

Urban Dirt

*Plumerias in
Your Garden*

Gardening Events and Information for Texans

Snippets about Plumerias

by Terri Simon, Master Gardener

With a swirl of blooms that come in a beautiful solid or multi burst of color and a luscious scent it seems anyone could be attracted to plumerias. Plumerias (*Plumeria rubra*), or frangipani as they are sometimes called, are tropical bushes or trees with upright branches that have leaves at the tips. Some varieties can reach 30 feet in tropical weather. In cold areas, it is best to grow them in pots that can be moved to a warmer spot. For mine, I rip them out of the pot, shake the dirt off, remove the leaves, wrap some newspaper around them and toss them into a storage shed. Rather harsh, but it works for me. If the branches get punctured or damaged, a milky sap oozes out. In my garden I grow them in sturdy pots because they can get top heavy and the wind will blow them over.

Plumerias are native to tropical America, but they are not native to Hawaii. Since visitors to Hawaii often receive gorgeous leis made from plumerias, they may assume plumeria is a native plant. The plumeria was named after Charles Plumier (1648-1704), a botanist and a Franciscan monk who visited South America. His primary search was for plants that had medicinal uses. He made several new plant discoveries and was generous enough to name some after friends. The lobelia and begonia plants were named after acquaintances. A French botanist named Joseph de Tournefort and the famous Swedish botanist Lineaus named the plant

plumeria as a tribute to Charles Plumier. The name frangipani comes from an Italian noble, the Marquis Frangipani who invented a perfume to scent gloves in the 16th century. Another source says the frangipani name is derived from the



The kauka-wilder has the strongest sweet fragrance known.
Photo courtesy Hawaii.edu

French frangipanier, a type of coagulated milk that looks similar to the milky latex exuded from plumerias.

Plumerias have many names in different countries. In Mexico, it's called cacaloxochitl while in Nicaragua it is known by the name sacuanjoche. India and Pakistan refer to the plant as champa.

Plumerias are in the dogbane family and have a trunk that reminds me of a succulent. Some leaves can reach 20 inches long and they are located at the end of branches. The plant can survive in dry conditions and it likes zones 10B to 11 in the United

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

UPCOMING EVENTS

JUNE 2021

Green Thumb Gardening Series

We have collaborated with the Harris County Public Library and Houston Community College. Join us for one or both!

Plumerias in Your Garden

June 14, 10:00 - 11:30 a.m. For the HCC program, register in advance to receive the link: hccs.edu/community-learning-workshops

June 15, 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Simply visit the Harris County Public Library System. No reservation required. Watch on Facebook – facebook.com/harriscountyp/live

Educational Programs

Home Grown Lecture Series - This webinar is provided by our Harris County Ag/Natural Resources Department. Registration is required for these free events. Please visit: homegrown2021Q2.eventbrite.com/

June 3, 10:00 a.m. - *A Legen-Dairy Lecture* by Shannon Dietz, Texas A&M AgriLife County Extension Agent - Agriculture & Natural Resources

June 17, 10:00 a.m. - *Art from the Garden* by Brandi Keller, Texas A&M AgriLife County Extension Agent - Horticulture

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/>

June 8, 10:00 a.m. - *Wildflowers* by Master Gardeners, Celeste Germany and Jeanie Trippie. For information about upcoming topics, dates, and registration, please email us at ogd.harrishort@gmail.com. Registration is required before each Family Zoom Event.

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](#)

For more information on COVID-19, please visit the following website:



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PLANT OF THE MONTH

Pineapple Guava

Article and photos by Don Tyler, Master Gardener

Is it a tree? Is it a shrub? No.....it's pineapple guava....it's both!

By now my garden is looking good and I wish I had stock in a local nursery! Wow, if you have been to a nursery or should I say, if you tried to get close to a nursery, you realize everyone is not to be deterred and actively replacing their damaged plants (I promise this is the last time I will bring up the horrendous freeze!). However, were it not for the freeze, I may not have thought twice about pineapple guava.

When we bought our house six years ago, we had a tremendous "hedge" along two of our fence lines. I use the word "hedge" for lack of a better term. The plants were a good two feet above our fence with thick foliage. The "hedge" made for a great screen between us and our neighbors.

