

Urban Dirt

Trees: Planting and Care
(includes fruit trees)

Gardening Events and Information for Texans

Global Gardening

by Terri Simon, Master Gardener

Global warming, an increase in population, the shrinkage of available crop land and an anticipated water shortage; all of these factors and others mean that home gardeners and commercial growers must seek alternative methods for growing plants and crops that are efficient and take advantage of new technologies and locations. Drones, new hybrid plants, perhaps a return to heirlooms, and xeriscaping, anything that contributes to higher crop yields using minimal resources is being considered. From the coldest places, to the warmest places, and yes, even underwater, the search for improved and innovative growing and harvesting methods continues.

An abandoned hockey arena located 120 miles north of the Arctic Circle has been upcycled into a polycarbonate dome to grow flowers and vegetables. Located in Inuvik, Canada, where temperatures can drop to -40 F°, the Inuvik

Inuvik community greenhouse interior

Photo courtesy Inuvik Community Greenhouse



Community Greenhouse can reach temperatures of 100 F° in summer. Vegetable growth is heightened due to 24 hours of sunlight. The midnight sun accelerates productivity. Previously, the native population depended on imported produce. Produce that was expensive and some of which was past its prime. Bok choy can cost nine dollars.

In 2017, the local community was encouraged to begin their own greenhouse projects. Local greenhouse production really took off when they began growing plants they chose. The Community Greenhouse has 18,000 square feet that is rented out to different

groups. Produce can also be purchased at a farmer's market. The greenhouse produce and flowers unite the community encouraging them to work together to enjoy the bounty they grow.

At the other end of the spectrum, Israel is using hydroponic gardening to grow crops. In

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Have Garden Questions? Submit your questions and photos at <https://hcmga.tamu.edu/ask-a-question/>

UPCOMING EVENTS

NOVEMBER 2020

Educational Programs

Home Grown Lecture Series - Webinar To register for these free events, please visit: homegrown2020november.eventbrite.com

Nov. 5, 10:00 a.m. - *Plant Disease Identification* by Paul Winski, Texas A&M AgriLife County Extension Agent - Horticulture

Nov 12, 10:00 a.m. - *Fall Gardening Chores* by Shannon Dietz, Texas A&M AgriLife County Extension Agent - Agriculture & Natural Resources

Nov 19, 10:00 a.m. - *Holiday Plant Care* by Brandi Keller, Harris County Master Gardener Program Coordinator

Gardening on the Gulf Coast - Webinar To register for these free events, please visit: gardeningonthegulf.eventbrite.com

Nov. 4, 10:00 a.m. - *Gardening for Hummingbirds* by Ginger Easton-Smith AgriLife Extension Horticulture Agent in Aransas County

Nov. 11, 10:00 a.m. - NO PROGRAM (Veteran's Day)

Nov. 18, 10:00 a.m. - *Homeowner Chemical and PPE Safety* by David Oates, AgriLife Extension Horticulture Agent in Jefferson County

Nov. 25, 10:00 a.m. - NO PROGRAM (Happy Thanksgiving)

Youth Activities - Growing with Plants & Nature

Please visit us on our Growing with Plants and Nature Virtual Group found at the following link: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/GPNVG/>.

Nov. 17, 10:00 a.m. - *Holiday Foods from the Garden*

For information about upcoming topics, dates, and registration, please email us at ogd.harrishort@gmail.com. Registration is required before each Family Zoom Event.

For Harris County Master Gardeners Only!

Master Gardener Garden Work Day at GFG!

Nov. 14 and 28, 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. at Genoa Friendship Gardens, 1210 Genoa Red Bluff Road, Houston, Texas 77034

An opportunity for Interns and Master Gardeners to meet with other gardeners, and to learn by working in a variety of gardens. Work tasks will be outlined and garden leads will be available to guide you through the task.

If you have horticulture questions, visit our Master Gardener Hotline at <https://hcmga.tamu.edu/ask-a-question/>

Please visit us at the social media pages below:

- *Harris County Extension Horticulture Facebook Page*
- *Harris County Master Gardeners Facebook Page*
- *Harris County Family and Community Health Facebook Page*



**Texas AgriLife Extension Service
Horticulture Program in Harris County**
13105 Northwest Freeway, Suite 1000
Houston, TX 77040
713.274.0950

Master Gardener Program Coordinator
Brandi Keller - 713-274-0956
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PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

My trip to Washington DC to visit family was scheduled for late March to coincide with the peak of cherry blossom season. With the arrival of the novel coronavirus, plans were in limbo for a few days, then pushed back to October.

