HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENER NEWSLETTER • APRIL 2022

Urban Dirt

Water Conservation

Gardening Events and Information for Texans

Earth-Kind Plants®: Helping to Conserve Water

by Terri Simon, Master Gardener

Conditions in Texas can be tough on plants. Earth-Kind Plants® can lower water usage, reduce landscape wastes, taper the usage of fertilizers and pesticides and allow for conserving energy through landscaping. The Earth-Kind Environmental Landscape Management System evolved from 20 years of study by Texas A&M. It uses a blend of traditional and organic methods. With Earth-Kind landscaping it is possible to design striking landscapes while protecting the environment and saving our natural resources. The use of native plants is one way to conserve water. Native plants have adapted to Texas weather conditions and many use less water. The goal of Earth-Kind plants is to save water usage, lower yard wastes, landscape with a goal of conserving energy and decrease the amount of fertilizer and pesticide applications. To determine if you are practicing good Earth-Kind habits, take the quiz at *https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/earthkind/challenge/test/*.

Caldwell Pink Rose
Photo courtesy of emeraldgoddessgardens.com

Flame acanthus *Photo courtesy of centraltexasgardener.com*

One easy tip to conserve water is to shrink the size of your lawn (make sure you are in compliance with your HOA (Home Owners Association). Use ground covers, patios or decks. Plant a grass that needs less water. Don't use elongated areas and opt for more square spaces. Install irrigation fixtures and arrange beds to irrigate as efficiently as possible. Run off that wets the street is not efficient and wastes water while increasing your water bill. Our aquifers are precious and we should be as frugal as possible with their output. Runoff from pesticides and fertilizers

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

Upcoming Events

April 2022

Green Thumb Gardening Series

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

Water Conservation

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

Apr. 19, 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Simply visit the Harris County Public Library System No reservation required. Watch on Facebook – *facebook.com/harriscountypl/live*

Educational Programs

Apr. 5, *First Tuesday* 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Meeting in-person at Trini Mendenhall Community Center, 1414 Wirt Road, Houston 77055.

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: **homegrown2022.eventbrite.com/**

Apr. 7, 10:00 a.m. - *Starting Plants From Cuttings* by Paul Winski, Texas A&M AgriLife Harris County Extension Agent – Horticulture

Plant Sales!

Apr. 9 Northwest Spring Perennial, Veggie and Herb Sale, in-person only, 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., Weekley Park, 19110 Longenbaugh, Cypress TX 77433

Apr. 16 Genoa Friendship Gardens Spring Veggie, Pepper and Herb Sale sale pick up, 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m, 1210 Genoa Red Bluff Rd., Houston, TX 77034

Apr. 18 Genoa Friendship Gardens Open Garden Day, 8:30 - 11:00 a.m, 1210 Genoa Red Bluff Rd., Houston, TX 77034, garden tours and in-person plant sale.

Youth Activities

GPN

Look for the Growing with Plants and Nature table at following plant sales and farmer's markets:

Apr. 9 Northwest Spring Perennial, Veggie and Herb Sale 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., Weekley Park, 19110 Longenbaugh, Cypress TX 77433 *Hands on educational activities for children attending this event.*

Apr. 16 & 18 Genoa Friendship Gardens Spring Veggie, Pepper and Herb Sale, 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., and Open Garden Day 8:30 - 11:00 a.m, 1210 Genoa Red Bluff Rd., Houston, TX 77034 *Grab and go activity packets for families with children.*

Apr. 16 Towne Lake Farmer's Market, 9955 Barker Cypress Rd., Cypress TX 77433 10:00 a.m - 1:00 p.m. *Hands on planting activity for children.*

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:

COVID-19 AgriLife Extension Web Hub

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

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Herb of the Month

Alecost *(Tanacetum balsamita)*

by Karen McGowan, Master Gardener

Alecost falls into the category of fun herbs to investigate that have, for one reason or another, fallen into obscurity. Up until the late 1800s, Alecost was grown and used as an integral part of American life, including religious life. American colonists were purported to have used the long balsam-scented leaves as bookmarks in their Bibles. According to historical accounts, the scented leaves were likewise pressed into their Bibles to help keep parishioners awake during sermons. The name Alecost is derived from the English who used the herb to flavor their ales. Known by other names, as well, including Balsam Weed, Bible Leaf, Bible Plant, and Costmary; its alternative name Costmary is derived from the Latin word, *Costus*, which is an Asian plant used as a spice and preserve. "Mary" references the Virgin Mary and may be related to the plant being used as an herb during Medieval Times to relieve pain during childbirth. The genus name, Tanacetum, is derived from the Greek word, "Athanasia," meaning "immortal." The species name, *balasamita*, is from the Latin word "balsamum," meaning "an aromatic resin used for healing wounds and soothing pain."

Alecost

Native to southern Europe and western Asia, in Europe between the 16th and 18th centuries, Alecost was being used to relieve pain during childbirth. Additionally, the herb was used as a diuretic, a laxative, and an antipyretic (fever reducer). Alecost was also used in making potpourri, and bundled together with lavender to add fragrance to bedding.

This aromatic, perennial herb may be one that was at one time frequently traded as a "pass-along plant," since it is virtually impossible to grow from seed. Alecost is almost always propagated by root cutting, stem cuttings, or division. Preferring full sun to partial shade, Alecost produces mostly leaves and no flowers if grown in the shade, but bright buttons of yellow color arrive in late summer to fall when grown in full sun. Since it can become aggressive and crowd out other plants, this should be kept in mind when selecting a garden location, and in regards to the maintenance schedule. The herb's growth habit is erect, to a height of three to six feet tall with a shallow root system, and it prefers well-drained soil, although it can tolerate moist to dry conditions. With silvery green leaves carrying a minty balsam scent, Alecost is pollinated by insects. While the plant will die back during the winter in colder climates, it will return in the spring.

Alecost is probably not a front-running candidate for most folk's garden real estate. I can almost see this herb as being one of those you might run across in a Hill Country ranch's herb garden that belongs to one of those people we all know who have unique and delightfully interesting sunny gardens where sprawl is not only encouraged, but celebrated. If you are one of those folks, Alecost might be your garden "next." Happy gardening to all!

Citations:
https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/tanacetum-balsamita/#:~:text=The%20plant%20is%20native%20to,diuretic%2C%20laxative%2C%20and%20antipyretic.
https://pfaf.org/user/Plant.aspx?LatinName=Tanacetum+balsamita

A Penchant for Perennials

Turk's Cap - *Malvaviscus arboreus (var. drummodii)*

by Cindy Barger, Master Gardener

To be classified as a Texas Superstar (selections are made by a nine-member board of horticultural professionals), a plant must be attractive, easy to grow, and readily available. It should not be a struggle to nurture a Texas Superstar. Instead, you plant it and get to stand back and enjoy it, hopefully for years to come.

Another favorite perennial on this Texas Superstar list is Turk's Cap (Mystic Spires was covered last month). And what a favorite it is! This herbaceous shrub grows very quickly, with attractive leaves very coarse in texture. I bought a one-gallon pot of Turk's Cap years ago at a Harris County Master Gardener Plant Sale at Bear Creek Park long before I was a Master Gardener, and since then that one plant has filled out half of a big flower bed in our back yard, continuing to thrive year after year. I would guess I bought the plant in either 2006 or 2007.