I never paid much attention to the "hedge". I was far more focused on other parts of the yard and especially trying to get my vegetable garden in. One day, much to my surprise, I noticed a weird looking fruit on the "hedge" and all over the ground.

I was a Master Gardener intern at the time and fired off a text message to our coordinator with a simple question, "What is it?".

The crazy thing is we had been living in the house for four years and this was the first time I had ever noticed this weird looking fruit. The answer to my question, "Pineapple Guava". I must admit growing up in West Texas I had no idea what a pineapple guava was.

To say our wonderful "hedge" got hammered by the freeze is an understatement. There were signs of life but it was spotty at best, so we took the pineapple guava down to the stumps. Needing to re-establish our natural barrier, we braved a trip to one of our local nurseries and purchased three new pineapple guavas.

In a matter of weeks, we have already seen several inches of new growth on the newly planted guavas and much to my surprise they are blooming too.

So, why am I going on about pineapple guava? The article on the *Fine Gardening* website (www.finegardening.com) says it best, "Pineapple guava is quite possibly the world's most versatile shrub." The article (www.finegardening.com/article/5-or-6-reasons-to-grow-pineapple-guava) goes on to list the following reasons why we should grow pineapple guava.

1. Interesting and attractive foliage (evergreen).
2. Beautiful (and interesting) flowers.
3. Edible fruit (and flowers).
4. Carefree.
5. Container friendly.
6. Deer resistant.

I will add a couple to the list; fast growing and the perfect natural screen along a fence line!

Unfortunately, we have not tried the fruit and now it may be a while, maybe two years, but live and learn and that is the beauty of being part I love best about gardening!

If you want to learn more about this versatile shrub, I again recommend Texas A&M as your one stop shop for all things horticulture related. They have a great article authored by Ms. Julian W. Sauls, Professor & Extension Horticulturalist, Aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/citrus/guava.htm. If I had read the article first, I would have learned, "Even if killed to the ground by freezing weather, the tree will usually regrow from underground portions." As the photo shows, our old sawed-off shrubs are already starting to grow again! That was a pleasant surprise.



(Top) Newly planted pineapple guava, (bottom) a new emerging bloom.



Pineapple guava fruit



Snippets about Plumerias, cont'd from pg. 1

States. They cannot tolerate wet conditions or temperatures below 50 degrees. Plumerias like bright sun and warm temperatures. White flies, mealy bugs and spider mites can be troublesome but insecticidal soap can take care of these problems. They can be propagated easily from cuttings as long as you allow the ends to dry for a week before rooting them in soil or if your plant produces seed pods you can grow those but the seed pod methods takes longer to produce flowers. Different varieties can produce different amounts of flowers, some more than others.

To learn more about plumerias, visit our website <https://hcmga.tamu.edu/2021-green-thumb-gardening-series/> for the dates and times of our June Green Thumb lectures.

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Il pink pansy

Photo courtesy Hawaii.edu



Bali-whirl plumeria double form

Photo courtesy Hawaii.edu



Dwarf-singapore has cupped small flowers

Photo courtesy Hawaii.edu



The leaf of P. rubra (L) has a pointed tip (LC); P. obtusa (RC) has rounded leaf tips (RC); P. pudica has spoon-shaped leaves (R)

Photo courtesy of wis.edu.



MGs win in the 2020 Texas Master Gardener Association Search for Excellence Awards!

In the Large Association category, the Green Thumb Lecture Series team placed 2nd and the *Urban Dirt* newsletter team took home 3rd place. Congratulations to all for their hard work and dedication in winning these awards!

Snippets about Plumerias, cont'd from pg. 4

Plumeria Trivia

- The plumeria is the national tree of Laos where it is considered sacred. It is planted at every Buddhist temple and there are centenarian (100 + years old) trees there.
- It is the flower of Palermo in Sicily, Italy. The Botanical Gardens of Palermo contains several old plumerias. Sicilian women planted trees to present to their daughters after marriage.
- The national flower of Nicaragua is the plumeria. They are pollinated at night by sphinx moths even though they have no nectar.
- Plumerias are a symbol of immortality in India. You will see it planted close to temples and graveyards.
- The plumeria can be worn to indicate relationship status in Polynesia. If worn over the right ear, you are available. If worn over the left ear, you are not available.
- Hindus associate the flower with loyalty. Women wore it in their hair on their marriage day.
- One Mexican myth claims the gods were born from plumerias.



