

MG Wood Works

January/February 2023



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Wood Works Staff
Kathy Goodman, Editor
Jenna Nelson, Proofreader

Barb Williams: President's Letter

Howdy all y'all and welcome to 2023!

Wow, what a difference a year makes! Last year at this time, it was right after our first hard freeze. This year (dealing with the August heat in June, followed by the hard freeze mid-October, and then this ridiculously moist heat wave) has me hoping 2023 will have garden friendly weather!

My greenhouse is "closed in" and just has a few more projects inside to be completely finished. Be on the lookout for a greenhouse open house at some point this year.

The asparagus bed next to it was delightful to observe last year! I have been patient and have not harvested the stalks; however, I have tasted the tops and love the nutty flavor!



My indoor project for January will be planning my summer garden and ordering seeds. I'm curious what new varieties I'll find this time. This year, I'll try to start the seedlings at the end of January since I'll have room in the greenhouse to move them when they get big. I'm also excited about getting to propagate some of the plants that are currently over wintering in there!

I am much honored to receive the "Wood County Master Gardener of the Year" award for 2022. I really appreciate the confidence y'all have in me and the support that you've given me!



As president this year, I'm looking forward to continuing the journey we started last year! I'm excited to meet the 2023 trainee class and curious about the impact having a mentor will have. I'm hopeful we'll finally get to sponsor a garden tour this spring and get started on planning an expo for 2024. I hope to see y'all out at the projects and in our monthly meetings!



Photos by Barb Williams

As always, please feel free to reach out to me whenever you'd like. I respond quickest to text messages. (505)321-2817

Peace, Love and Joy!

2023 WCMGA Officers



Barb Williams, President



Carolyn West, Vice President



May Sandison, Treasurer



Marty DaSilva, Secretary

WCMGA Directors

Gayle Mullinax, Director

Keith Mullinax, Director

Debbie Latham, Alternate Director

Barb Williams, 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>

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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, Ann Reynolds

Mineola Nature Preserve, Linda Timmons

Phenology-Nature Watch, Jessie Mellon

Quitman Public Library, Jan Whitlock

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Office, Martha Maurits

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

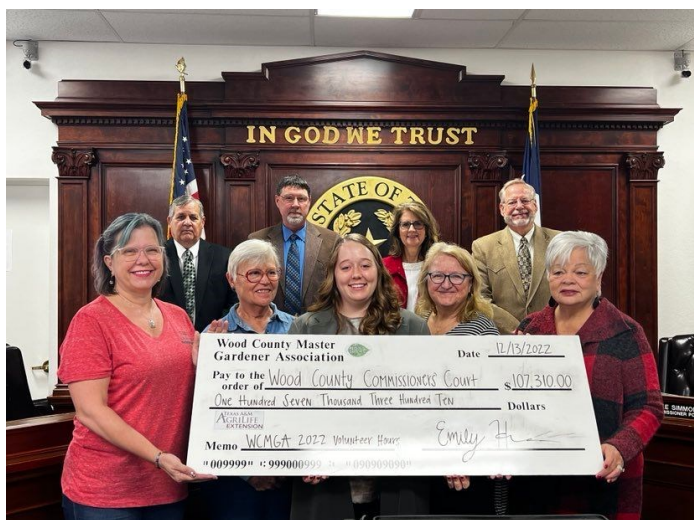
Master Gardener Volunteers' Value for Wood County

By *Emily Husmann Castillo*

At the December 13, 2022, meeting of the Wood County Commissioners Court, Wood County Extension Agent Emily Husmann Castillo along with Barbara Williams, Linda Timmons, Melodee Eishen, and Carolyn West presented a symbolic value check to the court. The check represented the monetary value of the volunteer work that the Wood County Master Gardeners contributed to the county.

Wood County Master Gardener volunteer work includes tangible benefits to the county such as beautifying county parks, hosting educational events, and creating demonstration gardens.

The check in the amount of \$107,310.00 represented 3,760 volunteer hours logged to that date. Texas A&M AgriLife Extension values MG volunteer time at \$28.54 per hour.



Getting to Know the WCMGA Officers for 2023

By *Kathy Goodman*

The Wood County Master Gardeners Association elected the following officers for 2023:

- Barbara Williams, President
- Carolyn West, Vice President
- May Sandison, Treasurer
- Marty DaSilva, Secretary

Barb and May are serving their second term. Thank you for serving again.

To get to know our officers better, I asked them to answer a few questions:

1. Why did you become a Texas Master Gardener?
2. Have you always lived in Wood County, Texas? If not, where did you come from and when?
3. What occupation or profession do you have, or did you have before retiring?
4. What's your favorite thing about the WCMGA?
5. What are you looking forward to in 2023?

Barb Williams, President



Howdy everyone! I'm looking forward to continuing my service to y'all as president of WCMGA for the 2023 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 as if I'm home with all the green foliage, 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 varieties of beds around my place with an asparagus bed being the newest addition. My husband is almost finished building me a timber frame greenhouse near my garden. I really enjoy seeing what others have done and brainstorming ideas for future plans.

It is our goal in WCMGA to be of assistance and to educate the public about local gardening research-based techniques. I look forward to continuing to work alongside Extension Agent Emily Castillo and finding out how we can serve Texas AgriLife and her in the best way possible!

I've enjoyed getting to know y'all better and I'm excited about our group continuing to grow and get back to pre-Covid-19 days!!!

Carolyn West, Vice President



Since I was a child, I have loved growing flowers and vegetables. Although in my younger days my gardening efforts were pretty unsuccessful and I could hardly be gardener of the year, I enjoyed every minute outdoors. I joined Texas Master Gardeners after retirement to rekindle my gardening spirit and learn new techniques.

Pascagoula, Mississippi is my hometown; however, Ken and I moved to Dallas in 1977 to join Texas Instruments. In 1985, we learned about Lake Fork; so we decided to build a second home on the lake in Wood County.

