

Urban Dirt

Trees and Tree Care!

Gardening Events and Information for Texans

Protecting Trees in the Winter

by Terri Simon, Master Gardener

Trees can provide so many things for us at our home and in our garden. They can provide food, flowers, shade, insulation or color, adding value and beauty to your landscape. They reduce erosion and give us oxygen. Trees also offer a home for animals and plants. When I lived in Galveston a magnificent magnolia tree reached up to our second floor apartment. When it flowered I could open windows and the delicate scent wafted through our kitchen and bedroom. It was like having a natural deodorizer. Don't forget trees can also have a recreational aspect. How many of us grew up swinging on a swing that was hung from a tree? I spent many childhood days reading my beloved books beneath the shade of a tree. Those were carefree days.

As fall approaches, now is the time to consider how to protect our trees against freezing weather. Fortunately, in this growing zone we do not have a lot of inclement weather, but we have had some surprises in the past few years. Earlier this year, several of my plants bit the dust because of a freeze I didn't prepare for. I had already lost the few fruit trees due to Winter Storm Uri in February 2021. That four day freeze devastated plants and trees in many parts of the U.S. I lost trees and many plants as others gardeners did. The freeze had no mercy. Even though I thought I had protected my trees and plants sufficiently, they died. Some died

more slowly than others. I thought my precious Moro blood orange had been spared but I was wrong. It looked okay at first, but when all of the ice had melted it began oozing sap. I harvested over a 100 oranges from that tree, and I still miss it.



Frost damaged citrus tree Photo courtesy itreeservice.com

Stock up and prepare early for cold weather. If you wait until the last minute, the supplies you need may not be available. During Uri I waited with several customers at a hardware store for a semi truck loaded with

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

UPCOMING EVENTS - OCTOBER 2023

Educational Programs

Oct. 3, First Tuesday 11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Program: *Managing Weeds* by Sherri Harrah from Plants for All Seasons. Meeting in-person at Trini Mendenhall Community Center, 1414 Wirt Road, Houston, TX 77055

Public Gardening Lectures

- Oct. 4,** 11:30 a.m., *Indoor Gardening* by Terri Cole, Weekley Community Center, 8440 Greenhouse Rd., Cypress, TX 77433
- Oct. 4,** 11:00 a.m., *A Few Perennials* by Teresa See, Fonteno Senior Education Center, 6600 Bissonnet St, Houston, TX 77074
- Oct. 4,** 5:30 p.m., *Fall Vegetable Gardening* by Robin Yates, Pasadena Library, Fairmont Branch, 4330 Fairmont Parkway Pasadena, TX 77504
- Oct. 9,** 1:30 p.m., *Fall Vegetable Gardening* by James Holmes, Hockley Community Center, 28515 Old Washington Road Hockley, TX 77447
- Oct. 9,** 4:00 p.m., *Native Plants* by Robin Yates, Hennington-Alief Regional Library, 11903 Bellaire Blvd. Houston, TX 77072
- Oct. 12,** 6:00 p.m., *Herbs* by Chevvy Tang, Heights Neighborhood Library, 1302 Heights Blvd., Houston, TX 77008
- Oct. 16,** 11:00 a.m., *Herbs* by Karen Gerlach, Central Library, 500 McKinney, Houston, TX 77002
- Oct. 18,** 10:00 a.m., *Fall Vegetable Gardening* by Teresa See, Harris County Precinct One Senior Community Center, 9500 Hall Road, Houston, TX 77089
- Oct. 24,** 1:00 p.m., *Bulbs* by Debra Caldwell, Glazier Senior Education Center, 16600 Pine Forest Lane, Houston, TX 77084

Green Thumb Gardening Series

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

Trees and Tree Care

Oct. 9, 10:00 - 11:30 a.m. For the HCC program, register in advance to receive the link: hccs.edu/community-learning-workshops

Oct. 17, 11:00 a.m. - 12 p.m. Simply visit the Harris County Public Library System. No reservation required. Watch on Facebook – facebook.com/harriscountyp/l/live

Ethnic Veggies Workshop

Oct. 7, 9 - 10 a.m. *Ethnic Veggies* by Bennie Matusek. Learn how to successfully grow produce from around the world! Register [HERE](#)

Plant Sale!!!