Here are a few specifics on Turk's Cap:

This plant produces an abundance of small turban-like flowers (giving the plant its name) in colors ranging from bright red to pink to white. The most prevalent color is red. The hummingbirds in our yard are extremely attracted to this plant, and we often see more than a couple of hummers working the flowers at one time. It may be the one plant that attracts the most hummingbird activity; they will go to the Turk's Cap before checking out the feeders. This plant provides important nectar for migrating ruby-throated hummingbirds as they make their way south each year.

Pink Turk's Cap

Years ago Pam Puryear, one of the original Texas Rose Rustlers, encouraged Greg Grant, County Extension Agent of Smith County, to develop new varieties of Turk's Cap. The pink variety you can find today is named for her. I have a pink one (the blooms appear more peach than pink at times), and it has done very well. I also have a white one, which I may move this year as it isn't thriving quite as well as the red and pink ones.

Red Turk's Cap

While in North Texas Turk's Cap should be considered an annual, in South Texas it is a native and will become a root-hardy perennial that is very drought-tolerant. This is a pest- and disease-resistant plant, seldom bothered by either.

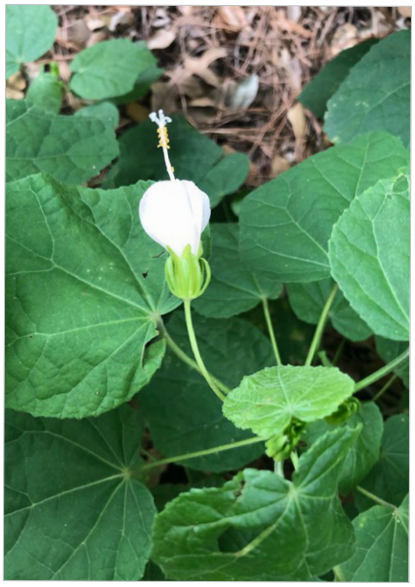
Turk's Cap has a plant hardiness of 7-11. While this most agreeable plant will do well in sun or shade, blooms will be more plentiful if planted where it gets direct sunlight. In the summer the leaves may become lighter green and have a rather quilted appearance. Some believe the foliage is more attractive when the plant is in the shade. Turk's Cap will bloom from summer to frost. Spring is the best time to plant so the plant can get established before the heavy flowering period in the summer, but planting at other times is fine. In the fall this plant produces marble-sized red fruit, shaped like tiny apples. They are enjoyed by birds, animals, and some humans (yes, they are edible but some find them unpleasant).

cont'd on pg. 5

Turk's Cap, *cont'd from pg. 4*

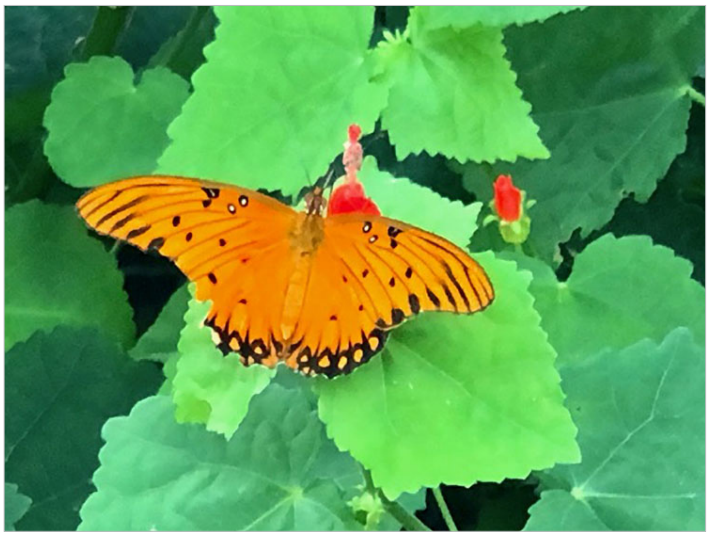
The size of a Turk's Cap can be 3-6 feet in both height and width. The plant produces many suckers from the base and can spread and take over if left to its own devices. I cannot imagine this as a container plant. It is not a well-manicured plant, but it is an eye-catcher with all the heavy foliage and abundant flowers. Fertilize two or three times during the growing period with a long-lasting slow-release fertilizer, and you will be rewarded with copious flowers and nectar-loving visitors.

Speaking of flowers, this plant is in the mallow family along with hibiscus. If you look closely you can see the long pistil with its yellow stamens sticking out of the twirled petals. Unlike hibiscus and other mallows, these petals remain twirled. Along with hummingbirds, butterflies and bees love Turk's Cap. Interesting is the fact that since bumblebees don't have long tongues like hummingbirds and butterflies they have to shred the flowers to get to the nectar.



White Turk's Cap

This plant has been around for many years and became known as a "pass-along plant" because it was shared or given away to friends and neighbors. In an 1891 nursery catalog from Felsburg, Texas, the plant was described as "a native of Texas, producing during summer a profusion of scarlet flowers. 40 cents." And Greg Grant is quoted as having said, "It'll grow in full sun, full shade, wet soil, dry soil, alkaline soil and acid soil -- it's a pretty dang amazing plant." Two sound recommendations over a century apart!



Gulf Coast Fritillary butterfly attracted to a Red Turk's Cap

I hope you'll be encouraged to find a spot for Turk's Cap if you don't have one. I believe it is a superstar among the Texas Superstars.

Earth-Kind Plants®: Helping to Conserve Water, *cont'd from pg. 1*

can also cause damage in the long run. Remember that mulch is your friend. It helps maintain soil temperature, lowers water evaporation, helps limit soil compaction and can lessen diseases.

For an in-depth explanation of Earth-Kind Landscaping and suitable plants, there are a few resources on the internet: *https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/earthkind/drought/efficient-use-of-water-in-the-garden-and-landscape/* *http://counties.agrilife.org/aransas/files/2011/08/Plant-Selection.pdf*

The Master Gardeners also have lectures this month, April, on Water Conservation. Check out the link *https://hcmga.tamu.edu/2022-green-thumb-gardening-series/* for dates and times.

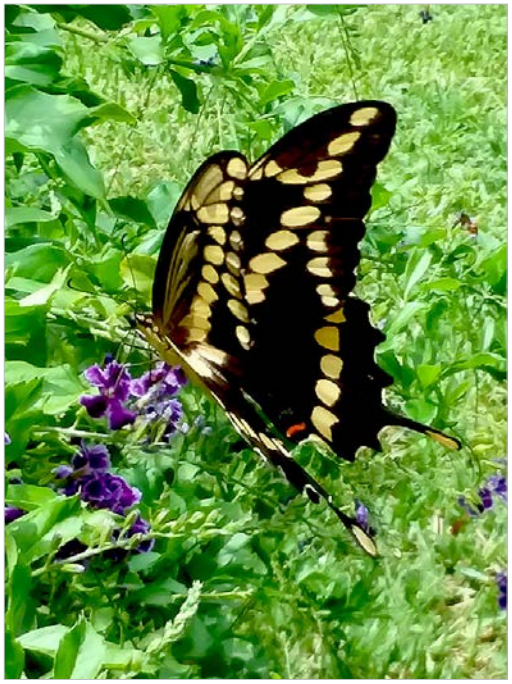
Plant of the Month

Drought-tolerant Diva Duranta

Article and photos by Becky Lowicki, Master Gardener

Want a workhorse of a perennial that thrives in the heat and is a profuse bloomer? Look no further than showstopper Duranta—a mighty hardy specimen that withstands the 100-degree temps of Houston and keep on going.