It's that time of year!

As you all know, we are in hurricane season until November 30th. Hopefully, storms will bypass our area this year. But, to make sure you and your families are prepared for an event, check out <https://www.nhc.noaa.gov/prepare/ready.php>.

Shopping at the Mercer Plant Sale

Article and photos by Terri Simon, Master Gardener

What a wonderful way to spend my morning. Why hasn't someone told me about the plant sales at Mercer Arboretum? I showed up for the Spring Plant Sale with my trusty wagon when the gates opened at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, May 8th, 2021. Their website said they would have almost 1,200 varieties of plants available. While I didn't count them, I can vouch that they had a huge assortment. Since Mercer has so much acreage, maintaining social distancing was not a problem and many people wore masks. Hand sanitizers were also available. The sale was open to the public at no charge and all purchases were tax free. I was impressed by the quality of the plants and also happy that there were some rare plants as well. Besides our Master Gardener plant sales, I believe it is now my second favorite plant sale venue.

I made a list of plants before I went. Primarily, I wanted to replace plants I lost during our freeze, but while looking at their plant list I jotted down a few other plants I wanted to buy. Their selection was huge. Categories included annuals and perennials, edibles, gingers, shade plants, trees and shrubs, and natives and carnivorous plants. I would say one of the most popular sections was the carnivorous plants. There seemed to be more children and their parents checking out the plants there. One drawing



Pitcher plant



Audrey Jr.

factor for that area was a prominently placed blow up balloon of "Audrey Jr." from the film "Little Shop of Horrors". People took selfies in front of her. In the 1960 movie, Audrey was a carnivorous plant that was a cross between a Venus fly-trap and a butterwort who survives on human blood and humans. The film was also performed as off-Broadway stage productions in 1982



Mercer shoppers

and 2019. The show has a huge fan base, and it's nice to know Audrey still draws a crowd.

The good news is that my total for the sale came in just under the budget I'd set for myself. And, I had set a "healthy" budget! Mercer had all of the plants on my list except a pink variegated Turk's cap, I lost during the freeze. They had only a red variegated Turk's cap. Did that stop me from loading it into my wagon? No, it did not. My favorite plant is the Hercules Club tree (*Zanthoxylum clava-herculis*). I tried to grow one from seed but I was not successful. Overall, I'm quite happy with my latest acquisitions. Next year, I hope to see you there.



Terri's haul at the Mercer plant sale

In case you haven't been to Mercer Arboretum before, the address is 22306 Aldine Westfield Road, Humble, TX 77338. The 14.5 acres has a botanical garden, an arboretum, hiking trails, picnic sections and a butterfly house. They also hold events, as well. The membership is reasonable and it includes a minimum 10% off the sales price, if you purchase plants.

TEXAS A&M AGRI LIFE EXTENSION

APRIL
MAY
JUNE **2021**



HOME GROWN LECTURE SERIES

- 04/01 **Southern Bulbs**
Paul Winski - Texas A&M AgriLife County
Extension Agent-Horticulture
- 04/15 **Sausage Making 101**
Shannon Dietz - Texas A&M AgriLife County
Extension Agent-Agriculture & Natural Resources
- 05/06 **Benefits of Bats**
Brandi Keller - Harris County Master Gardener
Program Coordinator
- 05/20 **Growing Fabulous Houseplants**
Paul Winski - Texas A&M AgriLife County
Extension Agent-Horticulture
- 06/03 **A Legen-Dairy Lecture**
Shannon Dietz - Texas A&M AgriLife County
Extension Agent-Agriculture & Natural Resources
- 06/17 **Art from the Garden**
Brandi Keller - Harris County Master Gardener
Program Coordinator



TO REGISTER FOR THIS FREE
EVENT,
PLEASE VISIT
[HTTPS://HOMEGROWN2021Q2.
EVENTBRITE.COM/](https://homegrown2021q2.eventbrite.com/)

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.

Growing with Plants and Nature

Growing with Plants and Nature offers children and their families opportunities for learning about gardening and nature.

