our new pollinator garden.

We had some open, unused space on a down slope and along a fence line that seemed like a good spot for dedicated pollinator gardens. The areas were spotty in weedy ground cover yet still required mowing so we decided we'd plant pollinator seed mix there and try to make a wildscape out of it. Both areas are in proximity to our raised garden beds and a close pollinator flight to the vegetable plants flowering there, some of which need pollinating activity for production. A pollinator is anything, such as a bee or butterfly, that helps carry pollen from the male to the female parts of flowers for reproduction, while feeding and flying from plant to plant. Seeking to establish a friendly habitat for these important workers, we bought a 50 lb. bag of pollinator seed mix, which should cover an acre.

We ordered our seeds through the East Texas Seed Co., a wholesale company in Tyler. The seeds were labeled "Pollinator Mix-2022." The seed was shipped directly from Turner Seed Co. a retail company in Breckenridge, TX.

Reference: East Texas Seed Company (Wholesale) easttexasseedcompany.com and Turner Seed Co. <https://www.turnerseed.com/storefront.html>

The soft bag which arrived contained a variety of 15 early, middle, and late pollinator plant seeds expected to germinate and bloom during the spring, summer, and fall.

The mix contained:

- 10% green sprangletop (Van Horn)
- 10% Illinois bundleflower
- 10% Indian blanket
- 10% sideoats grama
- 10% sweet clover (silver river)
- 10% switchgrass (Blackwell)
- 6% black-eyed Susan
- 6% clasping coneflower
- 6% plains coreopsis
- 5% alfalfa
- 5% Maximilian sunflower
- 5% partridge pea



- 5% purple prairie clover
- 1% awnless bushsunflower
- 1% gayfeather

The total purity of the mix was 97%. The mix was rich in future nectar plants and host plants for butterflies. When I opened the bag for sowing, the scented mix reminded me of a drawer sachet! It was lovely and made a great first impression!

Last October we tilled the soil of our staked planting zones to rough it up before the winter, then sowed all 50 lbs. of seed using a

handheld fertilizer spreader across a 40' x 60' rectangle and a 15' x 200' mini runway. The seeds lay patiently through the winter and early spring rains and, sure enough, began germinating in March and have been growing thicker ever since. The resulting pollinator flower show has been vivid, first with a spring abundance of yellow and red Indian blanket flowers and scented white Silver River sweet clover. Then, the more recent blooms of yellow and black-eyed Susans; purple blooming alfalfa and prairie clover; and yellow and maroon plains coreopsis appeared.

Both planting zones contained the weeds originally growing there along with the new plants. We expect a variety of bees,



beetles, butterflies, and flies to enjoy their new habitat, which has been irrigated only by rainfall. We're going to see what nature can support there with rain.

We set a yellow pollinator watering station at the edge of the wildscape, which we refresh regularly to provide drinking water for the insects. There is also an iron ore rock pile between the plantings which serves as a pollinator resting

Continued on page 6

Observations of a Pollinator Party continued from page 5

station. When we mow around the plots, our impression is that the landscape has retained adequate moisture to this point in the summer and we will evaluate what happens to the plants during the coming heat of summer. This is a pilot program to provide essential nectar, the nutrients our insect visitors need to survive, and a supportive terrain to keep them coming back.

The dense habitations resemble an uneven flowery, stalky jumble thick enough to provide shelter for a baby rabbit we saw there. Daily we see an interesting abundance of flying insects in both zones. They seem to be attracted to the tapestry of colors and different bloom shapes that offer the nectar they seek.

Our visitors have included industrious honeybees and native bees as well as common buckeye butterflies. Host plants for eggs and caterpillars for this butterfly include American bluehearts, false foxglove, plantain, toadflax, turkey tangle fogfruit, twinflower, and yaupon black senna. The common plantain was in the natural weed mix at our site before planting.