- Oct. 1-19,** Southeast Fall Online Plant Sale. Order at <https://hcmga.tamu.edu/shop/>
- Oct. 21,** 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. **Plant Sale Pick-up day**, plus in-person shopping of remaining plant inventory, Genoa Friendship Gardens, 1210 Genoa Red Bluff Rd., Houston 77034

Open Garden Day at Genoa Friendship Gardens

Oct. 16, 8:30 - 11 a.m. The garden is open to tour and Master Gardeners will be available to answer gardening questions. And, visit the *Ask a Master Gardener* table for additional gardening information. Plants will be for sale in the greenhouse. 1210 Genoa Red Bluff Rd., Houston, TX 77034

Youth Events

- Oct. 21,** 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Towne Lake Farmers Market on the Boardwalk, 9955 Barker Cypress Rd., Cypress. Planting or craft activity for the children.
- Oct. 21,** 10:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. KRB Kids Day sponsored by Buffalo Bayou Partnership, Tony Marron Park, 808 York St., Houston. We usually have over 100 children come to our table at this large, popular event we share with many other community groups focused on 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](#)



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Protecting Trees in Winter, cont'd from pg. 1

tubular foam pipe insulators that are put around pipes to prevent freezing. I bought the widest diameter (2") they had for my pipes and my trees. The trunk of my Moro blood orange tree was wider than that so I sliced the pipes lengthwise and taped them together the best I could.

There are several things you can do to protect your trees. If they are in pots, move them to a protected area. All of my plants are on the south side of my house and the majority of them are in pots. I can move them next to the house for a little shelter if necessary. Brutal winter weather can cause severe damage to trees. This includes the wind as well. Winter wind can dry out foliage.



Frost damaged citrus tree

Photo by Terri Simon

Snow and ice that accumulates can snap limbs or even knock down an entire tree. Another drawback to consider during the cold snaps-critters. Animals such as deer and rodents will nibble on your trees and plants since food is scarce. Sometimes you will find plants that are labeled as "deer proof". An experienced

woodsman once told me that was not correct. He said if a deer is hungry, they will eat literally anything. Fencing or another type of barrier can help keep them out, but not always. Repellents may also work.

Always water your plants well if a freeze is expected. If the soil is damp it can conserve heat loss better than dry soil. Don't forget to mulch. Three to four inches of mulch is sufficient. Do not use colored or rubber mulch! Some gardeners pack the mulch all around including the trunk. If you mulch around the trunk be sure to move it away from the trunk as soon as possible. Our freezes usually don't last long. In a pinch, use flattened cardboard instead of mulch but remove it as soon as possible.

You can save old bedding to cover trees with. Lightweight quilts and blankets can be used. Second hand stores may have covers at a discounted price. If you use fabric, then you should cover that completely with plastic sheeting so the covers don't get wet. Burlap can be effective. Tree wraps are available at various local gardening stores, as well as online sites. Plant covers are also available, but know the approximate height and width of your tree before ordering. Secure the bottom of the covers with rope, twine or even bungee cords so they don't get wet or blow away. Some gardeners use Christmas lights and entwine them in the tree for additional warmth. Warning: the LED Christmas lights do not generate enough heat to protect your tree. The older traditional lights with the glass oval bulb do generate heat. One gardening couple I know in Pasadena had a large hoop house to store their 200+ plumerias. The plumerias were pulled from their pots in their garden and tossed in the hoop house during the winter. The hoop house was covered with large plastic sheeting during the winter and in the summer, once the plastic sheeting was removed, several of the larger plumerias were repotted and left in place. A small propane heater was used if the temperature dropped too low. A greenhouse is a good investment if your tree is small enough and is in a pot. The garage can work well also.

Whichever method you use to protect your trees and plants, make sure to monitor them and remove them as soon as possible. Since I lost many succulents a long time ago I always watch or listen to the weather forecast. With some preparation and luck, your trees will be around for next spring.



This very large hoop house is covered in plastic for the winter. It is filled with 200+ plumerias stacked like cord wood.