We both retired in 2008 after a wonderful career with TI and TriQuint Semiconductor in Richardson. When we joined TI, I was the first woman logistics engineer. Later I moved into Procurement Quality Engineering management. I held several jobs at TI, then transferred to TriQuint Semiconductor when TI sold their Defense Systems Group. There I held several positions but ended my career as Customer Service manager.

My favorite thing about WCMGA is learning from such sage members. I literally love being a part of the organization. In 2023, I am looking forward to being the vice president and having the opportunity to learn so much more as we set the programs for the year.

May Sandison, Treasurer



I have a problematic mind that never rests. As a result, I have to feed it all the time. It wanted to learn more about the plants, soils, and gardening techniques in our area from professionals and peers. So now I'm rubbing elbows with Wood County's gardening elites.

My family has lived in this area for 7 years. We moved from Friendswood, Galveston County, but my birthplace

was in West Texas.

During my career, I was a high school counselor and I love working with teenagers and young adults. My favorite thing about WCMGA is multitasking and hobnobbing with WCMGA members.

For 2023, I look forward to observing the "mean and lean" machine that was put into place in 2022 with its various committees and projects. (Thank you for your foresight, madame president.) It's gratifying to see how many men and women have eagerly and responsibly filled very needful positions within WCMGA.

Continued on Page 4

Getting to Know the WCMGA Officers for 2023 continued from page 3

Marty DaSilva, Secretary



Becoming a Master Gardener was on my bucket list for several years before I could become a certified Master Gardener in 2017.

We moved to Quitman six years ago. Before that, we lived in Rockwall, TX; Coppell, TX; Powell, OH; Pawtucket, RI; and Landover, MD.

In my working career, I was an executive director for two different nonprofit organizations, a Risk Management supervisor, and a Public Relations director for a major hospital. In addition, I was a reporter and an editor for weekly newspapers for 16 years.

I really enjoy the many friendships and camaraderie with others while working on projects. I also enjoy learning and growing my skills so I can be a more successful gardener.

In 2023, I am looking forward to growing, learning, participating, meeting new gardeners, and having new challenges.

Years of Service Awards

Congratulations to these Master Gardeners for their years of service.

10 Years

- Katie Carter
- Lin Grado
- Anna Wilkins

5 Years

- Lannette Beaver
- Marty DaSilva
- Melodee Eishen*
- Gwen Fleishman*
- Carol Hollen
- Tracie Justice*
- Charlotte Kettlewell
- Janelle Lyons
- Brenda Martinez*
- Gayle Mullinax*
- Keith Mullinax
- David Raines
- May Sandison
- Tracey Snow Murphy*
- Betty Stark
- Joyce Tullis*
- Barbara Williams
- Phil Young

*MGs with 6 years service who missed getting their pins last year.

If you missed the meeting, you can pick up your pin at the AgriLife Extension office.

First Master Gardener?

By Susan Jarrell

On a recent trip to Kentucky, we stopped at the Ark Encounter in Northern Kentucky. What a magnificent sight! After walking the entire ark (510 feet long, 85 feet wide, and 51 feet high), we finally reached the top level.

I never thought about Noah and his family needing nutrition. (However, I was overly concerned about how they fed all those animals.)



Photo by Susan Jarrell

As we toured the realistically, reimagined family quarters on the top level, I noticed that they showed how the family could grow some of their food on the ark!

They had hanging baskets of various plants as well as raised beds made of gopher wood. It makes sense when you think about it, but I have to admit my surprise!

In fact, Noah and his family were vegetarians. Since they couldn't bring enough food for all of the days (The global flood lasted about one year.), they grew onions, garlic, squash, beans, cabbage, lettuce, herbs, and more.

But what about irrigation?

There was a basic, but effective, way to catch rainwater and transfer it to the gardens.

How about sunlight?

The garden was on the top level and thin animal skins covered the top windows making sure that plants received filtered sunlight.

Fertilizer?

No problem! We saw an intricate animal waste collection system that sufficed nicely and there was plenty of hay and kitchen scraps to make a nice compost!

My conclusion is that Noah (a mere 4,300 years ago), just might have been the first Master Gardener. After all, his family and animals (two by two) survived 40 days and 40 nights of flood using their resourcefulness and skills.



Photo by Susan Jarrell

2022 Wood County Master Gardener Awards

By *Emily Husmann Castillo*

Innovator of the Year - Bob Bauerschmidt



Recognition for this Master Gardener is in order due to his dedicated work at many of the Texas Master Gardener, Wood County demonstration gardens as well as the many planning hours, volunteer work, and care

he has put into renovating the Winnsboro library garden beds. This Texas Master Gardener took the bare bones of a potential project and dedicated his time this past year to building it up to the project it is today.

Community Outreach - Kathy Goodman MG Wood Works Newsletter



This Master Gardener continuously works behind the scenes and supports the Wood County Master Gardener Association in more ways than one.

You are likely to see her at almost all programs, meetings, project areas, and various Master Gardener events to capture and record the goings on of the Texas Master Gardeners, Wood County.

She dedicates her time to polishing and editing our award winning newsletter, which is a great tool to promote the Texas Master Gardeners to the Wood County community.

Project Leader - Ann Reynolds Hawkins City Park and Library



This year's Project Leader of the Year is awarded to the Texas Master Gardener who has dedicated time and energy to her project, those who work on the project with her, and her community.

Even when she was out due to an injury earlier this year, she was on top of the project she leads and made sure the needs of the project were taken care of.

She worked hard to prepare the Hawkins City Park and Library garden beds for the first Educational Series Garden Program this year, in which the project was showcased.

As project leader, she has also participated in Hawkins community events to share and educate on the work that takes

place in the park and library garden beds as well as promoting Texas Master Gardeners to anyone interested.