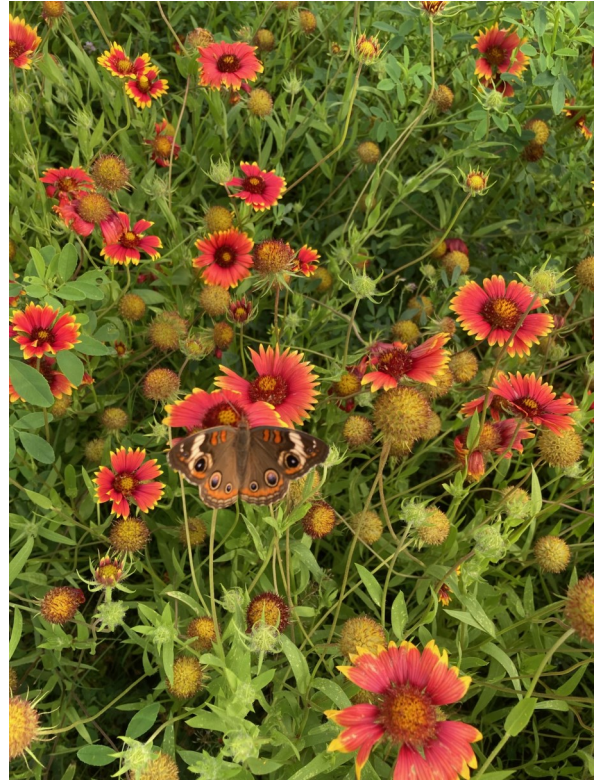
Clouded sulphur butterflies also visited. Their host plants are alfalfa, clovers, and members of the vetch family. Alfalfa and clover bloomed from the pollinator seed mix we used. We also saw southern cabbage butterflies whose host plants are brazos rockcress, sicklepod, black mustard, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, and turnips.

This spring we planted and grew broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, and turnips in our raised beds, all of which attracted caterpillar activity. We saw variegated fritillary butterflies (whose host plants include passion vines, violets, pansies, purslane, mayapple, and flax) and black swallowtail butterflies (whose host plants include parsley, dill, fennel, mock bishopsweed, and golden alexanders), along with various other unidentified buzzing workers.

Pollinators are most attracted to the blue, purple, white, and yellow hues, which will draw these precious visitors into your garden. Bees see the flower blooms as targets which show them exactly where they can find the nectar that they seek. God's creations and their relationships with each other for survival certainly are amazing!

We look forward to observing this new habitat during the summer of 2023 and learning more about the middle and late pollinator flower growth and insect activity to come. This experiment has beautified our yard with flowers, color, scent and animal activity in spaces which were not at all interesting before. Not only us, but neighbors too, have noticed and commented about the new flower growth because it is so cheerful looking.

If you have ever considered planting a pollinator support zone using any number and type of flowers, you'll be amazed at the color and interesting activity



which will develop there. "Pollinator party" is a phrase which comes to my mind when describing our new habitat trial. Furthermore, the bee and butterfly show can be pretty entertaining to identify and watch.

By looking into the host plants for our butterfly ID, I also became less concerned about the caterpillar activity we noticed on our garden plants this season. It was normal. They are host plants! Thankfully, we planted more than enough to share with the pollinators we were trying to attract!

Happy summer everyone! May your garden nurture you with the positive, amazing blessings of East Texas nature!



June Phenology Report 2023

By Jessie Mellon

On June 8, 2023, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Climate Prediction Center announced the beginning of the expected shift in the sea temperatures and atmospheric conditions from La Niña to El Niño. Sea surface temperatures in the eastern and central pacific have begun to rise. We can expect a weak El Niño during the summer months which will strengthen as winter approaches. What does this mean for Texas weather? We should have adequate moisture this summer followed by a strengthening El Niño bringing cooler and wetter winter weather.

According to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) weather station in Winnsboro, from May 20 to June 19 we received 5.14 inches of rain. The total from January 1 to June 19 was 15.18 inches of rain. We are no longer in drought conditions in Wood County.

Reference: <https://waterdata.usgs.gov/monitoring-location/325736095164800>

My Observation Area

What's going on in my observation area?

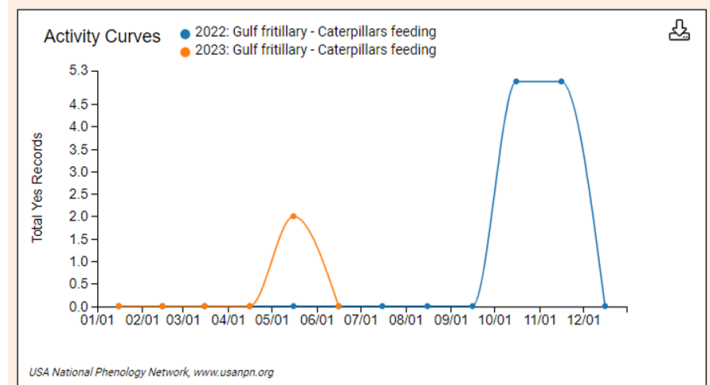
Poke weed (*Phytolacca americana*) continues to grow and is about 5 feet tall, sporting new leaves which increase in size, new flower panicles and green, ripening seeds.