While there are many varieties, if you're in for beauty and hardiness, then *Duranta erecta* 'Sapphire Showers' can't be beat. No shrinking violet, this one withstands extreme temps as well. From personal experience, my purple stunner came back from the depths of "dead as a doornail" following the subfreezing temps and multi-week power outage of 2021. Literally just a stub of a root in the ground, it blossomed back in no time and sent its majestic spires skyward over last summer.



Giant swallowtail is a sight to behold on the majestic purple Duranta 'Sapphire Showers.'

Plus the regal purple delicate flowers attract a host of butterflies − from the giant swallowtail (Papilio cresphontes), the largest butterfly of North America − to the black beauty swallowtail, both of whom make a regular habit of stopping by for a sip of the nectar.

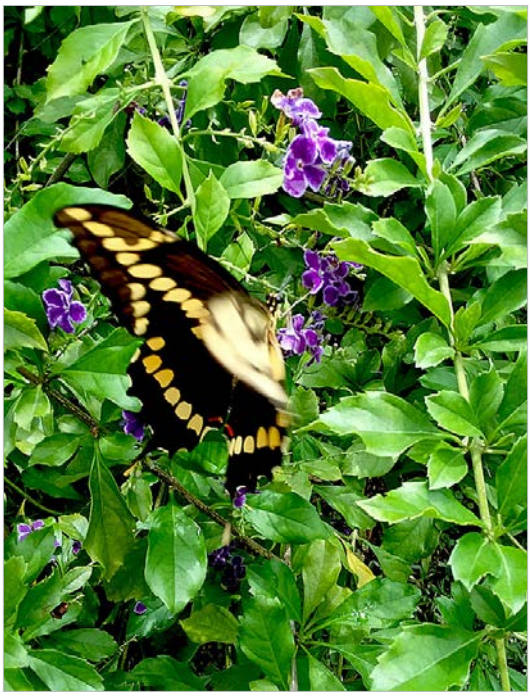
Even after the blooms are spent, Duranta's day is not done − the yellow-orange berries provide a colorful array of ornamental fruit.

If purple is not your thing, although it should be, there's also 'Alba' with clusters of white flowers, as well as 'Golden Edge' with bright gold and green foliage − all from the family Verbenaceae, native from Mexico to South America and the Caribbean.

Widely cultivated as an ornamental plant in tropical and subtropical gardens throughout the world, the plant has become naturalized in many places. Common names include golden dewdrop, pigeon berry and skyflower.

Likes and dislikes:

- Loves full sun—tolerates partial sun
- Prefers well-drained soil
- Spotlight as a specimen bush or patio accent
- Perennial evergreen
- Fast grower
- Flowers grow in clusters like grapes
- Small to average amount of water
- Hardy to below freezing temps
- Small elliptic leaves provide dense shrub characteristic
- Plant in spring/summer/fall
- Likely to grow to small tree height in excess of 8-10' or more if not pruned
- Likes a bed of mulch and periodic slow release 10-10-10 fertilizer
- Hardiness zones: 8-13



Duranta's attractive evergreen foliage, clusters of yellow-orange berries in the fall and vibrant purple blossoms are a magnet for butterflies and bees alike.

2022 HCMGA Plant Sale Schedule!

SOUTHEAST SALE

Genoa Friendship Garden
1210 Genoa Red Bluff
Houston 77034

February 19th & 21st
Tomato Sale

March 19th & 21st
Fruit Tree Sale

April 16 & 18th
Spring Vegetables & Peppers Sale

May 14 & 16th
Perennials & Herb Sale

Online & in -person sales!
Sales will be posted separately on the shop page. Pick up for each sale is the Saturday date.

NORTHWEST SALE

Weekley Park
19110 Longenbaugh
Cypress 77433

Thank You!

Feb[illegible]th
Fruit [illegible] & Tomato

April 9th
Spring Perennial, Veggie & Herb Sale

In -person only!

HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS

2022 PLANT SALES

6 Sales - 2 Locations
Including activities for families!

For more information go to:
hcmga.tamu.edu/plant-sales/

Times for all sales - 9am-1pm or until supplies last.

TEXAS MASTER GARDENER
TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

Southeast Sale ONLY: Order online for the best selections, hand chosen by Master Gardeners. Pick up paid orders on the Saturday date. In person shopping will also be available for Saturday and Monday of each sale. Monday is our Open Garden Day; tours of our demonstration gardens and plant trials will be provided along with plant sales.

Individuals with disabilities who require an auxiliary aid, service, or accommodation in order to participate are encouraged to contact the County Extension Office prior to the sale to determine how reasonable accommodations can be made.

The 2022 Fruit Tree listings are now available on our website!

https://hcmga.tamu.edu/plant-sales/

April Gardening Calendar

by Karen Shook, Master Gardener

The downside of writing a monthly to do list is that when I sit down to write the list for next month, it reminds me of all the things I should be doing right now. So, the first item on my personal April list is to take time to enjoy the spring flowers and the warming, but still mild weather. Prediction is that temperatures will be near normal for April, averaging about 70 degrees F. Temptation calls my name every time I near a plant sale. Remember that just because a plant is available here, doesn't mean it will do well here. Try this linked tool for good choices in your area: *Earth–Kind® Plant Selector*

As always, check for "too wet, too dry, just right" and water accordingly. Remember a good, deep watering is better than frequent, light watering. April is a good time to evaluate your irrigation system and make any needed repairs.

Caterpillars are on the prowl. Watch for signs like BB sized droppings, holes in leaves, rolled leaves. (The canna leaf rollers visit me every year!)

Perennials and Ornamental Grasses

- ❍ Remove spent blooms regularly to keep plants attractive and avoid using plant energy "going to seed".
- ❍ Finish fertilizing established perennials and ornamental grasses.
- ❍ Shear back by 1/3 if plants are getting leggy.
- ❍ Divide chrysanthemums in late April, early May.

Annuals

- ❍ Plant warm-season bedding plants.
- ❍ For cool season annuals, tidy up beds, remove spent flowers, pinch back lanky growth, fertilize, water well and enjoy extended flowering time. Flowers of many cool season annuals are edible.
- ❍ As weather warms, annuals in containers will need more frequent watering. Fertilize annuals in containers once per week at 1/2 recommended rates.

Roses

- ❍ Spraying for blackspot, powdery mildew, aphids, etc., should continue every 7 to 10 days through November.

Shrubs

- ❍ Newly planted shrubs do not have established root systems and may need supplemental watering. Moisten soil 4 to 6 in.
- ❍ Fertilize established shrubs if you didn't do this in March.
- ❍ Prune spring flowering shrubs after they finish flowering.
- ❍ For azaleas and other acid loving plants, it is a good time to check and adjust soil acidity.