Rookie of the Year - Patt Bauerschmidt, Class of 2022



This Master Gardener hit the ground running upon joining the 2022 Training Class. She immediately started working on completing her 50 volunteer hours and ended up working all 50

hours before graduating from the 2022 Training Class.

Upon becoming a certified Texas Master Gardener, she went straight to work on helping to design the garden beds at the Winnsboro library.

In the fall, she attended the Propagation Advanced Training class and will be taking what she learned and helping to teach two of the 2023 Master Gardener training classes on propagation.

Master Gardener of the Year - Barbara Williams President, WCMGA



There is no doubt that this Texas Master Gardener is passionate and dedicated to this Wood County Master Gardeners Association.

Upon starting in a leadership position this year, no task has seemingly been too daunting for this Texas Master Gardener as she has been committed to

working to improve the Wood County Master Gardeners Association as a whole for all members involved.

She has done a great job addressing the needs of the association, delegating when needed, and encouraging others to step up and help out where needed. She approaches anything that comes her way in a positive manner and is there to help out in any way she can.

Perfect Attendance

The following members attended each WCMGA meeting in 2022:

- Reggie Askins
- Bob Bauerschmidt
- Patt Bauerschmidt
- Linda Timmons

*Congratulations to all Texas Master Gardeners,
Wood County for a great year!*

Winnsboro Library Garden Project Improves Landscaping

By Patt Bauerschmidt

The Winnsboro Library Garden project at the Gilbreath Memorial Library began in 2022 as a collaboration between the city of Winnsboro and Texas Master Gardeners, Wood County. Bob Bauerschmidt agreed to take the leadership role. From the beginning of the project we had a small and loyal group of volunteers, mostly from the 2022 class. The city had tried to maintain a garden at the library, but they did not have the knowledge base to make it work. As you can see from the following picture, the existing garden was an eyesore.

Lin provided us with a majority of the plants that we used from her growers.

The library garden has had a positive impact on the community. We have had so much encouraging feedback from the city, library management, and library users. Whenever we are working, library patrons tell us how good the garden looks and how happy they are that we keep it so well maintained.



Before the garden improvements. Photo by Bob Bauerschmidt



Beautiful plants improved the library gardens. Photo by Bob Bauerschmidt

The city agreed to remove the existing bushes and landscape cloth for us and the library had a budget for the project. The garden was designated as an Earth-Kind garden which was started in two phases. Since we had a completely blank slate, we needed a planting plan and an implementation plan. I met with Jenna Nelson and Lin Grado, who were very instrumental in helping with the design and plant selection.

Our volunteer group grew in many ways as well. We all learned together from the process and made new lasting friendships. All of us have a great deal of pride in what we have accomplished. We all feel honored that we have brought value to the city of Winnsboro.



After the landscaping was installed. Photo by Bob Bauerschmidt

The implementation began by bringing in many yards of compost from Vital Earth. Then we spread and tilled the compost into the soil. Next, we brought in more yards of mulch to finish the bed prep.

Fortunately, an irrigation system was in place. Phil Young designed a new drip irrigation system and helped to instruct us about how to put it in. We were then ready to plant.



After the landscaping was installed. Photo by Bob Bauerschmidt

Wildscape Garden Project Enhances Visitors' Experience

By Linda Timmons

The Mineola Nature Preserve opened April 8, 2006. Master Gardeners had installed two sensory gardens between the pavilion and the restrooms before the opening. After being approached by Sandy Tibbs, with the Friends of the Preserve, the MGs agreed to install and maintain a wildscape garden on approximately 0.7 acres just off the main parking lot. Planning for the Wildscape Garden started in 2006 with initial installations beginning in 2007.



Eileen Bartlett at the beginning of the project. Photo from the files of Janet Starr

The first Wildscape Garden coordinator was Janet Starr. She headed up the research to find potential plants native to within

150 miles of Wood County. Bart Bartlett was experienced in mapping and with his wife, Eileen, owned a nursery near Quitman. Bart helped with mapping the design and procuring suitable plants. Other Texas Master Gardeners who were very active in early planning and installation were Nancy Weaver, Liz Soutendijk, Jerry Sutphin, and Judy Dooly.

Billie Wilder was the next coordinator assisted by Fran and Clyde McKinney, Lucy Germany, Jim Willis, Peggy Rogers, Cecil Wallace, Ruth Allen, and many of the original workers. In 2009-2010 a tool shed and small pergola were added. The roof covering the structures is used to capture rainwater for a catchment system that was installed in 2010.

Joan Morgan took over in 2011 from Billie. Under Joan's leadership, a drip irrigation system was installed in 2012. In March of 2014, XTO Energy gave the Wildscape a \$2,000 donation to build a pergola over the path to the dry bed.

Karen Anderson became the coordinator in 2014. Karen was responsible for installing the plants in the current dry bed. In 2016 Karen broke her wrist and had to give up the direction of the garden. Linda Timmons stepped in as the most recent coordinator.

Gardens are Added and Updated

In the last few years, trough gardens have been added and updated to showcase container gardening options.

The Children's Education area was installed in 2020 with the Pocket Prairie Garden following in 2021. This year the Bee Haven area has been a priority with signage about native bees added to the garden.

The Focus is Education

The focus of the Wildscape Garden project since it was started 16 years ago has been on education. Each year since 2009 the gardens have been used for at least two educational events per year. There have been demonstrations, tours, and classes.

The presentations range from drip irrigation installation and home rainwater collection systems to this year's Educational Series Garden Program about native plants for the home gardener and what we can do to help native bees.

Hopefully the Wildscape Garden will continue to be a place where Texas Master Gardeners can learn and teach others about our native plants, insects, and animals.