I follow several trees:

- Black gum (*Nyssa sylvatica*)
- Common hackberry (*Celtis occidentalis*)
- Red mulberry (*Morus rubra*)
- Pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*)
- Mexican plum (*Prunus mexicana*)

All these trees are putting on new leaves at the apical meristem. The tender new leaves increase in size and deepen in color as they grow. There are no blossoms or fruit on any of these trees. They are in their spring/summer growth phase.

The two hollies I follow are Yaupon holly (*Ilex vomitoria*) and American holly (*Ilex opaca*). The yaupon holly is growing as a shrub and like the above-mentioned trees is putting on new leaves but flowers have faded and tiny fruits are beginning to



form. American holly (*Ilex opaca*) is a large tree in my back yard and sports new leaves and green berries. The flowers have all faded.

Purple passionflower vine (*Passiflora incarnata*) is lush with new leaves on twining vines. There are numerous flowers in various stages of maturity and 11 maturing fruits. However, I saw only one tiny Gulf fritillary (*Agraulis vanillae*) caterpillar and have seen only one adult feeding in my pollinator garden. Last year I saw caterpillars beginning in mid-September. This year I have seen one or two caterpillars feeding beginning in mid-May. I have only seen one, just one, adult feeding this year. I hope they will visit the pollinator garden soon.

References:

What is El Niño? And what does it mean for the coming Texas summer?

<https://www.wfaa.com/article/weather/el-nino-watch-what-does-it-mean-north-texas-summer-winter/287-4978413d-ce26-42aa-b2ef-5bf7885cff37#:~:text=While%20El%20Ni%C3%B1o%20may%20not,norml%20conditions%20during%20the%20winter>

NOAA declares the arrival of El Nino

<https://www.weather.gov/news/230706-ElNino#:~:text=June%208%2C%202023%20%2D%20The%20expected,of%20the%20National%20Weather%20Service>

Texas Sage Does Not Like Overly Moist Soil



By Kathy Goodman

Texas Sage (*Leucophyllum frutescens*) is also known as: cenizo, Texas rain sage, Texas silverleaf, purple sage, or Texas barometer bush.

It grows best in full sun. This native plant is a seasonal bloomer depending on changes in humidity to produce the showy purple flowers. Flower bloom is typically triggered by rains or significant soil moisture. It is not a true sage. It is close to being evergreen, but some leaf drop occurs in winter.

Root rot occurs when the soil is overly moist, and temperatures are higher than 80 degrees. It is a good xeriscape plant.

Mosquito Proofing Your Backyard

By Holly Ross

Shall we talk about mosquitoes, again? If I have been asked once, I have been asked 10,000 times for advice on controlling mosquitoes and with good reason! These little beasts are a bane to our existence.

While it may be impossible to completely remove mosquitoes from our lives, we can make a huge impact in reducing the numbers at our homes. In a mosquito's lifetime, it will not fly more than a few blocks. Consequently, if we can interrupt the life cycle of the mosquitoes around our property, the number of adult mosquitoes drops considerably.

Mosquito Lifecycle

The mosquito lifecycle is:

- **Adult** – Only females bite people. They use the blood to make eggs. A female can lay 50 to 500 eggs in a brood (at one time). One female may lay 10 broods in her lifetime.
- **Egg** – Eggs are laid just above the water line in containers or on vegetation in areas prone to flooding or standing water.
- **Larva** – Larvae hatch from eggs in a few days or as long as several months depending on the environmental conditions.
- **Pupa** – Larvae are aquatic and develop into pupae in as little as five days.

Pupae then develop into adult mosquitoes and the cycle goes on and on.