The story of the cherry trees in DC begins with Eliza Scidmore, the first woman to sit on the National Geographic Society's board of directors. Starting in the 1880s, she tried unsuccessfully for 20 years to get the trees imported. Meanwhile, Department of Agriculture botanist Dr. David Fairchild bought 75 trees, experimented with them and declared them viable in 1907.

Between then and now, the saga of the DC cherry trees is one of setbacks and advances, diplomatic crises and friendship between the governments of Japan and the U.S., losses, propagation, planting, and care.

About 3,750 cherry trees now line the Tidal Basin, the National Mall, and the Potomac waterfront, with the majority near the Tidal Basin. Almost 2,800 are Yoshino hybrids (*Prunus x yedoensis*), followed by 480 Kwanzan and at least ten more varieties, each with beautiful characteristics.

A daunting environmental challenge now faces the cherished cherry trees along the Tidal Basin: it's sinking and the tides are rising. The sinking is partly due to the heavy foot and car traffic during the annual Cherry Blossom Festival. With walkways regularly flooded, visitors step onto the green areas and trample over tree roots. At high tide every day, brackish water soaks the trees in 3 feet of water.

It's not just the cherry trees and landscaping that are threatened. Without intervention, the Jefferson Memorial is expected to be submerged in 4 feet of water at high tide by 2040; the MLK Jr. Memorial in 6 feet of water by 2070; and they will likely stand in 9 feet of water at high tide by 2100.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation, Trust for the National Mall and National Park Service together created the Tidal Basin Ideas Lab last year to deal with this crisis, and recently five leading landscape architect firms proposed plans to rescue the Tidal Basin environment, iconic monuments and living history. Will the cherry trees be moved? Time will tell.

Meanwhile, back to Harris County Master Gardeners. At our October meeting, your Board approved moving all spring 2021 plant sales to an online shopping format with in-person pickup, in order to minimize contact between Master Gardener volunteers and with the public. We also approved the 2021 budget, in spite of uncertainties. Let's be hopeful. Thanks to the work of the Nominating Committee comprised of **Carolyn Boyd**, **Evan Hopkins**, and **Linda Saxman**, we have a slate of candidates for the 2021 Board to be approved by the membership in December.

I started the year expecting to see cherry blossoms in full bloom and an uneventful year with Harris County Master Gardeners. Instead, I got a souvenir handbag and a rollercoaster year that proved, once again, that we are a resourceful and resilient group.

Beth Braun
HCMGA Board President, 2020



Fall color in Washington D.C.



Cherry blossom handbag

HERB OF THE MONTH

Feverfew (*Tanacetum parthenium*)

by Karen McGowan, Master Gardener

If you've never heard of this month's featured herb, feverfew, kin to the daisy, you probably aren't alone. But if you have traveled anywhere from eastern Canada to Maryland, westward to Missouri, you have likely passed by the happy white flower with its sunshine center growing along roadsides, fields, waste areas, and along the borders of woods.

Native to the Balkan Peninsula (an area formerly known as Yugoslavia, separated into eleven distinct countries in 1992), feverfew now makes its home throughout Europe, Australia, Central and South America, and parts of the United States. Feverfew was

well-known to the Ancient Greeks, who called it "Parthenium," because, according to legend, it was used medicinally to save the life of someone who had fallen from the Parthenon during its construction in the 5th century BC. The first-century Greek physician Dioscorides used feverfew as an antipyretic. Feverfew also was known as "medieval aspirin" or the "aspirin" of the 18th century.

Throughout the world and the centuries, feverfew has been used to treat a wide variety of ailments, including arthritis, asthma, constipation, dermatitis, earache, fever, headache, inflammatory conditions, insect bites, menstrual disorders, potential miscarriage, psoriasis, spasms, stomach ache, swelling, tinnitus, toothache, vertigo, and worms. Feverfew also has been used as an abortifacient, as an insecticide, and for treating coughs and colds. Traditionally, the herb has been used as an antipyretic, from which its common name is derived.