Wildscape in fall of 2020. Photo by Linda Timmons



New Wildscape Garden sign in 2022. Photo by Linda Timmons



Setting up to welcome visitors to the 2022 WCMGA Educational Series Garden program at the Mineola Nature Preserve. Photo by Kathy Goodman



Linda Timmons leading a garden tour of the Wildscape Garden. Photo by Kathy Goodman

Extension Office Gardens Project Provides Hands-On Education

By Kathy Goodman and Martha Maurits

The AgriLife Extension office is the face of the Texas AgriLife Extension service in Wood County. And the goal of Texas Master Gardeners is to educate and enhance their local community. As a result, the Extension Office Gardens is a project that multiple MG classes have chosen to enhance.



North flowerbed. Photo by Kathy Goodman

First Class to Improve the Area

The Class of 2016 was the first to improve the Texas AgriLife Extension office landscape.

The project lead was Andrea Sullivan. The team for the east wall bed was Gwen Fleishman, Larry Fleishman, Laurie Fisher, Melodee Eishen, and Tracie Justice. The highway bed improvement team was Gayle Mullinax, Tracey Snow Murphy, Joyce Tullis, Leo Fisher, and Marcia Upton. The north bed under the AgriLife Extension office sign was improved by Brandi Patterson and Suzette Neal.

They made great strides in improving the Extension office gardens while learning how to implement a landscaping plan.

Class of 2019 Refreshed the Landscape

By the Class of 2019, the Extension office beds needed refreshing; so the class chose the challenge as their class project.

After design and planning sessions, they improved the landscape by creating attention-getting flower beds using cattle troughs, donated rocks, mulch, and drought tolerant plants.

The team working on the project included Melodee Eishen, Debbie Latham, Elaine Hall, Extension Agent Shaniqua Davis, Sandy Hayden, Janet Judkins, Bev Ray, and Victoria Settle.

Class of 2020 Adds Features

In 2021, the WCMGA decided that each graduating class would be responsible for the AgriLife Extension office gardens for a year.

The team came up with the following plan:

- Improve the entrance to the office by adding self-irrigating planters on each side of the entrance.
- Build a compost bin for use and for training opportunities.
- Incorporate plants that tolerate drought and heat.

The intense freeze of the winter of 2021 damaged or killed some existing plants. Then, the heat and drought of the summer of 2022 made it difficult to establish new plants.

The heat and drought were learning opportunities for the Texas Master Gardeners working on the project. The biggest challenge encountered was that there is one outside water source. In an effort to find ways to use water more efficiently, Nancy McDonald researched self-irrigating planter (SIP) gardening. Nancy's husband built two SIP troughs to add to the entrance.

Carolyn and Ken West along with Michele and James Musser built a large compost bin on the west side of the office. Carolyn uses the compost bin to train Master Gardeners and the local community members about composting methods.



Composting training at the 2022 Educational event. Photo by Kathy Goodman

Educational Opportunities

The Extension Office is the location of the Master Gardener training classes and the gardens provide a hands-on learning experience.

In 2022, the Texas Master Gardeners hosted an educational session for the local community at the AgriLife Extension office. Carolyn West and Bob Bauerschmidt demonstrated composting techniques, Nancy McDonald taught SIP gardening techniques, Jessie Mellon talked about how to be a citizen scientist, and Kathy Goodman talked about the plant choices that worked or did not work.

Class of 2022 Plans Improvements

The Class of 2022 is now in charge of the project. Martha Maurits is the project lead. Their project goals are to:

- Add two raised bed vegetable planters near the compost pile and plant vegetables donated by class members. The planters will be used to educate trainees, Texas Master Gardeners, and the local community about raised bed gardening.
- Rework the low-water level SIP planter (by raising the substructure) in the spring. The SIP planter design is a continuing learning process.
- Continue to experiment with plants to see what works in certain growing conditions and share that knowledge with fellow Texas Master Gardeners and the local community.

Hawkins Gardens Project Enhances the Community

By Ann Reynolds

The Hawkins City Park project is like an ice cream store—there is something for everyone—Texas Master Gardener and home gardener alike.

The Hawkins City Park project began the summer of 2018 with the flowerbed at the pavilion. Long-time Hawkins residents, Pat Harris and LaJuan Hickey, who had been taking care of the flowerbed for many years, could no longer do so due to health issues. They approached the Texas Master Gardeners, Wood County for consideration of this location as a project. Upon approval of the AgriLife Extension agent and the president of the Texas Master Gardeners, Wood County, the rest is history.



Pavilion and flowerbed. Photo by Peggy Rogers

Pavilion Flowerbed

The pavilion flowerbed consisted of an oval (30' by 15') planting area with a crape myrtle centered between four Knock Out rose bushes. There were two lantanas at each end of the flowerbed and zinnias filled the remaining area. With no budget for the project, members provided plants from their home gardens.

Over the years, the pavilion flowerbed has been converted to a pollinator-friendly flowerbed. Volunteers installed signage about pollinators and planted Texas wildflower seeds. A variety of butterflies come to this garden along with other creatures such as birds, toads, frogs, moths, and praying mantis. This insect activity proves that a healthy habitat supports the ecosystem.

The pavilion is the location for the Hawkins annual Easter Egg Hunt, Pancake Festival (spring), Oil Festival (fall), and Christmas in the Park. Texas Master Gardeners provide plant information, answer questions, distribute informational materials, and give out seeds and bulbs from the gardens at these events.

Garden tours are also led by the members at this location. An Educational Series Garden Program event was held at the pavilion in 2022 and a Science Days event is planned for 2023.

Sensory Garden

In 2019, with a total park budget of \$50, a small round flowerbed near the splash pad and playground was revitalized

with soil from the city and plants from members.

This flowerbed was added to the Hawkins City Park project. Given the location of this flowerbed, the vision was a sensory garden that children could touch, see, smell, and hear. A donated windchime provided beautiful sound and a whirly gig provided movement.

Library Gardens Added to the Project

By 2020, the city library director, Norma Hallmark, noticed the Texas Master Gardeners' work. She wanted the Texas Master Gardeners to help with the library flowerbeds. She sought approval from the AgriLife Extension agent and this location was added to the project. The total budget for all three flowerbeds was \$150.