Use Mosquito Traps for Control

Recently I came across the use of mosquito traps for control. The idea is for a container of water to be set up intentionally for mosquitoes to lay their eggs. What the nasty little beasts don't know is that under the surface of the water are fish. These little fish then eat the larvae interrupting the life cycle. Like any creature, mosquitoes look for the easiest place to lay their eggs; so if there is a handy container of water, they will use this container versus other areas.

How To Make A Mosquito Trap

Making a mosquito trap is ridiculously simple and the results are ridiculously amazing!

Mosquito traps are containers of water set up to intentionally attract mosquitoes. Once the eggs are laid and the larvae hatch, the little fish that are hiding in the water eat the larvae, preventing them from ever reaching adulthood.

Because mosquitoes only travel a few blocks in their lifetime, you can make a real impact on the mosquito population around your home.

What you need:

- Container
- Water
- Large leaves or other debris
- Small fish



Container

The container should be deep enough to hold at least three inches of water. More is fine, but three inches is the minimum. This container can be pretty and incorporated into your garden motif or it can be a Rubbermaid tub that sits at the side of your house. It is all about what works for you.

Water

The water needs to be murky. Rainwater is great but any water that is allowed to sit for a few days will get murky.

Large Leaves

Any type of large leaves or other debris that can float on the water will work. Mosquito larvae need a bit of cover and this is what draws mosquitoes in to lay their eggs.

Small Fish

Small fish are the key. Without the fish, all you have is a breeding ground for mosquitoes! Any small goldfish or minnows will work. You may even find mosquito fish (yes, those are real) at a bait shop. You only need one or two, but, for a large container, you can add more.

Once this is set up, all you need to do is sit back and let nature work to your advantage!



Heat and Drought Tolerant Plants

By Kathy Goodman

In my experience, Texas weather has always been unpredictable. However, in the last two years we have experienced multiple difficult weather challenges.

The first was the February 16, 2021, never-seen-before -4° F record low. Winter storm Uri in East Texas was a weeklong event accompanied by ice-and-snow loads that devastated many Texas urban landscapes. Every county in Texas saw temperatures below freezing. The urban landscape was devastated.

Second was the record-breaking heat in summer 2022, with 36 days over 100° F, a high temperature of 107 and 10 weeks of drought. Records indicate it was the second-hottest summer in Texas since 1883.

Third was the Dec 23, 2022, 9° F winter-storm Elliott event, which can best be described as a bomb-cyclone. It was preceded by a mild dry fall. Plants weren't acclimated. The entire state fell under a freeze alert. Gustly winds made it feel even colder, with wind chills ranging from 23° F to -10° F.

Time to Rethink the Plants Used in Your Landscape

Now more than ever, plants in the landscape need to be resilient. Based on Texas' unpredictable weather, it is important to consider plants that are more heat and drought tolerant. Based on the past two years, we also may be wise to use landscapes that tolerate low temperatures.

David Creech, the director of the SFA Gardens at Stephen F. Austin State University recommends using the 80:20 rule with the plants used in your landscape.

Plant 80 percent of the landscape with proven performers that deal well with weather changes. Save the 20 percent for plants that might be iffy.

For proven performers, you can use Texas Superstar plants that are tried and tested plants. They undergo several years of extensive field trials by Texas A&M AgriLife Research and the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. During field trials, plants receive minimal soil preparation, reasonable levels of water, and no pesticides.

You can learn more about Texas Superstar plants at TexasSuperstar.com.

Critical Temperatures for Plants

Three temperatures are critical for plant success. Each plant has a minimum, maximum, and optimum temperature range at which it grows best. Using those ranges, a plant may be considered hardy in a particular zone.

Wood County is in Zone 9 and the minimum temperatures are typically 20° F to 30° F. Only a few plants have maximum temperatures at which they cannot survive. The main problem is prolonged extreme heat and drought.

Plants That Survived the 2022 Drought in Wood County

In 2022, I asked the Wood County Master Gardeners to share the plants that did well or survived during the heat and drought. One of the benefits of being a member of a gardening group is learning what works for others in your area.

Some plants on the resulting list received no supplemental watering, but most of those plants were established, not newly planted.

You can find the entire list on the Wood County Master Gardeners, Texas AgriLife Extension Service website under the Resources tab:

<https://txmg.org/woodcounty/drought-and-heat-tolerant-plants-for-wood-county/>

Many of the plants on this list are also deer resistant, which only means that the plant is not the favorite taste or texture for deer. If they get hungry enough, they will eat almost anything.