Regionally and a bit closer to home, in Central and South America the plant has been used to treat a variety of disorders, as well. The Kallaway Indians (an itinerant group of traditional healers living in the Andes Mountains of Bolivia) value its use for

treating colic, kidney pain, morning sickness, and stomach ache. Costa Rican herb medicinalists use a decoction of the herb to aid digestion, as a cardiotonic, an emmenagogue, and as an enema for worms. In Mexico, it is used as an antispasmodic and as a tonic to regulate menstruation (as in Costa Rica). In Venezuela, it is often used for treating earaches.

Despite the vast geographical spread of feverfew's usage and its broad historical medicinal application, there is only one ailment among the aforementioned with a battery of scientific test results offering fairly conclusive evidence of feverfew's treat-



Feverfew

ment effectiveness, and that one is migraine headache. While there is no evidence supporting feverfew's ability to eliminate an active migraine headache, there is a considerable amount supporting its ability to prevent them, dating back to a British study in 1978 of a 68-year-old woman, who, after suffering regular migraine headaches throughout her life beginning at the age of 16, experienced relief from them for the very first

time. Under medical observation for the test, at 68 years of age she began using 3 leaves of feverfew daily, and after 10 months her headaches ceased completely. Several subsequent studies confirmed similar success, while others indicated only partially positive results. In many of the successfully treated cases, upon ceasing feverfew's usage, the migraine headaches returned, often immediately.

Whether or not you are interested in feverfew's medicinal effectiveness, the herb is one of a select number of beautiful bloomers that attract birds, bees, and butterflies to the garden, and so it is a useful plant, nonetheless, offering its flowering presentation from roughly July to October. Feverfew is easily grown from seed. The seeds are very fine and most easily planted in small peat pots filled with damp, loamy soil. Sprinkle a few seeds into the pot and tap the bottom of the pot on the counter to settle the seeds into the soil. Spray water to keep the seeds moist as poured

Citations:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3210009/>
<https://agrilifeextension.tamu.edu/library/landscaping/herbs-texas-landscapes/>
<https://www.urmc.rochester.edu/encyclopedia/>
<http://pennstatehershey.adam.com>
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/>

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PLANT OF THE MONTH

Camellia sinensis

by Don Tyler, Master Gardener

I have written before that I like to try and grow all different types of plants and this month's article is no exception. My first trip back to a nursery (The Arbor Gate located in Tomball) this weekend, for what has seemed like an eternity, warranted a couple of blueberry bushes, a muscadine vine and my new *Camellia sinensis*, often referred to as a tea plant. (Personal note: This will be my third and last attempt at blueberries! That may just be one of my upcoming articles, How NOT to grow blueberries!)

I had seen the tea plant several months back and resisted the temptation to buy it but this weekend, resistance was futile! I am blaming it on the pandemic! Much to my delight they had just received a new shipment in just a couple of days prior!

In any case, I have been intrigued by the idea of growing tea but I was also drawn to the story behind the plant. Apparently, the tea plants sold by The Arbor Gate come from an abandoned

Lipton tea plantation located near Fairhope, Alabama. Apparently, the plantation was abandoned around 1979 when hurricane Frederick hit the Alabama gulf coast region. The area was used as a dumping site for hurricane debris and Mr. Donnie Barrett noticed the abandoned plants and took a few for his own use. His fascination with growing tea led him to China and ultimately back to Fairhope when in 1990, he started what is known today as the Fairhope Tea Plantation. It is a rather interesting story and more information can be found on their website, www.fairhopeteaplantation.com.

What makes this personal is I met my wife in Mobile, Alabama just across the bay from Fairhope. We were married in August of 1979 and were living in Mobile when Frederick hit. That would not be much of a deal for most of you reading this, but I am a West Texas native. I am used to dust storms not hurricanes! In any case, I thought it was kind of cool to buy a tea plant from Alabama considering the surrounding events over 40 years ago... ..I suppose that is enough of a journey through memory lane!

Of course, being an impulse buyer, I buy first and then research second. Not necessarily the wisest approach but I still have fun! Here is just a short summary of some of the information I collected.

- Hardiness Zone – 6 to 9. (That makes it suitable for our area.)
- Sun Exposure – Partial Shade (I have plenty of shade in my yard. I planted mine under a tree canopy, but the plant will also get direct sun during the early morning hours. Only time will tell if this is a truly suitable site.)
- Soil Type – Rich, well-drained, moist. (Not drought resistant.)
- Soil pH – Acidic, pH 5.5-6.5.