Our Facebook Group is found at <http://www.facebook.com/groups/GPNVG>. It is filled with educational and fun information, games, puzzles and crafts. We also present a Family Zoom Event on a different topic each month. For more information about upcoming topics and dates, check out our Facebook Group.

Please register for our Family Zoom Events at ogd.harrishort@gmail.com. Use this email address for any questions, information or comments about all of our Growing with Plants and Nature activities.

May's program featured **The Three B's - Birds, Butterflies and Bees**, presented by Master Gardeners, Jerri Grimland and Cindy Barger. Master Gardener, Julee Jackson, showed a video on how to make a butterfly puddler. The programs covered:

- Ideas on how to create a bird-friendly habitat, including plants that attract them
- The importance of pollination and getting your garden ready for a pollinator friendly environment
- Beautiful flowers and plants to attract bees and butterflies, featuring Texas Super Stars



Our June 8th program on Wildflowers will be presented by Master Gardeners Celeste Germany and Jeanie Trippie. Master Gardener, Jo Ann Stevenson, will present a craft on how to preserve and press beautiful Texas wildflowers.



You will learn:

- How many species of wildflowers there are in the state of Texas
- Why Texas has six state flowers
- Why Texas Wildflowers were important to Lady Bird Johnson
- How to plant wildflowers
- A pressed flower craft



Getting Down to Earth

Article and photos by Pam Longley, Master Gardener

News from Genoa Friendship Gardens

This month's spotlight is on Carolyn Boyd, a 2015 MG graduate, who is our Plant Trial Lead, Trial Garden Representative for the GFG Steering Committee, 2nd Vice President on the HCMGA Board and the Editor of *Urban Dirt*. I don't know how she does it all! Talk about loyalty and devotion!



Carolyn Boyd

Carolyn graduated from the University of Houston with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree. Currently, she is a freelance graphic designer. Carolyn loves Scrabble®, playing since she was a kid. Fifteen years ago she discovered the world of tournament Scrabble. Inspired, after reading *Word Freak* by Stefan Fatsis, she jumped in and has played in tournaments across

the country, meeting a wide array of fun and interesting people and winning a few dollars along the way. She also makes and sells Scrabble tile bags.

Carolyn says she became a Master Gardener to gain more in-depth knowledge of gardening, and I think she has some horticulture genes because her parents had big home gardens when she was growing up. She calls the GFG Perennial/Annual and Vegetable Plant Trials the most satisfying of all of her roles and enjoys being part of her knowledgeable and fun trial team. Carolyn believes trials are the ultimate gardening experience—from seeding to final planting and harvest. She and the trial team learn something new every time we start a new trial phase.

Her favorite memories of times at GFG are when (pre-COVID) the MGs would gather for Wednesday watermelon time provided by the late Guy Lazarus and when MGs gathered for a potluck lunch at the picnic tables. Her hopes for the future of HCMGA are to grow the membership, have new opportunities to expand education and demonstration garden reach to the community and to also expand the school garden program. She believes it is immensely rewarding to see young and old alike excited about the wonders of gardening.



Pat Daniel "in the weeds" cleaning out the GFG pond



From Rick's Rows, Chef's Choice tomatoes



Pam Longley's Kitchen Mini Edible Red Velvet with first tomato at 4" tall on her patio

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Getting Down to Earth, *cont'd from pg. 9*

Christ the Good Shepherd Garden

Article and photos by Dale Hudson, Master Gardener

If you are gardening in south Texas in the month of May and you are not enjoying every minute of it, then you need to find another vocation, hobby or excuse for getting out of the house. May is as good as it gets, certainly for veggie growers like the crew at CGS Garden up on the North side of town. This month all 30 of our beds are looking great and producing something we can harvest and enjoy sharing and consuming.

This month we will harvest the ten beds of white or red onions that we nursed through the Valentine's Day freeze. This is one of the largest contributions we make to the various pantries and kitchens and it is always well received.

The HCMGA trial on kale and swiss chard just concluded on May 13th, exactly six months after we started it. A report of the results will be prepared, but one surprising tidbit of info...almost every variety was still going strong well after the time we expected they would have bolted and shut down. These beds will undergo a quick turnaround and then we will kick off the Candle Fire okra trial over the rest of the summer.



L-R, Master Gardeners Dale Hudson and Tony Ruppe help Sheila Haskins and John Zdansky get the onions into storage.