Many factors influence the extent of feeding by deer: the number of deer in the area, the availability of other food sources, winter weather conditions, and plant preferences. Native plants co-evolved with deer and are often better able to withstand deer browsing if they are eaten at all.



She's comfortable in the flowerbeds and not bothering native plants.

American Beautyberry a Pioneer Plant

One of the most deer resistant plants is the American beautyberry with its beautiful purple berries that appear in the late summer or early fall. The American beautyberry is considered a pioneer plant.

Pioneer plants are essentially plant species that are particularly efficient and effective when it comes to colonizing an area of land. They are typically native plants, which are used to recover and reclaim areas that have become degraded by climate change or human activity.

Deer typically avoid eating beautyberries because of their unpleasant strong fragrance. The smell is quite irritating and unusual for deer. In addition, the leaves and bushes of beautyberry are hairy, and the texture is fuzzy. Fragrance and texture are the best deer deterrents.



Learning Opportunities at the Master Gardener Meetings

By Carolyn West

This year, the Wood County Master Gardeners have had opportunities to expand their learning at each monthly Master Gardener meeting.

In January, Karen Young taught us to use flowers and shrubs grown in our own yards to make gorgeous arrangements. Karen owns Country Flowers and Gifts in Emory.

In February, Chris Wiesinger (founder and owner of Southern Bulb Company in East Texas) gave us a spirited and lively lecture on finding and growing bulbs. His story of developing his company is a saga of an aggressive young entrepreneur.

Steve Aker traveled here in March from the Lubbock area and taught us the process of using available materials to make fertilizers to enrich our soil. How interesting to hear the development of Back to Nature with relationships with cattle stock yards and family labor!

On a pretty April day we toured the ranch owned by our president, Barb Williams, and her husband. Rebecca Staggs talked about the basics of foraging followed by a walk-around the property as the attendees looked for forage-worthy plants.

Our May program's purpose was to honor the Master Gardener Class of 2023 as they received their certificates. Master Gardeners provided a buffet luncheon to welcome the new interns.

The spirited Holly Ross, an ex-Wood County Master Gardener, talked in June about Medicinal Herbs 101. Although she moved

Life is a classroom. Only those who are willing to be lifelong learners will move to the head of the class.

Liz Ziglar

quodlibet

to Louisiana, she returned to visit with our organization and share her depth of knowledge about herbs for wellness.

We are halfway through the year and have super plans for the second half. The schedule is:

- July: Microgreens Erin and Drew Mason
- August: Food Preservation County Agent Lindsey Yeager
- September: Designing Shade Gardens Tim Hooten, Hooten's Landscaping
- October: Annual Member Plant Swap Wood County Master Gardeners
- November: MG Annual Meeting Wood County Master Gardeners
- December: Year End Celebration Wood County Master Gardeners

I am thankful for the opportunity to serve as MG's vice president and to help provide another step toward lifelong learning.

Native Coral Honeysuckle Vine

By Kathy Goodman

The native coral honeysuckle vine (*Lonicera sempervirens*) is also known as: trumpet honeysuckle, woodbine, or scarlet honeysuckle. This vine was recommended by the Mineola Wildscape as a plant that survives heat and drought.

It is a perennial that grows best in full sun and reaches 10 to 20 ft. long but is not considered invasive. The bright, fiery-colored flowers appear in mid-spring, and are often not fragrant.

It is a nice addition to a butterfly, native, or pollinator garden because hummingbirds, bees, and butterflies are attracted to its flowers. Honeysuckle also attracts moths and songbirds. Birds such as quail, purple finch, and American robin eat the red berries.

It is known for being particularly deer tolerant due to its woody climbing structure.

This plant has been used medicinally (dried and smoked) for asthma. The juice of the plant (leaves ground by chewing) is beneficial in the treatment of bee stings. The leaves have been used as a decoction for coughs and sore throats. Decoction is the extraction of an essence or active ingredient by boiling.