Lawns

- ❍ April begins planting season for warm season grasses.
- ❍ The lawn can be fertilized after a second mowing of actively growing grass. Note if you have weeds in the turf, bag and compost clippings from these first two mowings.
- ❍ Broadleaf weed killer can be used in April, but check the label. St. Augustine can be sensitive to weed killer at warmer temperatures.

Ground Cover

- ❍ Transplant, divide ground covers. Fertilize if you didn't do in March.

Vines

- ❍ Prune spring flowering vines after they finish flowering. Snip back, wind vines through support to keep looking neat.

Edibles (vegetables, herbs, berries, fruits)

- ❍ Cool season vegetables are likely to be done in April. Warm season vegetables can be planted.
- ❍ Get your tomatoes planted so you can harvest before hot weather causes them to stop setting fruit.
- ❍ See the following link for recommended planting times: *Harris County Vegetable Planting Guide*

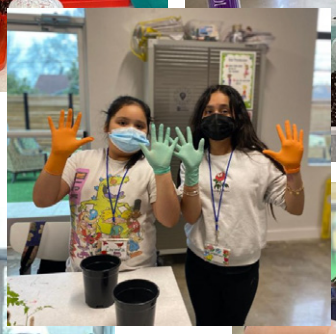
Citations:
A Garden Book for Houston. 2nd ed., River Oaks Garden Club, Houston, Tx 1968.
Groom, Dale, and Dan Gill. Texas Gardener's Handbook. Cool Springs Press, Minneapolis, MN, 2012.
Richter, Robert. Month-by-Month Gardening Texas. Cool Springs Press, Minneapolis, MN, 2014.
Weather.gov/wrh/climate

Growing with Plants and Nature

Growing with Plants and Nature offers children and their families opportunities for learning about gardening and nature through hands on activities and lessons focused on plants and the creeping, crawling, and flying creatures with whom the plants share the natural environment with.

We provide programs to community organizations, plant sales, fairs, farmer's markets, and other events. Also we reach out through our informative Facebook group, Growing with Plants and Nature Virtual Group. We welcome questions, comments and requests at: ogd.harrishort@gmail.com

Growing with Plants and Nature had a busy month in March, working at Friends of Northside, "Spring Break at Woodchase Park", Towne Lake Farmer's Market and CyFair and GFG plant sales.



Here are pictures of the children of Friends of Northside bumping up tomato and flowering plants to take home. They loved showing off their colored gloves!

We enjoyed working at **"Spring Break at Woodchase Park".** They offered programs from area museums and other services to children in the Westchase District. We helped children plant seeds for microgreens which gave us a chance to share information about seeds, roots, and nutrition.

2022 HOME GROWN LECTURE SERIES

Lectures will be presented on the first Thursday of each month on Microsoft Teams and include live demonstrations. Register now so you don't miss one!

Winter

STARTING PLANTS FROM SEEDS
Paul Winski - Texas A&M AgriLife Harris County Extension Agent-Horticulture

January 6, 2022 - 10:00 a.m.

BASIC GRAFTING TECHNIQUES
Shannon Dietz - Texas A&M AgriLife Harris County Extension Agent-Agriculture and Natural Resources

February 3, 2022 - 10:00 a.m.

TOMATOES FOR THE PATIO
Brandi Keller - Texas A&M AgriLife County Extension Agent-Horticulture

March 3, 2022 - 10:00 a.m.

Summer

IDENTIFYING PEST & DISEASE ISSUES IN THE GARDEN
Paul Winski - Texas A&M AgriLife Harris County Extension Agent-Horticulture

July 7, 2022 - 10:00 a.m.

SAFETY IN THE HOME GARDEN
Shannon Dietz - Texas A&M AgriLife Harris County Extension Agent-Agriculture and Natural Resources

August 4, 2022 - 10:00 a.m.

ALL ABOUT MINT
Brandi Keller - Texas A&M AgriLife County Extension Agent-Horticulture

September 1, 2022 - 10:00 a.m.

Spring

STARTING PLANTS FROM CUTTINGS
Paul Winski - Texas A&M AgriLife Harris County Extension Agent-Horticulture

April 7, 2022 - 10:00 a.m.

HOME BUTCHER: MAKING BOUDIN
Shannon Dietz - Texas A&M AgriLife Harris County Extension Agent-Agriculture and Natural Resources

May 5, 2022 - 10:00 a.m.

10 REASONS FOR YELLOWING LEAVES
Brandi Keller - Texas A&M AgriLife County Extension Agent-Horticulture

June 2, 2022 - 10:00 a.m.

Fall

PROPER PRUNING IN THE LANDSCAPE
Paul Winski - Texas A&M AgriLife Harris County Extension Agent-Horticulture

October 6, 2022 - 10:00 a.m.

HOLIDAY MEATS - NOT JUST TURKEY!
Shannon Dietz - Texas A&M AgriLife Harris County Extension Agent-Agriculture and Natural Resources

November 3, 2022 - 10:00 a.m.

PLANTABLE CHRISTMAS TREE ALTERNATIVES
Brandi Keller - Texas A&M AgriLife County Extension Agent-Horticulture

December 1, 2022 - 10:00 a.m.

Registration

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

homegrown2022.eventbrite.com

HARRIS COUNTY TEXAS

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..

Green Thumb 2022 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*

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

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

Houston Community College *@Home Gardening* Series

Register in advance to receive the link: hccs.edu/community-learning-workshops

Second Monday of each month

January 10 – ***Gardening in Small Spaces***
February 14 – ***Spring Vegetable Gardening***
March 7 – ***Composting***
April 11 – ***Water Conservation***
May 9 – ***Succulents***
June 13 – ***Gardening Open Forum***
July 11 – ***Fall Vegetable Gardening***
August 8 – ***Herbs 101***
September 12 – ***Plant Propagation***
October 10 – ***Citrus Trees***

Third Tuesday, 11:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.

Harris County Public Library Facebook Live

No reservation required – facebook.com/harriscountypl/events/

Third Tuesday of each month

January 18 – ***Gardening in Small Spaces***
February 15 – ***Spring Vegetable Gardening***
March 15 – ***Composting***
April 19 – ***Water Conservation***
May 17 – ***Succulents***
June 21 – ***Gardening Open Forum***
July 19 – ***Fall Vegetable Gardening***
August 16 – ***Herbs 101***
September 20 – ***Plant Propagation***
October 18 – ***Citrus Trees***

TEXAS MASTER GARDENER TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION Harris County

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TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

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

The Harris County Master Gardeners maintain the vegetable, herb, berry, and citrus beds in the Family Garden on Tuesday and Thursday mornings, so if you see one of us working there, feel free to say hi. We look forward to our formal in-person programming resuming soon. Please check back periodically for those dates.

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.

Getting Down to Earth

Article and photos by Pam Longley, Master Gardener

News from Genoa Friendship Gardens

Our fruit tree sale was advertised online for about 3 weeks now and there was a HUGE response. We started filling orders about two weeks before pickup day. We even had a $1000.00 order! Then came the threat of a freeze with all those orders sitting in front of our gate, but all was well.