(Source: <https://www.thespruce.com/how-to-grow-and-care-for-camellia-sinensis-4691072>)

Information from eHow (www.ehow.com) has an interesting article written by Cat McCabe entitled, *How to Grow Tea Trees in Texas* (https://www.ehow.com/how_7020408_grow-tea-trees-texas.html). In this article, McCabe emphasizes the location is very important to the success of the tea plant summarizing, "Choose a location that gets partial shade and good



Tea plant purchased from local nursery.

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Camellia sinensis, *cont'd from pg. 5*

shelter from winds and hot summer sun. The north- and east-facing sides of buildings make an excellent site for morning sun and afternoon shade.” The previously mentioned article from thespruce.com, echoed this recommendation stating:

- “Tea plants need partial sun to get the energy to produce blooms, but not so much light that the leaves are scorched. Partial sun is the best lighting for tea plants.”

- “Tea plants can tolerate hot summers given adequate shade.”

Other than location, I could not find anything else particularly concerning related to growing a tea plant in the Houston area.

One thing to keep in mind is the tea plant can easily become a tree if not properly pruned. Based on reading, it seems pruning to four feet in height is somewhat “typical”. The plant I purchased is already about three feet tall. My plant was covered

in buds and has bloomed since planting. I find the small white flower to be very attractive and it did not take long for the bees to enjoy them as well.

I tried to capture a picture of the bees but trust me they were far too busy visiting every bud on the plant.

In my research, several articles mentioned the ease from which you can propagate a tea plant. One mentioned collecting the seeds from the plant, another suggested using cuttings, while another recommended air layering. I look forward to seeing if I can get some additional plants started from this initial tea plant.

All in all, this looks like a promising impulse buy and one I would strongly recommend given you have an adequate location. I would invite you over for a cup of tea to discuss the possibilities but that may be a while!



Buds on the tea tree plant



Tea tree open blooms ready for visiting bees

Global Gardening, *cont'd from pg. 1*

one community, on the outskirts of Baka al-Gharbiya, Ensherah Nadaf and four other women took a hydroponic gardening course sponsored by a female-led nonprofit called Sindyanna of Galilee and Workers Advice Center WAC-MAAN. When the course was over each woman received a certificate and a basic hydroponic system. Nadaf now has parsley, mint, celery and lettuce growing at home in hydroponic tubes. No soil is necessary for hydroponic gardening, only water and nutrients. The plants use less space, less water, less chemicals, have fewer insect problems and grow faster. Growing their own produce gives the women a sense of ownership. It also reduces spoilage. Nadaf can harvest only the amount she needs and allow the plant to keep growing. Women in other communities can keep tabs on their gardens through a Whatsapp group and other social media groups as well.

Underwater crops for commercial and research applications is ongoing as well. Six biospheres anchored to the ocean bottom are off the shoreline of Noli, Italy. In October, 2019, a storm wiped out Nemo's Garden structure. Now resurrected and improved, the garden is flourishing. There are monitoring stations collecting data for the six spheres that contain 500+ plants.

In 2012, Sergio Gamberini, owner of a diving equipment company and an avid scuba diver and gardener as well, had the idea to grow basil underwater. His team, employees of his company, Ocean Reef Group, began sinking biospheres beneath the ocean. The project was intended as a substitute for growing plants in places where conditions were not ideal for one reason or another. Fresh seawater is desalinated for the plants. Today pharmaceutical companies lease some of the space to conduct research. Annually,



Nemo's Garden, one of several underwater biospheres developed by the Ocean Reef Group
 Photo courtesy Ocean Reef Group

new projects such as eco tourism (fish farming and seaweed farming) and other research ventures are considered. The list of possibilities keeps growing. Nemo's Garden was featured in an *Urban Dirt* issue several years ago.

Also mentioned in the *Urban Dirt* a few years ago was the Svalbard Global Seed Vault. Discussions for creating a permanent seed storage facility began in the 1980's. Until that time the Nordic Gene Bank (now NordGen) was using a deserted coal mine on the outskirts of Longyearbyen, Norway. After several years of negotiations, funding was made available in 2004 and in 2008 the Svalbard Global Seed Vault opened. Located in Norway, the seed vault is 130 meters above sea level. The seed storage area is 100 meters inside a mountain and the seeds can be stored to minus 18 degrees centigrade. There are generators in the event of a power outage. Its seed capacity is approximately 4.5 million seeds. Today it stores nearly



900,000 seeds.