Part of the May harvest on its way to a pantry

The pepper trial is off to a fast start. Of the nine varieties being evaluated, seven are already producing fruit and notable differences are already showing up in the habit and appearances of the plants.

The Seychelles green bean trial and the Green Light cucumber trials are both now in production. We will compare results versus the varieties familiar to our gardeners each summer.



HCMGA trial beans and cucumbers reaching for the sky

Call us stubborn, but we refuse to give in to the squash stem borers. The pantries love our zucchini and yellow squash each spring, so we keep planting and doing battle with the squash stem borers. This year we cocooned the plants until they bloomed, installed pheromone traps, treated the stems with Sevin dust and crawled on hands and knees picking off eggs and capturing adult moths. The jury is still out. As of this writing production is heavy and we are WINNING!!!



Adult squash stem borer caught in the act on a squash leaf

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Getting Down to Earth, *cont'd from pg. 10*

Centennial Gardens

Photos and article by Becky Larkin, Master Gardener

“What is that?” is probably the most frequent question we have in the Family Garden as guests walk through. Most people recognize tomatoes and green beans but are usually stumped at the kohlrabi, romanesco, sweet potato, and artichoke. Along with the vegetable beds, our 18 beds of herbs contain over 40 medicinal and culinary plants from around the world. Master Gardeners use the Family Garden at McGovern Centennial Gardens to demonstrate the wide variety of edible plants that can be grown in Harris County.

This past winter we had 36 different varieties of brassica alone. We have already put in eight varieties of tomatoes, six of peppers, four of sweet potato, along with multiples of legumes, and curcubits. Elizabeth Fisher, our data collection official, keeps an extensive record of everything that goes in the ground and how it performs, so we can review our production each season. While we enjoy trying out new varieties, we also learn which ones do best in the garden, and we stick with it. In past seasons, we have fought aphids and fungal issues with some of the okras we have planted, so this year we are sticking with Clemson spineless, our best producer.

We are still replacing many of our herbs that were lost in the freeze. Many have come right back from the roots or seed: borage, catnip, hoja santa, kadi patta, etc., and it has been easy to find the more traditional ones like lemon grass, rosemary, and thyme in the

nurseries. However, we will be using the greenhouse to propagate some of the more unusual ones: culantro, pineapple verbena, lion’s tail, and dittany of Crete. Judith Brocklehurst is always saying, “you never really know a plant till you grow that plant.” Come join us at the Family Garden and get to know loads of plants.

Everyone wants to grow tomatoes and peppers, but there are many other vegetables that do well in our climate. One of the things we do is to try and highlight less familiar vegetables like kohlrabi and romanesco cauliflower. Both are cool season plants, so they are at the end of their run and will be coming out soon. The genus name Brassica is Latin for cabbage, while oleracea means vegetable/herb and applies to kale, collards, broccoli, Brussel sprouts, cauliflower, and kohlrabi. The Brassica family is a tangled web of interrelated plants that seem to have nothing in common.

Kohlrabi is usually grown as a cool-season annual. The waxy lobed or wavy leaves emerge from the swollen stem and feature long petioles (leaf stems). The edible stem can be green, white, or purple, depending on the variety. If left to mature, the plant bears yellow four-petaled flowers in small clusters; the elongated fruits are known as siliques.

Kohlrabi, (*Brassica oleracea*, variety *gongylodes*), form of cabbage, of the mustard family (*Brassicaceae*), grown for its edible enlarged stem. Kohlrabi is best harvested for food when this enlargement is 5–6 cm (2–2.5 inches) in diameter; the flesh is similar to that of the turnip but is sweeter and milder.

Brassica rapa

Pak Choi is a group of plants in the mustard family consisting of various widely cultivated species including pak choi, bok choy, Chinese celery cabbage, Chinese white cabbage, mustard cabbage and choysum.



Judy Thomas and Jim Rath tending herb beds.

Gardening Activities at Spring Branch Elementary

Article and photos by Deb Stutsman, Master Gardener

We had a great day today with 6 classes of Kinder – 2nd grade doing their pollinator scavenger hunt activity and ladybug release, most 2nd graders pulling up their onions, 4th graders picking peppers, and 5th graders picking tomatoes. Thanks so much to Teresa Wilson for her fabulous help with prepping supplies and corralling ladybugs into individual Condiment cups for classes all day.