These two library beds had Knock Out roses at one end of an oval bed and nandina up against the brick wall. It was decided to make this location into a specimen garden for the home gardener.

Volunteers created a brochure listing the plants located in these flowerbeds and highlighting sun and water requirements, color of flower, and growth habit. Texas Master Gardeners, Wood County provided extra seeds from the plants to the library patrons. The library director refers all questions and comments to Ann Reynolds, the project leader.

Today with a budget of \$250, all three flowerbeds flourish with annuals, Texas natives, herbs, and perennials. The original project leader, Ann Reynolds, continues to write a garden

article quarterly for the Big Sandy Hawkins Journal to educate the public about plants and the Master Gardener program.

She has given informational talks about the program to DAR, Hawkins Study Club, Holly Gardeners, and Kiwanis. Recently, she taught a segment about plants to 60 Hawkins kindergarteners. The flowerbeds have been awarded a plaque by the Jim Hogg Chapter of the DAR and featured on KLTV.

Now, back to ice cream because there is a flavor for everyone. You like annuals? We've got that! You like herbs? We've got that! Are roses your thing? We've got that. Not into back-breaking labor? We've got that covered! So come join us on Friday mornings. Support the Hawkins community, ecosystem, and Texas Master Gardeners, Wood County.



Library flowerbed. Photo by Ann Reynolds



Sensory garden. Photo by Ann Reynolds

Phenology Project is a Service That Benefits at a National Level

By Jessie Mellon

American Pokeberry

American pokeberry, (*Phytolacca americana*) is no longer actively growing although seeds do remain on desiccated stems. The pokeberry plant I followed succumbed to a fungal attack following a heavy rain in August. Pokeberry plants, elsewhere on the property, continued to grow and produce seeds and died after two freezes in November.

Gulf Fritillary Butterflies

This year, my first sighting of an adult Gulf fritillary (*Dione vanillae*) butterfly occurred on October 2. That was a full six months after its host plant, purple passionflower (*Passiflora incarnata*), had emerged. This timing contrasts sharply with last year's observations.



Gulf fritillary butterfly on salvia flower. Photo by Kathy Goodman

In 2021, Gulf fritillary butterflies were numerous and were seen in the spring a little before the initial growth of the passionflower vines. As many as 20 actively feeding adults were counted at one observation time last year feeding on various flowers in my pollinator garden. Their ravenous caterpillars stripped the leaves from the passionflower vines.

This year, not only were the butterflies late to the party, but I observed only one or two at a time. The number of caterpillars reflected the reduced adult population and the passionflower vine lost less than 10 percent of its foliage. I can't account for the lack of butterflies this year, but I hope this isn't a trend.

Cedar Waxwing

Cedar waxwing (*Bombycilla cedrorum*) were not seen at all. I hoped to see them in November after the frosts or in December, but no luck! Perhaps they will come this far south in January or February. I'll keep an eye out for them.

*Become a certified observer.
It's a terrific way to earn
WCMGA volunteer time.*

<https://usanpn.org/>

Yaupon Holly

The yaupon holly (*Ilex vomitoria*) are as persistent as ever. They sport their signature red berries which will feed hungry birds in the dead of winter.

Black Gum

The black gum (*Nyssa sylvatica*) is one of my favorite trees. Bud break began in early April with tender light green leaves increasing in size through late May. Dark green leaves began to turn color in mid-August. Each mature leaf sported amber or burgundy tones. This color change may have been a result of the abnormally hot, dry conditions this summer. Leaves began to turn their bright scarlet fall color in mid-November and had all fallen by December 7.

I will continue to enter my observations into Nature's Notebook on the USANPN.org website to paint a complete picture of the phenophases of these plants and animals. I look forward to spring when the real fun begins!

I invite you to join USANPN.org and become a phenology observer! It's fun, educational, and provides a service to our community, county, and nation.

La Niña Continues

According to <https://www.weather.gov> La Niña is present and expected to continue with chances of a gradual decrease from 86 percent to 60 percent probability from December 2022 through February 2023.

Tropical Pacific atmospheric conditions are consistent with La Niña as equatorial sea surface temperatures are below average across most of the Pacific Ocean.

I have struggled to understand what happens in these conditions. I finally found an article by meteorologist Megan Campbell posted on <https://www.spectrumlocalnews.com> that explains the phenomenon.

What does this mean for winter in East Texas? It means we can expect a drier and warmer winter. That means that we may have lots of pesky bugs in our gardens next spring.

Happy gardening and bug swatting!



USA npn
National Phenology Network



Image credit: WD Peachey

The USA National Phenology Network supports science, natural resource management, and communication by providing data, tools, and resources and by connecting people.

USANPN.org

Arboretum and Botanical Gardens Provide Multiple Experiences for All Ages

By Lin Grado

The Wood County Arboretum and Botanical Gardens (the Arboretum) came about largely through the vision of Pam Riley, the principal founder and a strong advocate until her death in 2018. Pam's idea to start the Arboretum came from her work in 2007 as a Texas Master Gardener, Wood County trainee looking for a project. She initially worked with other trainees to reestablish flower beds around the Stinson House.

That project led to the idea to establish an arboretum on the adjacent property that was heavily wooded at the time. With the help of others in the community, she officially broke ground in October 2007 and established a governing non-profit, Friends of the Arboretum, Inc., in 2008. At the advice of Dr. David Creech, founder and director of SFA Gardens, the Stinson House was folded into the Arboretum in October 2009. The city of Quitman owns the Arboretum property and leases it to the Friends of the Arboretum.

The Arboretum's name has evolved with the growth of the gardens and our visitors. Originally, the Arboretum was called the Governor Hogg Park Arboretum & Botanical Gardens. That turned into a more simple Quitman Arboretum & Botanical Gardens and finally into the more descriptive Wood County Arboretum and Botanical Gardens in 2018.