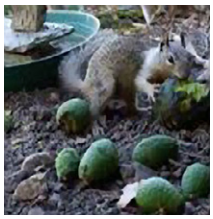
Marisol Arteaga, who heads the Cylinder Garden Program, reported that they have had 50 schools sign up for white plastic cyclinders and seeds for the spring semester. The largest group of students participating is 600+ and they are 3rd graders. In total, there are 3875 student gardeners enrolled from most of the school districts in Harris County. There are also a few private schools and homeschool groups participating.

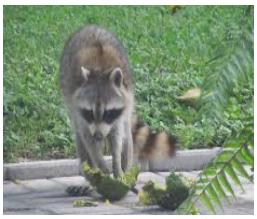
The perennial garden trial team has been busy in the greenhouse propagating spring seeds of begonia, echinacea, rudbeckia, vinca, zinnia, nasturtiums, verbena, torenia and Perovskia compact sage.

Linda Pearson, Evan Hopkins, Carolyn Boyd and Kathryn McCleod

We have a huge avocado tree that survived the February, 2021 winter storm. We are thrilled that it is loaded with buds. We are just hoping we do not have another attack of Mysterious Marauders this year. In 2020, sometime between April and May when the tree had oodles of avocadoes on it, these thieves ate every single avocado on it. The ground was littered with the peels and seeds. We were not just disappointed but hopping mad! So, was it squirrels, raccoons, or people?

Avocado tree (unknown cultivar) *Photo by Pam Longley*





Dianne Lawrence checking fruit tree orders for the March sale

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Getting Down to Earth, *cont'd from pg. 13*

Genoa Friendship Gardens

I was out at **Hope Farms** this week working to set up a volunteer project for my church. This urban farm is funded by local businesses and is a place for all Houstonians to learn about and celebrate fresh, locally grown food. They are going to re-start their Junior Master Gardeners program in the fall. They have a Farmer's Market on Saturdays from 9 a.m.-1p.m. and on the first Wednesday of each month. The Wednesday evening market also has free cooking demos, sunset meditation and kids' activities. There is a fresh-cut flower garden and floral studio, *Flower Child*, on site, too. **Grace Cavnar**, the owner and founder, also started *Recipe for Success* in 2005 to teach children in school settings how to grow and prepare healthy food. Their website is *HopeFarmsTX.org*.

Hope Farms, 10401 Scott St. *Photo by Pam Longley*

Hope Farms' enormous rain barrels *Photo by Pam Longley*

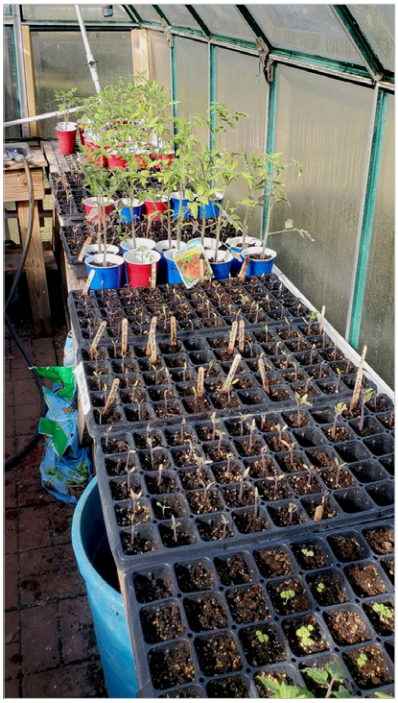
***cont'd** on pg. 15*

Getting Down to Earth, *cont'd from pg. 14*

Article and photos by Dale Hudson, Master Gardener

Christ the Good Shepherd Garden - Spring, TX

Hello again from Christ the Good Shepherd Garden in Spring, TX. This month you've caught us in transition. This is the time of year when it's "out with the old, and in with the new". It's time to say goodbye to our turnips, thank you to our lettuce and spinach beds, and hasta luego to the kale and swiss chard. This comes with some pain and regret since these winter crops are still producing well, but the time has come to prep the beds and get planting going for our spring garden.

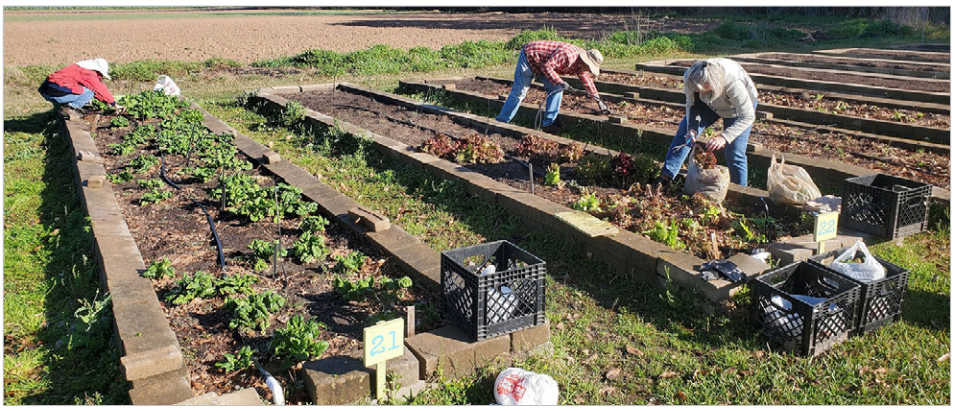


Tomato transplants in the greenhouse are ready and waiting for a home

Top priority goes to tomatoes. We typically plant six beds, with each bed having a different variety. This is a total of 125 transplants which have been growing in our greenhouse since mid-January. This year has special significance, however, because it will include a TxAgrilife trial. No, it doesn't involve new varieties, but rather a twist on bed preparation and growing conditions. Briefly stated, there are reports saying that tomato production can be influenced by the type and color of mulch used on the soil underneath the vines. Working with Paul Winski, we have designed a 3-bed trial for CGS Garden to see if we can confirm the results reported in the literature.

Second priority just behind the tomatoes is summer squash. We always plant both yellow squash and zucchini and start the race to see how much production we can get before the squash stem borers eventually shut us down. Sadly, we've tried just about every trick in the book to defeat the borers but they always win in the end. Not being discouraged, however, this year we will try direct injection of Bt into the base of the plants. It must work, because we read about it on the internet, right? Ha!

Our Texas Sweet 1015 Onions are looking great this time of year.



The winter crops have to come out to make way for the tomatoes and squash.

And looking forward just one more month, the three beds of strawberries (from the TxAgriLife trial) will come out and be replaced by peppers, and the ten beds of onions (our biggest single crop) will come out and be replaced by sweet potatoes.

It would be great if you could join us. There are plenty of jobs for everyone.

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Getting Down to Earth, *cont'd from pg. 15*

Article and photos by Nancy Graml, Master Gardener

McGovern Centennial Gardens Family Garden

New Visitors in the Family Garden

Harris County Extension Agent Brandi Keller and Master Gardener Program Coordinator Lili Bauerlein recently visited our volunteers during our Tuesday morning work day. This was Lili's first time here to see what we were doing, and she plans to visit the other gardens and Houston Rodeo where Master Gardeners volunteer. Lili also plans to come again to spend the morning with us. Brandi discussed our current plans with Master Gardener Lisa Rodriquez who coordinates with Master Gardeners Will Isbell and Marisol Arteaga to decide what will go in the beds next and where, while we transition from harvesting the winter produce.

Brandi Keller and Lili Bauerlein tour the Family Garden.