In August, 2020, the Seed Vault began a seed trial expected to last for 100 years. The seed longevity program uses 13 varieties



Svalbard Global Seed Vault

Photo courtesy nordgen.org

of vital crops. Realizing that storing seeds is useless if some don't survive the conditions they are kept under, the experiment is necessary to assure that the seeds will germinate after being stored for long periods of time. The first group will be tested in 2030. Every ten years another batch will be tested through 2120.

As we head into the future, more innovations will be followed, more will be discovered. As home gardeners we can continue to evolve as well.

Feverfew (*Tanacetum parthenium*), *cont'd from pg. 4*

water may dislodge the seeds. When placed in a sunny window or under a grow light, you should see signs of the feverfew seeds germinating in about two weeks. When the plants are about 3 inches (7.5 cm.) tall, plant them, pot and all, into a sunny garden spot and water regularly until the roots take hold. If you choose to grow your feverfew plant somewhere other than an herb garden, the only requirement is that the spot be sunny. They grow best in loamy soil, but aren't fussy. Indoors, they tend to get leggy, but flourish in outdoor containers. Feverfew is a perennial; cut it back to the ground after frost and watch for it to regrow in the spring. It re-seeds fairly easily, so you might find yourself giving away new plants within a couple of years. Feverfew as a standalone makes a beautiful bouquet.

2020's holiday season is upon us, after an historical year filled with unique challenges and opportunities. May you and your family enjoy all of the peace and hope this season brings forth, into the coming year!



Nominate a Master Gardener of the Month

We want to recognize the people who are working hard to keep our organization functioning.

To let the Membership committee know about the volunteers deserving of the award, contact Karen Breneman at kbreneman2017@gmail.com or phone at 281-463-2110 or 832-923-1712.

Thank you in advance for your nomination.



Please subscribe to our Harris County Horticulture YouTube page for access to recorded videos.

Thank you for your support.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel>

Have Garden Questions?

We have developed a new form located at <https://hcmga.tamu.edu/ask-a-question/>

You can submit your question and up to three photos. Be sure your photos are focused and clear.

Claim Your Spot on the Plant Sales Teams!

by Jonathan Correia, Master Gardener

There's nothing quite like the buzz at Master Gardener plant sales. These fundraising events make our mission of public education and outreach possible. Miss the camaraderie of working with fellow MG's? Here's your chance to engage. Whether you're new to the program or a veteran volunteer, there is a place for you. Work has already started on the four 2021 plant sales:

January 23 – West Side Fruit Tree Sale Pickup in Cypress

February 20 – Genoa Friendship Garden's Fruit Tree & Tomato Sale Pickup in Pasadena

March 13 – West Side Spring Vegetable & Perennial Sale Pickup in Cypress

March 20 – Genoa Friendship Garden's Pepper, Perennial & Herb Sale Pickup at Genoa Friendship Gardens

THE TOP PRIORITY NOW is to add volunteers to the **catalog team**. Click **HERE** to see open positions, and **HERE** for detailed descriptions of each position. Claim your spot and get started by emailing PlantSales.HarrisHort@gmail.com. We are counting on you!



Harris County Master Gardeners

Online Plant Sales Dates for 2021

Store location

HCMGA-online.company.site



WEST SIDE

Online Sale November 1 – December 31
Order at HCMGA-online.company.site

GENOA FRIENDSHIP GARDENS

Online Sale November 1 – January 31
Order at HCMGA-online.company.site

Pickup only locations (No in person shopping)

West Side

Fruit Tree Sale Pickup Date – January 23

RICHARD & MEG WEEKLEY PARK
19110 LONGENBAUGH ROAD
CYPRESS, TX 77433

Vegetable & Perennials Sale Pickup Date – March 13th

RICHARD & MEG WEEKLEY PARK
19110 LONGENBAUGH ROAD
CYPRESS, TX 77433



Genoa Friendship Gardens

Fruit Tree and Tomato Sale Pickup Date – February 20

CAMPBELL HALL, PASADENA FAIRGROUNDS
7601 RED BLUFF ROAD,
PASADENA, TX 77505

Peppers, Perennials and Herb Sale Pickup Date – March 20

GENOA FRIENDSHIP GARDEN
1210 GENOA RED BLUFF ROAD
HOUSTON, TX 77043



In response to the needs of the public we will have contactless sale events for 2021.
All sales will be 100% online/pickup only.