Spring Branch Elementary students participates in a pollinator scavenger hunt and ladybug release.



Green Thumb 2021 Gardening Series

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and the Harris County Master Gardeners are pleased to offer the FREE *Green Thumb Gardening Series of Lectures* now provided virtually twice a month. We have collaborated with the Harris County Public Library and Houston Community College. Join us for one or both!

Got questions? Go to hcmga.tamu.edu/ask-a-question/

Second Monday, 10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M. Houston Community College

Register in advance to receive the link: hccs.edu/community-learning-workshops
Second Monday of each month

January 11 – *Pruning Basics*

February 8 – *Spring Vegetable Gardening*

March 8 – *Composting*

April 12 – *Butterfly Gardens*

May 10 – *Integrated Pest Management*

June 14 – *Intro to Plumeria*

July 12 – *Fall Vegetable Gardening*

August 9 – *Gardening for Beginners*

September 13 – *Permaculture*

October 11 – *Plant Propagation*

Third Tuesday, 11:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M. Harris County Public Library Facebook Live

No reservation required. Watch on Facebook – facebook.com/harriscountyppl/live
Third Tuesday of each month

January 19 – *Pruning Basics*

February 16 – *Spring Vegetable Gardening*

March 16 – *Composting*

April 20 – *Butterfly Gardens*

May 18 – *Integrated Pest Management*

June 15 – *Intro to Plumeria*

July 20 – *Fall Vegetable Gardening*

August 17 – *Gardening for Beginners*

September 21 – *Permaculture*

October 19 – *Plant Propagation*



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What Freeze?, says Peggy Martin

by Becky Lowicki, Master Gardener

This year has been an outstanding year for roses, including this perennial survivor-- Peggy Martin, a.k.a., Katrina Rose, which has proven to be undeterred by by sub-freezing temps and

had the most beautiful bounty of prolific blooms this April along my back fence.



Peggy Martin, a.k.a., Katrina Rose

Ask a Master Gardener – Resuming Select In-Person Activities!

by Valerie Depew, Master Gardener

After a hiatus of over fourteen months due to the COVID pandemic, the Ask a Master Gardener program is back! We are resuming our Farmer's Market table hosting activities. These events will be in compliance with COVID protocols, such as wearing masks and social distancing. However,

with most of our volunteers now vaccinated, and with these activities occurring outside, we are ready to take those first steps to get back out there and educate the public.

If you are interested in volunteering for these events, the SignUp is available at: <https://signup.com/go/wBSYeQe>

The full AAMG schedule for June

- Sat., June 5** **Urban Harvest**, 3401 Westheimer, Houston, Texas – 7:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.
Garden Oaks Farmer's Market, 949 Wakefield, Houston, Texas – 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Mercer Arboretum, 22306 Aldine Westfield Rd, Humble, Texas 77338 – 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.
- Sat., June 12** **Tomball Farmer's Market**, 205 West Main St., Tomball, Texas – 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- Thurs., June 17** **Westchase Farmer's Market**, 10503 Westheimer Rd., Houston, Texas – 3 to 7 p.m.
- Sat., June 19** **Towne Lake Farmer's Market**, 9955 Barker Cypress Rd., Cypress, Texas 77433 – 12 to 3:30 p.m.
Mercer Arboretum, 22306 Aldine Westfield Rd, Humble, Texas 77338 – 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- Sat., June 26** **Memorial Villages Farmer's Market**, 10840 Beinhorn Rd., Houston, Texas – 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

*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,
Harris County Master Gardeners have suspended in-person
educational events until further notice.**

**However, this garden is a public space, so you are still welcome to visit
according to the guidelines set forth by Hermann Park Conservancy. The Harris
County Master Gardeners maintain the vegetable, herb, berry, and citrus beds in
the Family Garden, so if you see one of us working there, feel free to say hi.**

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.