Brandi Keller answers questions from visitors.

During Brandi and Lili's visit, Master Gardeners answered many questions from visitors who wandered through the Family Garden, which gave us the opportunity to tell them about the Master Gardener program.

What Happened After the February Freeze

We prepared for this year's freeze by covering certain beds. We covered everything tender, including the plants that we just planted and those that were just coming up, like the lettuces. We also protected the pineapple plant. We knew that the freeze would affect the blooms on the snap peas but the peas would be fine. We also knew that our established brassica like the broccoli, brussels sprouts, mustard should be totally fine, along with the Swiss Chard. The Cuban oregano is not cold tolerant and does not do well in any freeze, so we covered it. We did not cover our Mediterranean dry bed because rosemary, lavender, and sage are cold tolerant; instead, what kills rosemary is overwatering.

After drying and folding the freeze cloths, we assessed the beds for any freeze damage. Our herb garden, which we did not cover with freeze cloth did suffer some from the freeze, although we were surprised the basil had lasted as long as it did. The African blue basil bush may be no more, but we will wait to prune it because the bottom branches look green. Shiso beefsteak with its very distinctive leaves is in the basil family. It comes and goes because it reseeds; therefore, we did not weed this basil. We had some here the other day that were three inches tall and they're not here anymore. We lost a Cuban oregano. Calendula didn't even bat an eye. The Mediterranean dry bed was not covered and it looks fine. The Vick's plant still feels a little firm and is coming back from the base, so we waited a week before we trimmed it back. We also gave the toothache plant a hair cut so it doesn't look so obvious and we'll see if it comes back. The Nasturtiums are all history. The Hojo Santa Root Beer Plant took a beating, but like the African Blue Basil, we will wait to prune it. Texas Gold Columbine, a Texas Superstar perennial, lived up to its hearty reputation and still thrives.

Citrus Tree Freeze Survivors

Last year's February hard freeze killed five of our citrus trees, but several varieties survived then and continued to thrive after this February's freeze. They are Citrus Ujukitsu, a lemon tree sometimes called "lemonade fruit"; Kishu Seedless Mandarin; Citrus Kinokuni "Makakukishu", rated as one of the best Chinese citrus trees; Meiwa Kumquat (Fortunella Crassifolia); Cara Cara Orange (Citrus Sinesis); and Owari Satsuma (Citrus Reticulata "Oware"). Three of our citrus espaliers are still growing. Master Gardener Jim Rath answered questions from visitors about how to protect citrus trees from a freeze.

Master Gardener Jim Rath answers questions from visitors.

Ask a Master Gardener – In-Person Activities

by Valerie Depew, Master Gardener

Our Farmer's Market table hosting activities have resumed. These events are in compliance with COVID protocols, such as wearing masks and social distancing.

For Harris County MGs interested in volunteering please see the SignUp link: *https://signup.com/go/wBSYeQe*

Additional dates for 2022 have been added. so be sure to check the SignUp link. If you do not see an opening where you wish to serve, please contact Valerie Depew at *vdep56@gmail.com*. We will work hard to accommodate those situations!

The full AAMG schedule for April

Sat., Apr 2	**Mercer Botanic Gardens,** 22306 Aldine Westfield Rd, Humble, 77338 – 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. **Urban Harvest**, 3401 Westheimer, Houston, 77042 – 7:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. **Tomball Farmer's Market**, 205 West Main St., Tomball, 77375 – 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Thurs., Apr. 14	**Westchase Farmer's Market**, 10503 Westheimer Rd., Houston, 77042 – 3 to 7 p.m.
Sat., Apr. 16	**Mercer Botanic Gardens,** 22306 Aldine Westfield Rd, Humble, 77338 – 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. **Towne Lake Farmer's Market**, 9955 Barker Cypress Rd., Cypress, 77433 – 9:30 a.m to 1:30 p.m.
Sat., Apr. 23	**Memorial Villages Farmer's Market,** 10840 Beinhorn Rd., Houston, 77024 – 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.
EVENTS	
Apr. 9	**Westside Plant Sale**, Weekley Park, 19110 Longenbaugh, Cypress, 77433 – 9:00 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Apr. 18	**Genoa Friendship Gardens Open Garden Day** - 1210 Genoa Red Bluff Rd., Houston 77034

Thank you to all of the hardworking volunteers who have been able to get back out there with the public events!

The Home Grown podcast is presented by the Agriculture & Natural Resources (ANR) Unit of the Harris County Texas A&M AgriLife Extension office. The series provides information on urban agriculture / horticulture / gardening and ag literacy. The program focuses on topics that are relevant to the urban gardener.

https://bit.ly/3w4cUAR

HOME GROWN PODCAST

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Harris County

GARDENING
HORTICULTURE
URBAN AGRICULTURE

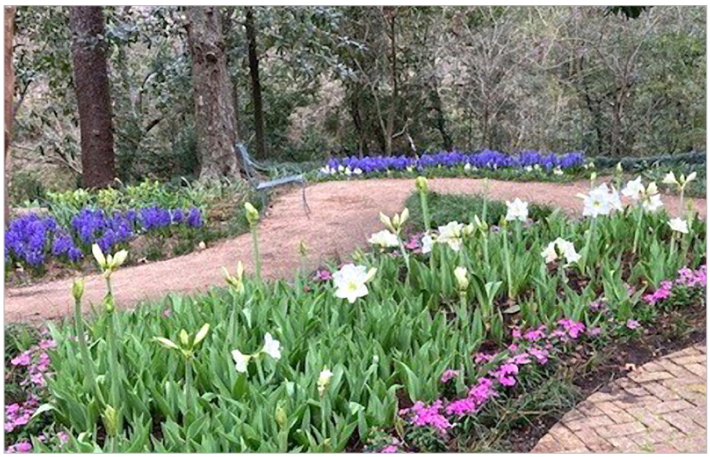
The podcast can also be found at the following site: www.listennotes.com/podcasts/home-grown-podcast-paul-OM7PKqityX_/

Azalea Trail 2022 Highlights

Article and photos by Jo Ann Stevenson, Master Gardener

The River Oaks Garden Club held their 86th Azalea Trail on March 4, 5 and 6, 2022. This year's theme was *Back to our Roots… Bringing New Blooms*. The trail included visits to the gardens at Bayou Bend, Rienzi and 4 private homes in the River Oaks area (different private homes are featured each year). Bayou Bend is the former home of Miss Ima Hogg (who is credited with introducing the azalea to Houston) and Rienzi is the former home of Carroll Sterling Masterson and Harris Masterson III. Both homes are operated by the Museum of Fine Arts Houston and welcome visitors throughout the year for tours and a variety of special events.

The event is sponsored and planned by the Garden Club and staffed 100% by volunteers. Spectacular floral arrangements that add a wonderful panache at each location were made by the Garden Club members. Each year, these floral displays astound me, and I can't wait to see the ones at the next stop on the trail. The Forum of Civics Building and Gardens is also on the tour each year and includes different educational displays and Q&A sessions with gardening experts – including the Harris County Master Gardeners – plus food vendors for a quick lunch or sweet treat.



Blue Hyacinth, Paperwhite narcissus, white amaryllis and pink dianthus blooms in the Bulb Garden at Rienzi.