Ask A Master Gardener - hcmga.tamu.edu/ask-a-question/ OR 713-274-0950

HOME GROWN LECTURE SERIES

November/December 2020

Join us on Thursdays at 10:00 a.m. CST

November 5th

Plant Disease Identification

Paul Winski, Texas A&M AgriLife County Extension Agent-
Horticulture

November 12th

Fall Gardening Chores

Shannon Dietz, Texas A&M AgriLife County Extension Agent-
Agriculture & Natural Resources

November 19th

Holiday Plant Care

Brandi Keller, Harris County Master Gardener Program Coordinator

December 3rd

Food Preservation

Amanda Krippel, Texas A&M AgriLife County Extension Agent-
Family & Community Health

December 10th

Ask the Agent/Open Forum

To register for this free event, please visit
<https://homegrown2020november.eventbrite.com/>

A link to the program will be emailed before the webinar.

TEXAS A&M
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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.



TEXAS A&M
AGRILIFE
EXTENSION

GARDENING ON THE GULF COAST

Join our Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Horticulture agents and specialists online as they discuss gardening in the Gulf Coast Region of Texas.

November 2020 Schedule

- November 4 at 10:00am -Gardening for Hummingbirds
 - by Ginger Easton-Smith AgriLife Extension Horticulture Agent in Aransas County
- November 11 - NO PROGRAM (Veterans' Day)
- November 18 at 10:00am - Homeowner Chemical and PPE Safety
 - by David Oates, AgriLife Extension Horticulture Agent in Jefferson County
- November 25 - NO PROGRAM (Happy Thanksgiving)

Online via Microsoft Teams
[Register Here](#)

Registration Questions? Please email Lindsey Munyon at lindsey.munyon@ag.tamu.edu

TEXAS A&M
AGRILIFE
EXTENSION

EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE
Providing Solutions

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension provides equal opportunities in its programs and employment to all persons, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, or gender identity. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating. Individuals with disabilities, who require an auxiliary aid, service or accommodation in order to participate in any Extension activity, are encouraged to contact the County Extension Office for assistance 5 days prior to the activity.



For Harris County Master Gardeners Only!



November 14th and 28th GFG Garden Workdays!

8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

1210 Genoa Red Bluff Road, Houston TX

Appropriate Covid-19 protocols will be observed. As a reminder, please remain socially distanced at least six feet apart, wash your hands and use hand sanitizer. If working closer than six feet, a mask is required.

Genoa Friendship Garden Workdays are an opportunity for Interns and Master Gardeners to meet with other gardeners, and to learn by working in a variety of gardens. Test your practical gardening skills and learn from other gardeners' knowledge. Explore the various options of working in a collection of gardens with perennials, proven Earth-Kind winners, the fruit tree orchard, native plants, composting, and greenhouse activities.

Come and enjoy a few hours working in the garden with fellow Gardeners while gaining your required membership service hours.

Work tasks will be outlined, and available to gardeners to seek their interest. Garden leads will be available to guide you through the tasks.



The GFG is located 1210 Genoa Red Bluff Road, Houston, Texas 77034. For some of you that may have considered this a distance you could not commit to on a regular basis, it is *always* available if you have a need to be surrounded by old or new friends.

Please join us at our Open Garden Workdays!

Evan J. Hopkins
HCMGA Past President



Ask a Master Gardener

Ask a Master Gardener is a volunteer program offered by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. Volunteers staff booths and tables to provide free, research-based horticulture education to the public throughout Harris County.

As a public health precaution to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, the Harris County Master Gardener Association is suspending events for the month of November.

Our top priority is the health and safety of our staff, guests and volunteers. We thank you for your understanding.

Look for an *Ask a Master Gardener* table at the following locations when events resume.

Urban Harvest - *1st Saturday*, 7:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m., at 3401 Westheimer Rd. (corner of Buffalo Spdwy. & Westheimer), Houston

Garden Oaks/Heights - *1st Saturday*, 8:30 a.m. - 11 a.m. at The Farmstand, 938 Wakefield, Houston

Tomball - *2nd Saturday*, 8:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. at 205 W. Main Street, Tomball

Westchase - *3rd Thursday*, 3 - 7 p.m. at 10503 Westheimer Rd., Houston

Memorial Villages - *4th Saturday*, 8:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. at 10840 Beinhorn Rd., Houston

Towne Lake - *4th Saturday*, 2:30 - 7 p.m. at 9955 Barker Cypress Rd., Cypress



Master Gardeners and Interns who celebrate a birthday during November include the following. Wish them a **HAPPY BIRTHDAY** when you see them!