Pam Riley was the project lead until 2016/2017, when she transitioned responsibility for the gardens to Lin Grado.

When the trees were cleared, the first flower beds contained Knock Out roses and other hybrid rose varieties. The gardens have expanded and evolved over time. Each year, new areas were planted and developed with a theme in mind, such as a Butterfly Bed and a Sensory Garden.

Master Gardeners Contributed Many Additions to the Arboretum

Many of the additions were projects by Texas Master Gardener trainee classes. For example, the Waterwise Garden was designed and built by the classes of 2013 and 2015. The Class of 2017 won an award for their revamp of the Succulent Bed.

The Class of 2019 took a different approach and created plant signs for all of the plants in several of the beds, adding to the educational value of the gardens.

Other gardens and features have been inspired by Texas Master Gardeners. Ann Norris sponsored the pergola and the bordering Shade Garden. Jan Whitlock planned the Sensory Garden as a children's educational area. Louis Theriault built a bridge connecting the gardens to the Civic Center and designed the barn for equipment storage. Barbara Williams designed the Moon Garden.

WCMGs have been instrumental in building and maintaining those beds and continue to enhance the gardens.



The original rose gardens, with various Knock Out roses. Photo by Lin Grado

Feral Hogs Caused Extensive Damage

Disaster struck the Arboretum in the fall of 2017 when the main gardens – plants, edging, and irrigation – were destroyed by feral hogs. In 10 weeks, 10 years of work was destroyed. However, we were able to enclose the gardens on three sides with wire fencing—largely through donated materials and with our volunteer labor, mostly from the Class of 2017. That fencing allowed us to completely redesign, rebuild, and reshape all the flower beds on the north side of the Stinson House.



Feral hogs destroyed gardens in the fall of 2017. Photo by Lin Grado

One of the major changes was to combine the individual rose beds into one large bed containing heirloom and EarthKind roses (the Heirloom Rose Garden). The other part of this bed containing color-themed perennial shrubs was planted in honor of Pam Riley. Likewise, the other beds were expanded and reshaped to their current structure and new ones have been added. (See the list of gardens at the end of this article.)

Monarch Demonstration Garden

In 2019, we received a small grant from the Native Plant Society of Texas to purchase plants for a Monarch Demonstration Garden.

With this as the inspiration, we decided to convert the gardens on the north side of the George bridge to a Texas native plant

Continued on Page 12

Arboretum and Botanical Gardens continued from page 10



The Heirloom Rose Garden in May. Photo by Lin Grado

area, with specific focus on monarch nectar and larval host plants. The native borders have been expanded, but they've also become overgrown, and will get a much-needed facelift in 2023.

In 2020 the hogs found their way around the fence and began entering through the front of the property. The Friends of the Arboretum had been raising funds for several years to erect an attractive metal fence across the entire front and the hogs were the impetus we needed. The fence protects the gardens from the hogs and reinforces the identity of the Arboretum. The main entrance, by the large Arboretum sign, also leads to a 1/3 mile walking trail through the woods.

Gardens Demonstrate What Can be Grown Locally

One of the goals of the Arboretum is to demonstrate to visitors what can be grown in their gardens.

For example, the Waterwise Garden contains plants grown with no supplemental water after they are established. The Pollinator Garden highlights both nectar and larval host plants. The Shades of Green Garden is a low-maintenance bed that provides color in the shade all year round. The Native Plant Gardens showcase plants that evolved in Texas over millennia. The Succulent Bed features plants with the iconic look of the southwest. About the only thing we can't demonstrate is deer resistance because we are not plagued by deer.

Arboretum Hosts Educational Opportunities for the Public

Before the pandemic, the Arboretum hosted many educational opportunities for the public. We had classes under Nature U (gardening and wildlife) and Creative U (craft topics), taught by volunteers, local experts, and TAMU personnel.

One of my favorite classes was the snake talk and walk held for families. We held the talk and snake demo at the library, and

the walk in the woods at the Arboretum. Picture a dozen little kids walking around the woods, poking the leaves on the ground in front of them with a stick to ward off snakes!

We also held free mini workshops on topics such as winter sowing, straw bale gardening, pruning, propagation, rose care, and vermicomposting. We usually offered the workshops on a Wednesday morning so volunteers could attend, but at times we repeated them on Saturdays as well. In addition, we offer guided garden tours to local clubs and visitors, to enhance their garden experience.

Opportunities for Master Gardeners

In 2023 we plan to revive the workshops, as we've had requests to bring them back. We're always looking for more topics. So if you have an area of interest that you'd like to share with visitors, we'd love to hear from you!

2023 has many opportunities for Texas Master Gardeners in the Arboretum, such as revamping the native borders (as previously mentioned), landscaping around the new pavilion, and planting maple trees in the area behind the pavilion. Another large project for 2023 is replacing our hydrant watering system with in-ground irrigation.

We'll also be placing new signage throughout the gardens to make it easier to see the plant IDs. We would like to develop some brochures about the gardens that we can place outside and on the porch of the Stinson House to add to the educational value of the gardens. Volunteers are welcome!