Photo by Terri Simon

One remaining HCMGA Fall Plant Sale!

by Carolyn Boyd, Master Gardener

We thank everyone who came to our Fall West Side sale. The sale was a success and HCMGA appreciates your support! Just *one more 2023 sale to go* - the Southeast sale! Order your selections at <https://hcmga.tamu.edu/shop/> October 1st - 19th. Pickup day and in-person sale of remaining plant inventory is

9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m, October 21st, at Genoa Friendship Gardens, 1210 Genoa Red Bluff Rd., Houston 77034. For more information about the plant sale and our organization, go to <https://hcmga.tamu.edu/plant-sales/> We hope to see you there!

WEST SIDE SALE

September 23rd

9 am to 1 pm

Bear Creek Park
3000 Bear Creek Dr.
Houston, TX 77084

In Person Sales Only

HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS

2023 FALL PLANT SALES

2 Sales - 2 Locations!

**Vegetables, Herbs,
Perennials and Ornamentals**

SOUTHEAST SALE

Genoa Friendship Garden
1210 Genoa Red Bluff
Houston 77034

October 1st - 19th

Online sales:
<https://hcmga.tamu.edu/shop/>

October 21st
Online sales pickup
In-person sale of remaining inventory

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

TEXAS MASTER GARDENER
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Harris County

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION



GREEN THUMB ETHNIC VEGGIES WORKSHOP

OCTOBER 7TH

Learn how to successfully grow produce from around the world!

Each participant will go home with samples from the garden!

Adults with children welcome to bring children free of charge.

	7 OCTOBER	BENNIE MATUSEK MASTER GARDENER
	9am-10am	

	Genoa Friendship Garden
	1210 Genoa Red Bluff Rd.
	Houston, TX 77034

\$15 REGISTER HERE: <https://bit.ly/45BAWVd>

For questions email stephanie.gray@ag.tamu.edu



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NATIVE PLANT OF THE MONTH

Pecan (*Carya illinoensis*)

Article and photos by Robin Yates, Master Gardener

What do the Indigenous Peoples of South Texas have in common with NASA? Read on to find out! All summer long I have been gardening in the shade, due to the oppressive heat, venturing outside only in the early morning. In the last few months, we have considered several different shade tolerant native plants and understory trees. This month, in concert with our Green Thumb Lecture Series, let's talk about what makes the shade we appreciate through our long hot summers. The layer of landscaping that provides the lion's share of our shade is called canopy. Canopy trees are those that grow 50 feet tall and higher, providing shade for at least a 25 feet diameter area. Our state tree, the Pecan, or *Carya illinoensis*, will be our native plant this month.

The Pecan is the largest of the hickories, growing typically 70-100 feet and up to 160 feet, living 150-300 years. It is one of the few plants native to the US that has become agriculturally significant. It grows into a broad and rounded crown with the trunk up to 4 feet in diameter, covered in slate gray, scaly bark. The deciduous leaves are pinnate, compound, 12-20 inches long, with 11-17 leaflets. Flowers are inconspicuous and both sexes are on the same tree. Pecan trees are wind-pollinated and require a neighboring pecan to cross-pollinate, which my wife assures me is not as simple as it sounds. Apparently, the study of pecan cross-pollination becomes more complex and fascinating the more you learn about it. The beloved namesake fruit is an oblong nut that grows in clusters, held in a thin husk that often remains on the tree once the nut has fallen. It is native to much of the US, especially central, east and parts of south Texas. Pecan trees have a high water



Mature pecan tree in Robin's neighborhood

requirement, so they are happiest in bottomlands or stream banks with moist, well-drained soil.

The Pecan is in the genus *Carya* comprising 16 species worldwide, eleven in North America, and eight in Texas. Interestingly, although Illinois is at the fringes of its range, that was the source of nuts brought back to colonists by early traders. Hence the species name *illinoensis*. Pecan nuts are arguably the tastiest and

most versatile fruit of any native tree in North America. They are used in pies, candies, ice cream, cookies and find their way into many salads and main dishes. You will almost always be successful in finding a bag of pecans in our pantry!