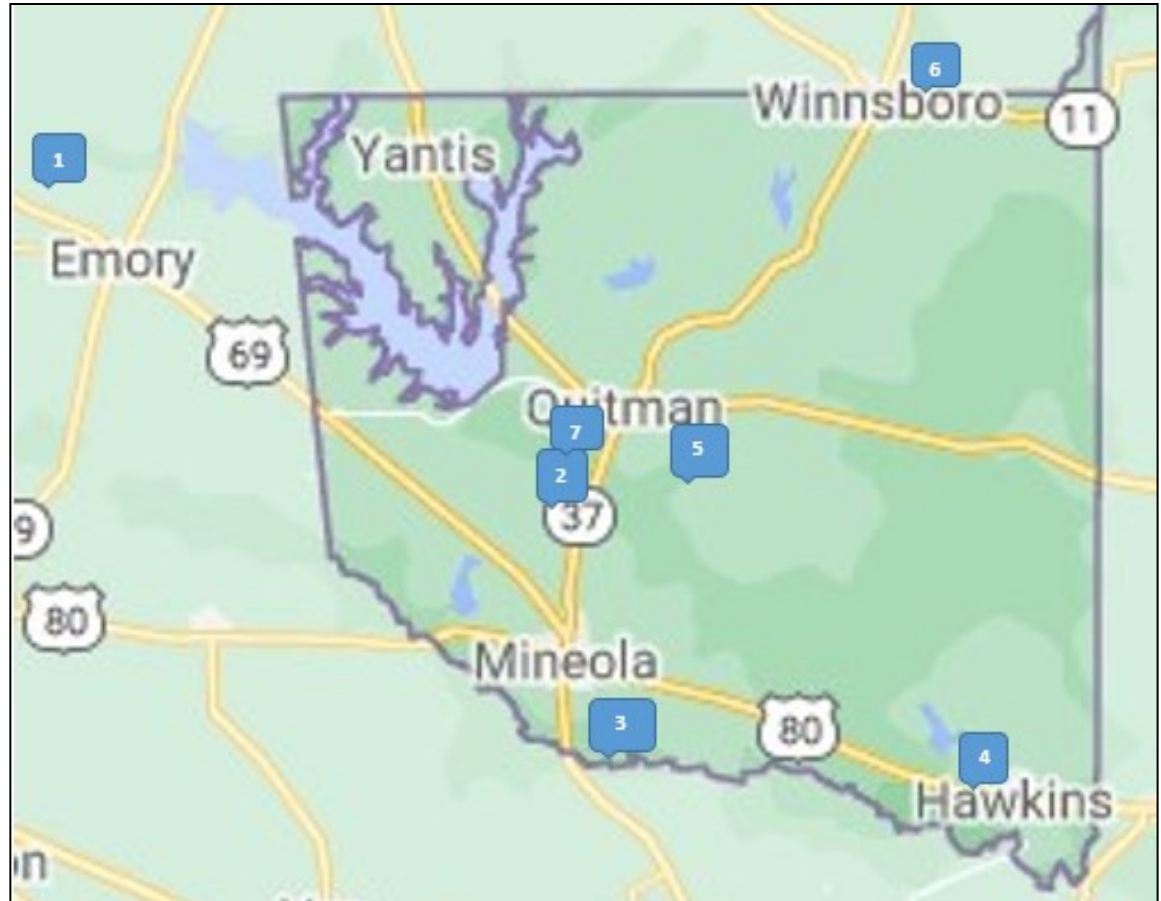
Note: Interestingly, and important in this area, the species is also flammable and is not recommended to be planted close to structures.

WCMGA Projects Map

by Barb Williams

This map shows the location of each of the WCMGA projects.

See the list below for the project names, project chairs, and work days relating to the numbers on the map.



WCMGA Projects

1. Emory Park (Emory)
Project Chair: Lannette Beaver
Workday: Varies
2. Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Office (EOG)
Project Chair: TBD
Workday: Thursday @ 9 am
3. Mineola Nature Preserve (MNP)
Project Chair: Linda Timmons
Workday: Tuesday @ 9 am
4. Hawkins City Park and Library (HCP)
Project Chair: TBD
Workday: Friday @ 9 am
5. Quitman Public Library (QPL)
Project Chair: Jan Whitlock
Workday: Monday @ 9 am
6. Winnsboro Library (WINNS)
Project Chair: Bob and Patt Bauerschmidt
Workday: Monday @ 10 am
7. Wood County Arboretum & Botanical Gardens (WCABG)
Project Chair: Lin Grado
Workday: Wednesday @ 9 am

Please sign up on the Texas Master Gardener Volunteer Management System (VMS) for each of the projects you would like an email from so you can receive up-to-date information about a particular project and their work schedule for the week.