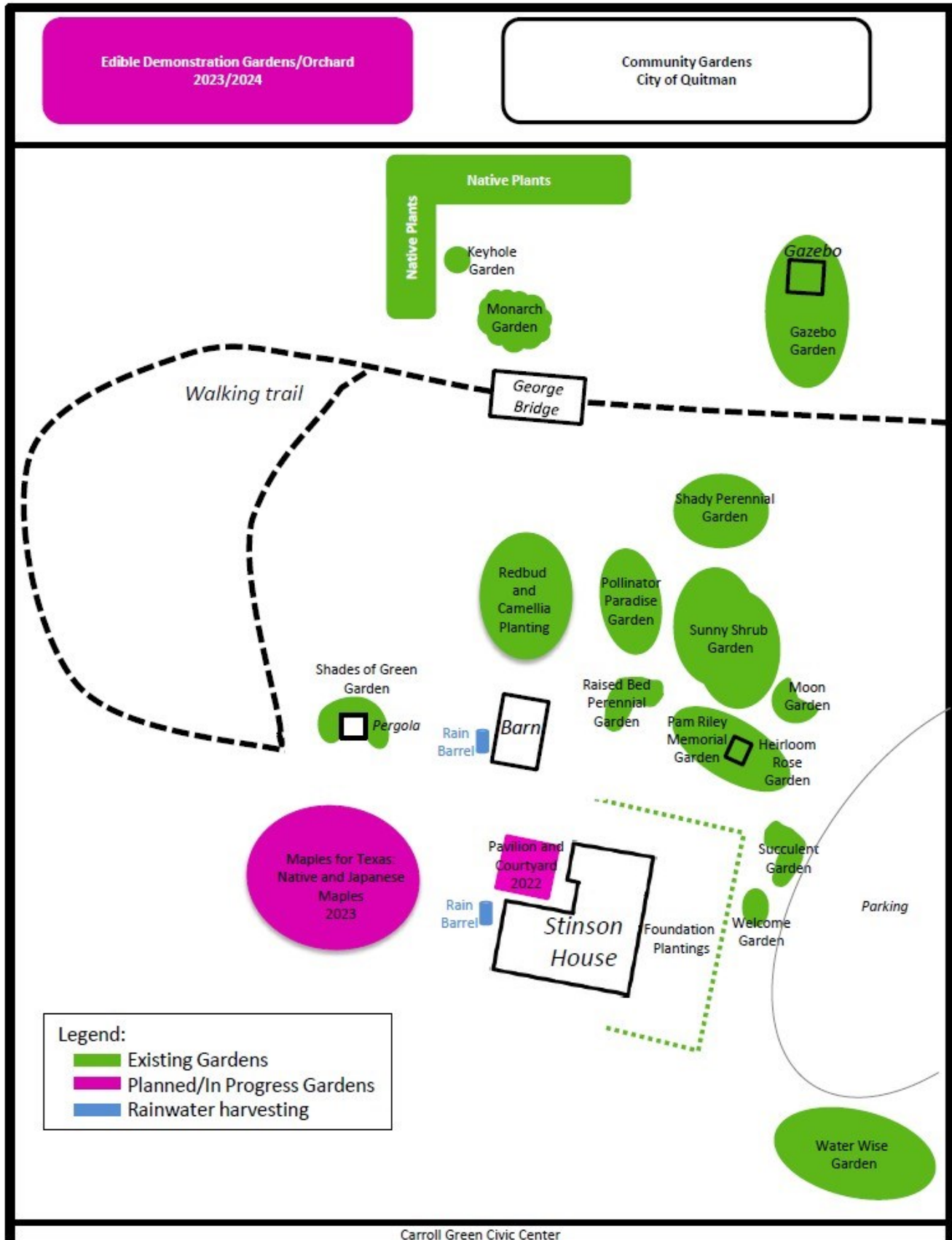
List of Arboretum Gardens

The following gardens are located from the north to the south in the Arboretum.

- Native Plant Gardens
- Monarch Demonstration Garden
- Gazebo Garden
- Shady Perennial Garden
- Redbud and Camellia Planting
- Pollinator Paradise Garden
- Sunny Shrub Garden
- Moon Garden
- Raised Bed Perennial Garden
- Pam Riley Memorial Garden
- Heirloom Rose Garden
- Shades of Green Garden
- Pavilion and Courtyard Plantings
- Foundation Plantings
- Succulent Garden
- Welcome Garden
- Maples for Texas (in progress)
- Waterwise Garden

See the location of the gardens on the map on page 13.

Map by Lin Grado



2022 Moringa Update from the Eishen Home

By Melodee Eishen

Here's an update for those who are interested in growing moringa (*Moringa oleifera*).

As many know, I enjoy growing, promoting, propagating, using, drying, and storing moringa for my own use. Just in case moringa is new to you, I suggest you do a google search for a YouTube video titled "Moringa, Angel in Plant Form" by Renate Ingruder.

Moringa is quite easy to grow and is quite prolific if given the right conditions. The soil needs to be warm to plant seeds or seedlings and to have them grow quickly.

For me that time is the first week of May, and if it is exceptionally warm it may be the week before. The soil temperature needs to be warm, from 65-70° F, for these plants to thrive.

Moringa Loves Sunlight

Moringa loves full sun, so I planted mine on the south side of my home. As it happens, it's just in front of my dining room window, which makes it nice when it starts blooming because the hummingbirds love the flowers and it's such fun to watch. There is a small berm built up in the front yard for our moringa. A young fig tree is at the west end of the berm. On the south side of this berm, returning moringa sprout up from the roots.

I find that moringa don't mind being fairly close together, although every year I tend to put fewer in this space than I did the previous year. I want to see them thrive individually, versus as a whole forest of moringa. With that said, I've had up to 100 in this space, which is about 40-50 feet long and 6-7 feet wide.

Last year I kept the number of moringa down to about 75 and in 2023 I'm planning on about 50. I need to find a suitable place to put another area of moringa that won't shade other garden plants too much.

An issue with moringa is that they hate wet feet. That's not to say they don't appreciate a drink, just don't plant them where they are sitting in water for a time. With that said, moringa are very drought tolerant once they are established and they don't mind sandy soil.

Moringa Grows Fast

One of the things I really enjoy about the moringa tree is that it grows extremely fast. When I say this tree grows fast, I'm not joking. Here in Wood County, Texas sometimes moringa will resprout from the roots in the spring, but as a general rule moringa is an annual in this region.