The pecan is aptly named the state tree of Texas. The shells of the pecan have been found in sites dating back to 6,000 BCE. The earliest recorded reference is from Cabeza de Vaca (ca. 1530), who noted the Karankawa



Pecan nut cluster visible in circled area

would migrate 100 miles to harvest pecans and live almost exclusively on them for two months each year. Being rich in protein and fat, it

was an essential part of many indigenous people's sustenance, including the Bidai, Caddo, Coahuiltecan, Comanche, Kickapoo, Lipan Apache, and Tonkawa. The Payaya, one of the Coahuiltecan tribes, stored the pecans in underground pits for use throughout the year. The Tonkawa bartered with early Texas settlers, some of

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Pecan, cont'd from pg. 6

whom later brought whole wagon loads to Houston to ship to the northern states.

San Antonio became a center for pecan activity in the late 1800's due to Gustave Antonio Duerler, who decided to stimulate pecan consumption by selling them already shelled. I am very glad for that effort. Have you ever tried to satisfy your hunger by shelling pecans? That can be challenging to say the least, but they are delicious!

One of my favorite sweets is the praline, a sugary confection with pecans that originated in the lower Mississippi region. It was named for the French marshal Cesar du Plessis-Praslin who made almonds more palatable by sugaring them. It eventually became a Tex-Mex staple.

An African-American enslaved gardener named Antoine first grafted pecans to develop the variety known as Centennial, in 1846. Many varieties were since developed for thinner shells and increased yield. Edmond E. Risien, an English-born cabinet maker who settled in San Saba, Texas, held a contest to find the best pecan nut in the area. He bought 320 acres around the winning tree and planted an orchard from its seeds. His original tree, "The Great San Saba Mother Tree," can still be seen today! That tree is the source of more important varieties of pecan than any other in the world.

The pecan has the distinction of being the first fresh snack food eaten in outer space! When NASA sought a tasty, high calorie, cold and heat tolerant alternative to the freeze-dried meal, the pecan won and went aboard Apollo 13 & 14.

In addition to the nut, the pecan is grown for its wood and is utilized in shingles, flooring, paneling, furniture, bats and farm implements. And is there anyone in Texas who hasn't eaten barbecue smoked over pecan wood?

Not only do we enjoy the pecan, but the wildlife has been utilizing it since time immemorial. The nut is devoured by wildlife, including squirrels, raccoons, opossums, blue jays and crows. It is also the larval host plant for the Gray Hairstreak (*Strymon melinus*) butterfly.

We have a beautiful, mature *C. illinoensis* in the northeast corner of the Genoa Friendship Gardens. It is an essential part of the native landscaping demonstration that I am developing. When you visit to tour or volunteer, stop by to visit this wonderful part of Texas history from prehistoric times to the present day, it is a wonderful addition to any yard. How about yours?

Credits:

Remarkable Plants of Texas, Uncommon Accounts of our Common Natives, Matt, Warnock, & Turner

https://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id_plant=CAIL2

Trees of Texas: An Easy Guide to Leaf Identification, Carmine Stahl & Ria Elvaney

<https://tjswweb.tamu.edu/websites/FamousTreesOfTexas/TreeLayout.aspx?pageid=16138>



October Gardening Calendar

by Karen Shook, Master Gardener

October is a prime time for planting woody ornamentals, container grown roses, shrubs, trees, vines, many bulbs, groundcovers, and many types of annuals and perennials.

Remember the Chinese proverb “*The best time to plant a tree was twenty years ago. The second-best time is now*”.

Keep beds mulched to discourage weeds. Watch for and treat pests before they settle in for the winter.

Perennials and Ornamental Grasses

- In September, you probably divided daylilies, calla lilies and irises. If not, divide those in October along with other spring blooming perennials (Shasta daisy, gaillardia, cannas). Move perennials you want in a different spot. Give them a good soaking after moving.
- Plant new perennials and fertilize the new plantings with 1/2 strength soluble fertilizer. Marigolds, chrysanthemums or perhaps Texas Superstar Mari-mum (*Tagetes erecta*) are nice fall choices.
- Spread wildflower seeds. Gently rake them into the soil.

Annuals

- Plant cool weather annuals like snapdragons, pinks, poppies, calendula, stock, dianthus, alyssum. There seem to be many opinions on when to plant pansies and violas. Some say to plant in September, some say October, others say wait until November. Personally, I am going for late October.
- Biennials like poppies, larkspur, bluebonnet seeded now will germinate, spend the winter as a small plant, then in spring grow and bloom. Mix fertilizer into soil before planting.
- Lightly fertilize annual beds to give warm season annuals a boost and get cool season annuals off to a good start.