Tickets were available for presale at various locations and also at each stop on the trail. Proceeds support maintenance and preservation of the Bayou Bend Gardens and the Forum of Civics Building and Gardens, plus a Bayou Bend Garden endowment (a charitable trust for the care of Bayou Bend Gardens), the annual Sadie Gwin Blackburn environmental seminar, and publication of the popular *A Garden Book for Houston and the Texas Gulf Coast*, first published in 1929 and now in its 5th printing.

Harris County Master Gardeners volunteers at The Forum of Civics Building

More than 5,000 people attend the 3-day event each year (although it seems like that many each day!).[1] The 2020 event was held just before the county-wide Covid shutdown, and the Garden Club has chosen to hold the event every two years instead of annually. Fellow attendees were excited to hit the trail again this year, after missing it in 2021.

Each stop on the trail had ample volunteer docents to give details about the gardens and answer any questions. One home's poolside patio was decorated in a French theme and made me feel like I had walked into a party in the south of France. Instead of the usual flower covered Jeep appearing at each site, bicycles, a rickshaw and even a 1930 Model A deluxe roadster convertible were decorated with flowers this year.

One of several "butterfly" floral arrangements at a private residence

What was different this year was only getting to see the gardens at the private residences and not having the opportunity to also walk through the homes. The first floor of Bayou Bend was open for tours, but Rienzi was not this year. It was fun in years past to peek into the homes of Houston's elite, but realistically the tour is all about the gardens and that is what most of us gardeners really want to see.

***cont**'d on pg. 19*

[1] *https://www.causeiq.com/organizations/river-oaks-garden-club,741145998/*
[2] *"Bayou Bend Gardens, A Southern Oasis", 2006, by David B. Warren, Scala Publishers in association with The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, ISBN 1 85759 423 1*

Azalea Trail 2022 Highlights, *cont'd from pg. 18*

This is the second time we took advantage of the free shuttle bus (masks required this year) instead of parking on the route and walking many blocks between locations. There were certainly spots on the tour that were walkable, but the bus was a welcome addition -- and not having to deal with traffic and parking was a plus. It was a cloudy day on Friday when we went, but I remember previous years that were either sunny and hot or threatening with rain.

Although not all the azaleas were in full bloom yet, the camellias, tulips, hyacinths, narcissus, geraniums, saucer magnolias, redbuds and other blooms did not disappoint. If you've never been on the Azalea Trail, I highly recommend it – mark your calendars for March 2024 -- it is always a welcome sign of Spring in Houston.

One of several bicycles decorated with flowers at private residences, this one with snapdragons and holly trees in the background. "And you'll look sweet upon the seat of a bicycle built for two", especially one as pretty as this!

Redbud detail at Bayou Bend

The East Garden at Bayou Bend is flanked by hedges of "Duchesse de Caze Pink" camellias and these "Rev. John G. Drayton" camellias (both are Camellia japonica) that look striking every year.

Croquet, anyone? Whimsical lady figure covered in flowers and leaves at a private residence. Even the croquet balls were covered with flowers.

Azaleas under Live Oak branches at a private residence.

Floral arrangements in the shape of cupcakes at a private residence. If you look closely, you can see a bee on the bottom left "cupcake".

Espalier Class at McGovern Centennial Gardens

by Debra Caldwell, Master Gardener

Master Gardeners and Hermann Park Conservancy staff attended a master class in espalier pruning given by Charles King Sadler, Certified Arborist and owner of King Garden. McGovern Centennial Gardens has established apple and pear trees that are trained as espaliers. The word *espalier* (ess-PALL'-yay) originated from the Italian word, *spalliera*, which means 'something to rest the *spalla* (shoulder) against'. It is the method of training plants to grow in a two-dimensional form supported by a structure.

Espaliering fruit trees saves space and can be used to extend the production of fruit by growing trees against a heat retaining wall. As trees grow, side shoots sprout from the trunk and branches. Trees must be pruned to keep the flat form of the espalier and branches should be tied to the support to train them in the desired pattern.

Charles Sadler outlined several principles that should be kept in mind when pruning. Identify the location of the sun. Plants are like solar panels that reach toward the sun to maximize photosynthesis. Pruning helps to balance the plant so the strong side that is getting more sun won't take over.

Charles Sadler pointing out espalier pruning options

Also consider the observer's view of the plant and its growth pattern. A pear tree is very upright while an apple tree has a more horizontal branching pattern. Consider the health of the tree when pruning. Is there enough vigorous growth to support the plant? If the plant is struggling, keep pruning to a minimum. More aggressive pruning can be done on a plant that has vigorous growth.

Before beginning the pruning process, Charles sprayed his tools with a 70% isopropyl alcohol solution to sterilize them. He was careful to sanitize his tools when he moved to another tree. He began pruning by cutting back previously pruned branches to the branch collar. A branch collar has tissues that help heal the cut. It's important to cut close to the branch collar, roughly parallel to the direction the branch is growing. Identify fruit spurs, the short twigs that bear the fruit buds and are marked by layers of growth. They should be four to six inches in length. Removing the spurs will result in no flowers or fruits.

Remove dead or damaged branches and crossing branches. Consider whether a branch looks intentional and if there is enough light to support it. Is a branch sticking out? Is it growing too high above the supporting frame? Is a branch redundant? If there are no branches in an area, try to train other branches to fill in the area.

Before and after photos of an espaliered pear tree show the end result of judicious pruning. The remaining growth will help the tree direct energy into the fruit-bearing spurs and improve yield. An additional pruning in summer to remove wayward branches can be done to further shape the plant. For more information and resources go to *https://kinggardeninc.com/espalier*.

Before pruning

After pruning

Wildflower Whims

by Robin Yates, Master Gardener

When landscaping our homes, we have an endless supply of options. When it comes time to purchase the plants to be installed, why should I include native plants in my decisions? That is a good question! I hope to pique your curiosity about the many benefits of planting native plants in your yard.

First, what do we mean by the term native plant? According to the Native Plant Society of Texas, a native plant is one that evolved and occurs naturally, with no human intervention, in a particular region or environment (Native Plant Landscaping Course, Level 1). A Texas native plant is one which is indigenous to Texas prior to Euro-American settlement.

Because native plants evolved here, in this ecosystem, they will survive on local rainfall. This decreases supplemental watering needs--an important consideration, as fresh water is a limited resource.

For the same reason, native plants are naturally hardy. They do not require the fertilization, insecticides, and fungicides many introduced plants do. Thus, we incur less maintenance cost and less runoff pollution in our waterways.

According to Texas Parks and Wildlife, our ecosystem is Gulf Prairies and Marshes. Many of the native prairie plants have deep root systems. These roots create channels to draw rainwater deep into the ground, instead of increasing flooding. This is a frequently neglected flood mitigation strategy. Historically, our common method of handling rainwater involves channelizing our bayous. We make them deeper, wider, and straighter. Whereas nature teaches us to spread it out, slow it down, and soak it in.

Texas bluebonnet
Photo courtesy Randy Heisch, Lacy Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

The deep root system also enables native plants to filter the water of pollutants, cleaning the water before it reenters the water cycle.