Wendy Barr, Sara Brana, Beth Braun, Fatma Dokumaci Ozgel, Nancy Graml, Toni Lawrence, Bea Lindzon, Kim Messer, Patricia Metzinger, Judy Padar, Ruthann Pechulis, Aida Pita, Betty Sigler, Chevvy Tang and Patti Usnick

If your name is missing, please check that your online profile is complete.

*Visit the Harris County Master Gardeners
Facebook page for event details!*

www.facebook.com/HarrisCountyMasterGardeners



Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

in partnership with

Hermann Park Conservancy

are pleased to present

Master Gardeners in the City at McGovern Centennial Gardens

**As a public health precaution to help prevent the spread of COVID-19,
the Harris County Master Gardener Association is suspending events
for the month of November.**

**Our top priority is the health and safety of our staff, guests and volunteers.
We thank you for your understanding.**

McGovern Centennial Gardens at Hermann Park

1500 Hermann Drive

Houston, Texas 77004

When events resume: free tours and children's activity. "Adult workshop at 10:30 a.m.

No registration required.

These educational programs are FREE and OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.

Extension programs serve people of all ages regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, religion, disability or national origin.
The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas cooperating.

MGs of the Month - *Claudette Johnson & Chuck Johnson*

by Karen Breneman, Master Gardener

Congratulations, Claudette and Chuck Johnson, our father and daughter team. They graduates of the Summer 2017 class.

Claudette D. Johnson

Claudette is a native Houstonian and a 2003 graduate of Incarnate Word Academy. She is a 2007 graduate from Texas Southern University, Houston, Texas with a BS in Public Affairs, and a Master’s in Public Affairs in 2011. Currently, Claudette is pursuing a Master’s in Education from University of Texas Arlington. She attained the recognition of Master Naturalist in 2017 and Master Gardener in 2019.

Claudette was one of the Co-founders of the Blodgett Urban Garden, a 3-acre inner city garden, as well as, several community gardens projects. She is currently employed by the Houston Museum of Natural science.

Her passions include organic herb propagation and growing herbs, peppers and fruit trees. Claudette’s ultimate goals are to develop and teach inner city families how to become more self-sustainable through gardening. teaching other.

Cleverick “Chuck” Johnson DDS

Dr. Johnson is a native Houstonian and a 1974 graduate from Bellaire High School in Houston, Texas. He then graduated from Texas Southern University Houston, Texas with A BS 1979, and MS in Biology 1981. He graduated from The University of Texas School of Dentistry, Houston, Texas with a DDS degree. Chuck remained in both private practice and academics for the last 35 years before retiring from private practice in 2015. Currently he remains in academics as a professor at the School of Dentistry.

Chuck was one of the co-founders of the Blodgett Urban Garden and became a Master Gardener in 2019.

His passions include growing and cultivating citrus and fruit trees.

Claudette and Chuck have also worked the MG plant sales and in the fruit orchard at GFG. This summer, they both showed up in the hottest weather and swampiest days to rehab

the peach trees at GFG. Back breaking work – all for a little old peach tree.

Thank you both for all your hard work!



Claudette and Chuck Johnson



Claudette and Chuck have been instrumental in the transformation of the peach tree area at GFG. Although still a work in progress, they along with other MGs have worked very hard to improve this section of the GFG orchard.

Growing with Plants & Nature

Growing with Plants & Nature has moved all in-person events online until further notice. Please visit us on our Growing with Plants and Nature Virtual Group found at the following link: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/GPNVG/>

We hope this helps educate more families and children on gardening and nature. Programs are tailored to children and their families and include lessons, crafts and other activities combining the Facebook presence and a monthly live Family Zoom Event.



Photo by Bruce D. Taubert

The October Family Zoom Event was titled **While You Sleep**. It explored insects, birds, plants, and mammals that are active at night featuring the Mexican Free-Tailed bat. **Candy Friday** provided a great lesson. Afterwards, **Karen Kabacinski** provided instruction on a fun craft project making a bat stuffed toy.

The next Family Zoom Event will focus on *Holiday Foods from the Garden* on November 17th at 10:00 am.