MG of the Month - *Linda Pearson*

by Karen Breneman, Master Gardener

Congratulations to **Linda Pearson!**

Linda Pearson, a 2010 graduate. She took over co-ownership of the butterfly garden with Nancy Cansler. Her gardening interests are plantings for birds and butterflies. A couple of years after graduation she volunteered to help the GFG treasurer. When the treasurer quit, she inherited more paperwork than she really wanted. She is an old fashioned gardener that



enjoys getting her hands dirty much more than sitting at a computer and inputting data. She has also helped order plants for GFG's perennial sales (that is a fun job) the last couple of years as well as pitched in for GFG's sales set up and clean up.

Linda Pearson

Linda spends much of her free time outside working with her husband in their yard working as well as just enjoying the birds and butterflies that the yard attracts. She has lately become interested in trying to go more native in her yard and in the butterfly garden at GFG. The February freeze only strengthened that interest. Her husband says if it doesn't attract some sort of critter or have the word "weed" in the name she won't plant it.

Linda and her husband love to travel. Their first ecotourism trip was to Michoacán Mexico to visit the oyamel forests where the monarch butterflies winter. It was wonderful and they were hooked. They have since been to the Galapagos Islands for the snorkeling and other wildlife, Amazon rain forest for the birding, New Zealand for the scenery and penguins, India for the tigers, and Botswana for the lions and elephants. Yes, sitting at home for a year has been hard, but it gave them an excuse to hike the Hill Country several times. They have two trips planned for this fall – Vermont to see the autumn leaves and Canada to see polar bears. Next year they would like to go to China and Brazil. All travel depends on other countries getting their citizens vaccinated.

Thank you, Linda for all you do.

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.

For Harris County Master Gardeners Only!

June 12th & 26th
GFG Garden Workday!

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 on hand to guide you through the tasks.



For some of you that have considered this a distance you couldn't commit to on a regular basis, it is *always* available if you want to be surrounded by old or new friends.

GFG also offers Mon./Wed. workdays (8:45 a.m. – Noon) for MGs who can attend during the week.

Please join us at our GFG Garden Workdays!

Evan J. Hopkins,
Master Gardener



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.



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

Thank you for your support.

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



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

Beatrice Bomba, Les Bujko, Suzanne Cobarruvias, Regina Flaherty, Cheryl Gans, Sue Gortemiller, Judith Jackson, Douglas Paluska, Lisa Rawl, and Jarvis Taylor

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

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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EXTENSION SERVICE

13105 NORTHWEST FREEWAY, SUITE 1000

HOUSTON, TX 77040

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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>

MG In-person Volunteer Gardening Opportunities

Learning Tuesdays at Centennial Gardens

As a reminder, every Tuesday, we will have a 30-minute lesson on a component of the garden for MGs and Interns. So you can get in an hour and a half of volunteer work and 30 minutes (sometimes more!) of continuing education. The workday begins at 9 a.m. We'll take a break mid-morning for a rest and the 30 minute class, then should finish up by 11 a.m. Email Becky Larkin directly, if you are interested in attending at rebeccalarkin117@gmail.com

Genoa Friendship Garden

1210 Genoa Red Bluff Road, Houston 77034

Weekday Workdays 8:30am - 12pm

Every Monday and Wednesday we are working in the gardens. Feel free to drop in to get service hours!

Weekend Workdays 8:00am - 12:00pm

Please join us every 2nd and 4th Saturday at our Weekend Workdays. These are opportunities for Interns and MGs to meet with other gardeners to learn and work in a variety of gardens while observing safe physical distancing.

Gardening on the North side at Christ the Good Shepherd Church (CGS)

Monday, Thursday and Saturday - 8:00 - 10:00 a.m.
CGS garden is located between TX 249 and I-45 just north of FM 1960 at 18511 Klein Church Rd, Spring, TX 77379.

All work tools and equipment are provided, including gloves, water, sunscreen, and bug spray. We welcome new faces to join our group. Contact **Dale Hudson** by phone or text at 832-659-7799, or email at UTVOL66@gmail.com.

The garden has 28 raised beds for vegetables and two uniquely designed raised beds for herbs. There is a heated greenhouse where veggies and herbs are started from seed. And, there is a specifically designed composting area where all of the compost and mulch requirements for the garden are met on site. Gardeners with special skills or interests can focus on a particular area and lead or learn in the setting they enjoy.

CGS garden is approved as a Texas AgriLife research site, and as such we conduct plant trials throughout the year.

Would you like to contribute to the Urban Dirt?

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