Native plants also improve air quality through photosynthesis and less maintenance. Gasoline powered lawn equipment is a major source of 'nonroad gasoline emissions' (*https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2015-09/documents/banks.pdf*). The less we use gasoline powered lawn devices, the better for air quality.

As native plants evolved simultaneously with insects and other wildlife, they provide habitat those species recognize and require for survival. We are amid what scientists are calling the sixth mass extinction. Last year, 23 species were removed from the endangered species list, because they are now extinct. Our ecosystem depends upon the insects, pollinators and others, to survive. By placing a native plant in your garden, you are helping the entire ecosystem.

Indian blanket
Photo courtesy Norman G. Flaigg, Lacy Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

Many of us have found spending time in nature an effective strategy for dealing with the difficulties of the pandemic. Native plants literally bring nature to your doorstep. All I need to do to relax out in nature, is step outside!

The good news is any native plant you put in your yard or garden helps. Start with just one plant. You don't need to make any big changes. Start small and observe.

For further reading on this subject, I recommend Doug Tallamy's books *Bringing Nature Home and Nature's Best Hope*. He is an entomologist at the University of Delaware and has done a lot of research on the benefits of native plants.

I plan to begin highlighting a different native plant on a monthly basis. Come and see the native wildflowers we have growing at Genoa Friendship Gardens. I'd be delighted to show you the progress on the new native plant bed.

MG of the Month - *Lucia Hansen*

by Karen Breneman, Master Gardener

Congratulations **Lucia Hansen!**

Lucia Hansen is a 2005 graduate. Recently, with her horse trailer, Lucia "saved" the recent Westside fruit tree sale, and then after the sale, she transported the unsold trees to Genoa Friendship Garden for the next MG fruit tree sale. She also helps with other MG programs.

Lucia Hansen

Lucia was born and raised near the family farm in Walla Walla, Washington and says "Apparently, I cannot get the dirt out from under my fingernails." She has always enjoyed gardening, no natter where she has lived. She and her hubby have enjoyed 50+ happy years together, 45 of which have been in the Houston area. She was lucky to stay home, raising three "pretty nice kids", then taught French in the Cy-Fair school district. For about 10 years, Lucia and her daughter competed in Hunter Jumper. (The horses are now pasture ornaments.) Aside from gardening Lucia is involved in family genealogy, training her golden retrievers and traveling abroad and on the West Coast.

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*.

Thank you in advance for your nomination.

For Harris County Master Gardeners Only!

April 9th & 23rd
GFG Workday!

8:30 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

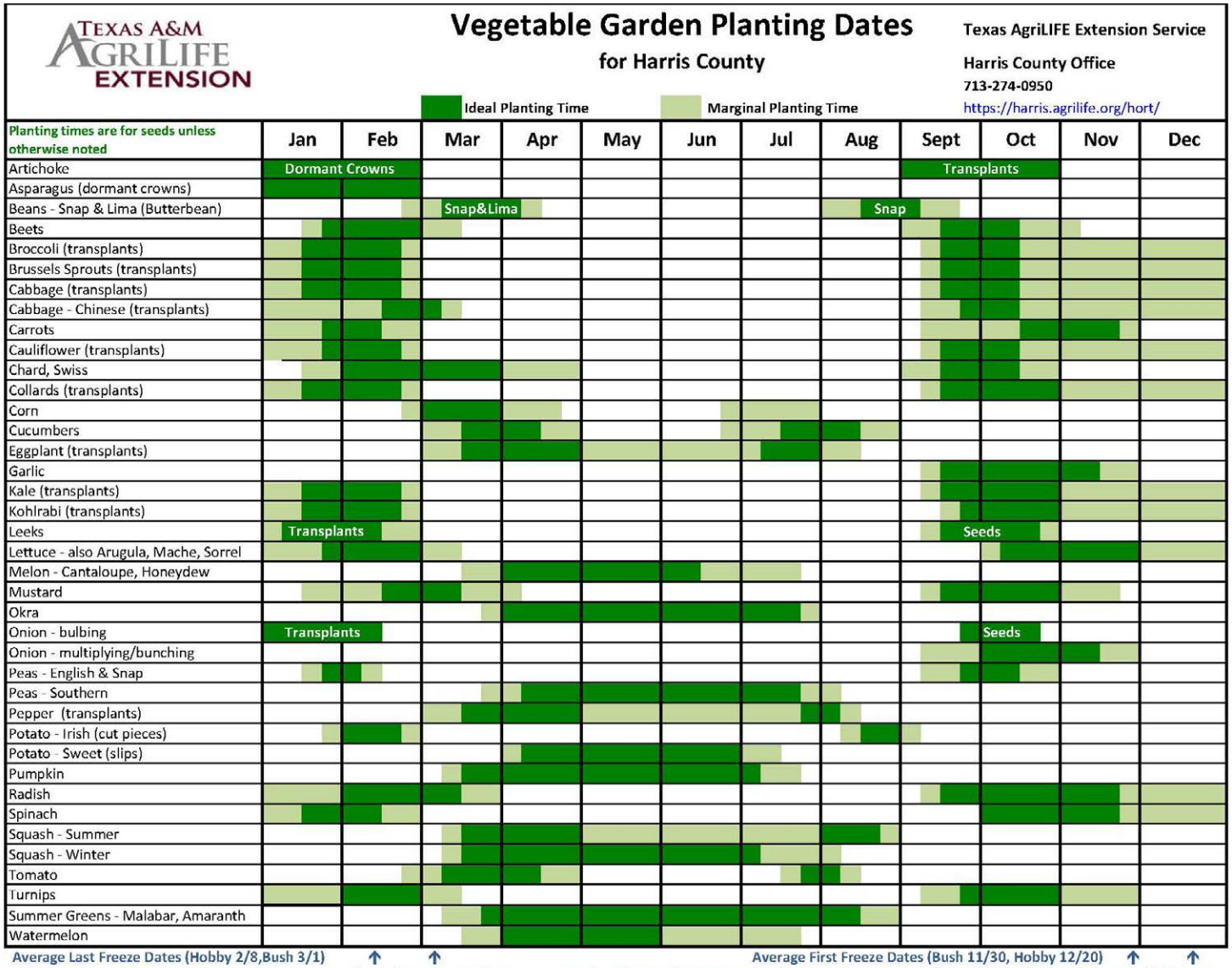
Master Gardeners and Interns who celebrate a birthday during ***April*** include the following. Wish them ***HAPPY BIRTHDAY*** when you see them!

Angela Byargeon, Ann Corbut, Valerie Depew, Diane Hosmer, Philip John, Jessica Marish-Jarl, Gabby Matringe, Cindy Moore, Mary Stokman and Cig Vergason

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.



Download the Vegetable Garden Planting Guide here!

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE
EXTENSION SERVICE
13105 NORTHWEST FREEWAY, SUITE 1000
HOUSTON, TX 77040
713-274-0950

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 **Will Isbell** at *mcg.harrishort@gmail.com,* if you are interested in attending.

Genoa Friendship Garden

1210 Genoa Red Bluff Road, Houston 77034
Weekday Workdays *8:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.*

Every Monday and Wednesday we are working in the a variety of gardens. They include a large vegetable production garden and Texas AgriLife research plant trial beds. Feel free to drop in to get service hours!

Weekend Workdays *8:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.*

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.

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