I plant my seeds in early May and by the end of September they could be as tall as 20 feet. Not all of my moringa trees get 20 feet tall, but the average height is 15 to 18 feet. Because this tree grows so fast, there is always harvesting that can be done, whether it's the greens, seed pods, or flowers for eating or drying. Some people who use this tree for selling green moringa leaves at Farmers Markets keep their trees cut to about 4 feet so they can easily harvest. I've kept a few trees

cut short, but moringa grows so fast that it's hard to keep short. Within a week of cutting off moringa, it is putting out new leaves and limbs.



Melodee Eishen in front of the tall moringa trees. Photo by David Eishen.

Many Uses for Moringa

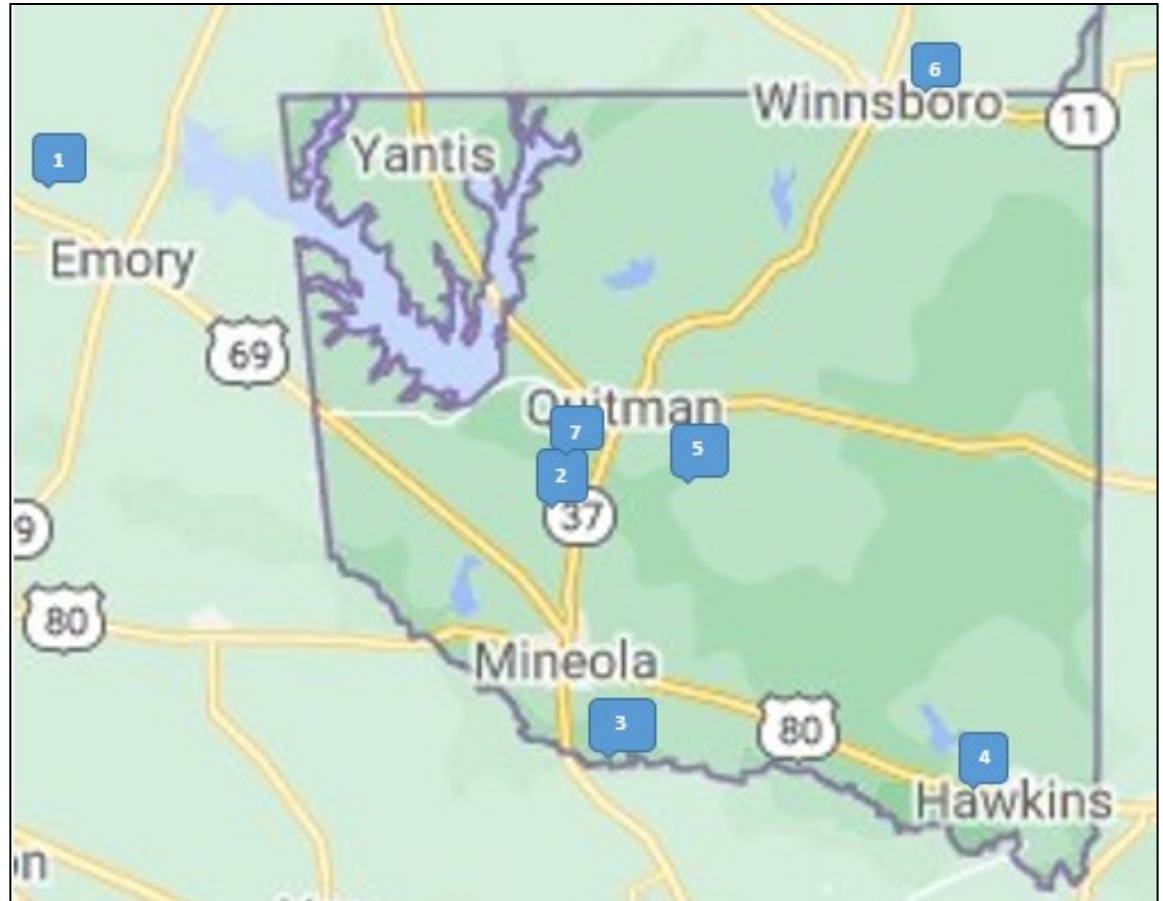
For the first time this year I have harvested a sizeable bundle of mature seed pods. I collected 50 pods this year, 45 of them from one tree, and that tree resprouted from last year's root. Each pod can hold from 20 to 30 seeds. I plucked a few pods off the tree to cook when they were tender and green. You can treat them as you would asparagus or green beans as far as cooking them to eat.

There are so many uses for moringa, obviously its great profile of nutrition makes it good for human consumption, whether raw or cooked. It dries very nicely whether using the whole leaf or, to save space, you can powder it for smoothies and soups.

Also, every part of the moringa is edible including the flowers, pods, and leaves. You can use tree trunks for mulch and roots in lieu of horseradish. The fallen leaves and limbs make a fantastic mulch that degrades into a wonderful fertilizer because of its high nutrient content. In addition, animals such as the cows and ducks at our farm enjoy eating moringa.

That is my 2022 moringa update. Moringa is certainly a lazy person's way of having fresh greens all summer with truly little work, while having a beautiful tree (with no pests or disease) providing lovely blooms that attract hummingbirds and bees. I hope you will consider growing a moringa tree or two.

Barb Williams: WCMGA Projects Map



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

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

Current Projects

1. Emory Park (Emory)
Project Chair: Lannette Beaver
Workday: Varies
2. Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Office (EOG)
Project Chair: Martha Maurits
Workday: Thursday @ 1 pm
3. Mineola Nature Preserve (MNP)
Project Chair: Linda Timmons
Workday: Tuesday @ 1 pm
4. Hawkins City Park and Library (HCP)
Project Chair: Ann Reynolds
Workday: Friday @ 9 am

Soft Launch Projects (1-Year Trial)

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.

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

By Ann McKelroy

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 Ann McKelroy and Kathy Goodman so they 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>

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



As you read the WCMGA newsletter, you can see 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.

Note: For writing articles, you 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/>

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: You can find email addresses and contact information for other 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.

*To learn about how to become a
Master Gardener, contact the AgriLife Extension Office for Wood County
903.763.2924*

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.