For Texas Master Gardeners in Wood County

To Sign Up for a Project:

1. Sign in to Texas Master Gardener VMS at https://vms.texasmg.org/sec_Login/
2. Select **GENERAL INFORMATION > PROJECTS**.
3. Click an **ID** for a project. For example:



The **PROJECTS** tab opens.

4. Scroll to the bottom. Add **Notes** to indicate that you want to offer a particular skill, and then click **Volunteer for this Project**. You will receive an email verifying your sign up.

Area 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 notify Kathy Goodman so she can update the list.

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 Wood County Extension Agent Emily (Husmann) Castillo's reports for the year, she needs 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, please 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

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://txmg.org/contacts/agrilife-extension>

To learn about how to become a Master Gardener, contact the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Office for Wood County 903.763.2924

Area Food Pantries

The following food pantries accept donations of fresh vegetables.

Alba

Alba-Golden Food Pantry

245 E. Holley Street, Alba (903) 765-2471

Friday 9 AM - 11 AM

Service Area: Alba-Golden School District

Lake Fork Baptist Church Feed My Sheep (Pantry)

9483 W FM 515, Alba (903) 473-9523

Second Tuesday 1 PM - 3 PM

Service Area: All counties

Hawkins

Hawkins Helping Hands (Pantry)

320 W. Front St., Hawkins (903) 769-4357

Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday 9 AM - 12 PM

Service Area: Hawkins ISD

Mineola

Bread of Life Ministries (Pantry)

1001 E. McDonald, Mineola (903) 405-0064

First and third Tuesday 8:30 AM - 4 PM

Service Area: Wood County

Kindness Kottage (Pantry)

316 E. Broad St, Mineola (903) 569-9197

Monday - Friday 9 AM - 3 PM

Service Area: Mineola ISD

Rose Hill Food Pantry

1420 CR 2460, Mineola (903) 312-3256

Second and fourth Wednesday 10 AM - 12 PM

Service Area: Wood County

Quitman

First United Methodist Church (Senior Box)

406 E Lane St, Quitman (903) 597-3663

Second Friday Participating Clients: 9 AM - 10 AM

Waiting Clients: 10 AM - 11 AM

Service Area: All counties

Note: Enter on N. Goldman St.

Mercy Mall (Pantry)

104 Bermuda, Quitman (903) 497-0684

Every Saturday 10 AM - 12 PM

Service Area: All

Winnsboro

Winnsboro CRC (Pantry)

115 W. Broadway, Winnsboro (903) 342-3287

Tuesday & Thursday 10 AM - 2 PM

Service Area: Winnsboro ISD



The WCMGA newsletter contains information about:

- Educational seminars and classes
- Garden projects
- Educational articles written by Master Gardeners
- Community outreach events

Please send newsletter articles, suggestions, and interesting information to newsletter editor Kathy Goodman (kmgoodman0807gmail.com).

Note: For writing articles, Master Gardeners can count up to 3 hours as Project: NL volunteer hours in VMS. Put the number of hours for research under Project: Research in VMS. Please understand that all articles will be edited to fit the newsletter style or for spacing needs.

WCMGA Information and Educational Opportunities

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> This website contains 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.

WCMGA Private Facebook Group

This private Facebook group is for the Wood County Master Gardeners Association members. To join, contact Linda Timmons.

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

Wood County Master Gardeners Public Facebook Group

This public Facebook group contains information about upcoming events at the Wood County Master Gardener Association projects, Master Gardener programs, and other useful horticulture information.

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

Volunteer Management System

VMS 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.

Associate Roster: WCMGA members can find email addresses and contact information for Master Gardeners in VMS. Please update your profile and add your photo in the Roster. Check your listing to be sure your contact information is up-to-date. If you have problems entering your hours or updating your information, please contact Linda Timmons.

<https://vms.texasmg.org/>

Advanced Training

Visit the **Texas Master Gardener Advanced Training** website for information about advanced training topics and opportunities.

<https://mastergardener.tamu.edu/master-gardener-specialist/>

Sunshine

Know of a member who needs a get well, warm thought, or sympathy card? Contact Elaine Porter.

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.