What foods do you look forward to during our fall and winter holidays? Some interesting and fun facts about the common plant foods we enjoy will be presented by **Linda Perse** for our November Family Zoom Event. Some examples:



- Which popular holiday fruit has a record weight of over 2,000 pounds, and why is it a fruit and not a vegetable?
- What traditional holiday food plants were known by Native Americans as “the Three Sisters,” and how are they mutually beneficial when grown together?
- What traditional holiday food is one of only three fruits considered to be native to North America?

For everyone that enjoys making crafts, **Jo Ann Stevenson** will show us a simple idea for creating a cornucopia.

For information about upcoming topics, dates, and registration, please email us at ogd.harrishort@gmail.com. Registration is required before each Family Zoom Event.

Open Garden Days at Genoa Friendship Gardens



The Perennial/Annual Trial Garden



The Water Garden



The Greenhouse

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and Harris County Master Gardeners invite you to join us for

Open Garden Days

on the 3rd Monday of the month, March through October, 8:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.
Admission to the Exhibit Gardens is free. Register at the Welcome Table to receive additional monthly notices for children and family events.

The Genoa Friendship Gardens

is located at
1210 Genoa Red Bluff Road
Houston, Texas 77034

To schedule a special event for your garden club, school or professional organization please email brandi.keller@ag.tamu.edu to make your arrangements.

- Tour the variety of exhibits to inspire you with vegetable, perennial, rose, tropical and native gardens.
- Meet and talk with a Master Gardener about planting citrus, fruit or berries for your home orchard.
- Contemplate the joy in the Serenity Garden and catch a view of the Water Garden.
- Don't leave the GFG until you have shopped the Greenhouse where seasonal herbs, vegetables and perennials are available for sale until September.

2020 Monthly Open Garden Days & Special Events

As a public health precaution to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, the Harris County Master Gardener Association is suspending events for the month of November.

Our top priority is the health and safety of our staff, guests and volunteers. We thank you for your understanding.

Gardening Tools

This chart is a handy guide for knowing the best times to plant in Harris County.

Planting times are for seeds unless otherwise noted	Vegetable Garden Planting Dates for Harris County											
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Artichoke	Dormant Crowns								Transplants			
Asparagus (dormant crowns)									Transplants			
Beans - Snap & Lima (Butterbean)			Snap&Lima					Snap				
Beets												
Broccoli (transplants)												
Brussels Sprouts (transplants)												
Cabbage (transplants)												
Cabbage - Chinese (transplants)												
Carrots												
Cauliflower (transplants)												
Chard, Swiss												
Collards (transplants)												
Corn												
Cucumbers												
Eggplant (transplants)												
Garlic												
Kale (transplants)												
Kohlrabi (transplants)												
Leeks	Transplants								Seeds			
Lettuce - also Arugula, Mache, Sorrel												
Melon - Cantaloupe, Honeydew												
Mustard												
Okra												
Onion - bulbing	Transplants									Seeds		
Onion - multiplying/bunching												
Peas - English & Snap												
Peas - Southern												
Pepper (transplants)												
Potato - Irish (cut pieces)												
Potato - Sweet (slips)												
Pumpkin												
Radish												
Spinach												
Squash - Summer												
Squash - Winter												
Tomato												
Turnips												
Summer Greens - Malabar, Amaranth												
Watermelon												

Average Last Freeze Dates (Hobby 2/8, Bush 3/1) Average First Freeze Dates (Bush 11/30, Hobby 12/20)

Plants grown over winter may require protection during freezing weather. Seeds and transplants started in the heat of summer will benefit from shading during establishment.

Download the Vegetable Garden Planting Guide here!

TEXAS A&M AGRI LIFE EXTENSION

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harris.agrilife.org/program-areas/hort/

hcmga.tamu.edu

Follow Us On Facebook, Twitter & Instagram

The Harris County Master Gardeners as well as Texas A&M AgriLife Extension - Harris County Horticulture are actively participating on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram offering tips, lists, news and plant advice almost daily. The best part, instead of locating planting guides or insect documents, and sale dates for individuals, you can add the HCMG site to your account and easily share information with others. This is a definitely a timesaver for these busy garden days and helps promote our organization. Reach us via these links:



www.facebook.com/HarrisCountyMasterGardeners

www.facebook.com/HarrisCountyHorticulture



<https://twitter.com/pharrishort>



<https://www.youtube.com/channel>



<https://www.instagram.com/harriscountymastergardeners>

Would you like to contribute to the Urban Dirt?

Send all questions and/or submissions to: UrbanDirt.harrishort@gmail.com