Bulbs

- Plant bulbs (except tulip and hyacinth which are in your refrigerator waiting for December). A general guide is to plant at depth three times the diameter of the bulb (so a two inch diameter bulb would be planted at a depth of six inches). Mulch and water when you plant.
- Divide spring to early summer blooming bulbs (daffodils, paperwhites, amaryllis, columbine, purple coneflower, etc.).

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

August 2023 set new 25-year records for highest average temperature and lowest rainfall. I have to admit that when it rained last week, I went out and played in the rain to celebrate. Forecasts suggest temperatures will continue slightly higher than average.

Bulbs, cont'd

- In late October dig up and store caladium bulbs for planting next spring.

Roses

- Continue regular fungicide spraying, although you may be able to reduce frequency as we get cooler, drier weather.
- No fertilizer should be used after early October (Guidance is to stop two months before first frost which in Zone 9 is typically November 25 to December 13).

Shrubs

- Fertilize any new shrubs planted in October. Do not fertilize established shrubs.
- Watch for and treat pest problems. Azalea lacebugs, camellia tea scale, and caterpillar activity are some things to watch for.

Natives

- Spread wildflower seeds. Gently rake them into the soil.
- Consider adding columbines. Two native species of columbines are Red (*Aquilegia canadensis*) and Hinckley's (*Aquilegia chrysantha var hinckleyana*).

Lawns

- Watch for brown patch (circular brown areas with yellowing grass at the outer edge of the circle). Milder temperatures and rainy weather encourage brown patch.
- If you didn't winterize in September, it is a task for early October. Pre-emergent herbicides can be applied in October to discourage cool season weeds. Check the label to see what soil temperature is needed for best performance.

Edibles (vegetables, herbs, berries, fruits)

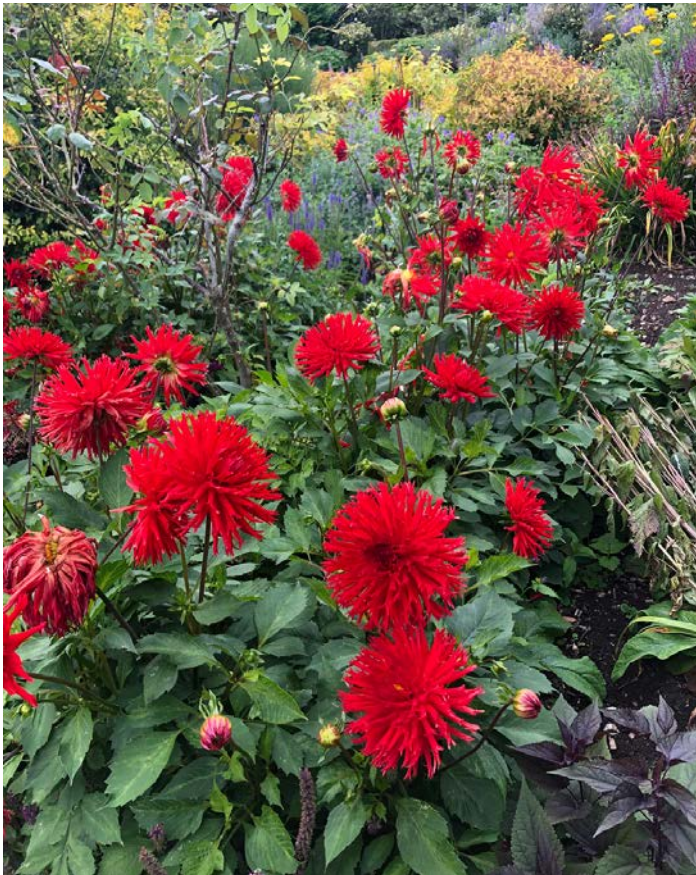
- October is a good month for planting perennial herbs (thyme, marjoram, oregano, rue, etc.)
- See the following link for recommended planting times:
[Harris County Vegetable Planting Guide](#)

Getting Down to Earth

Article and photos by Pam Longley, Master Gardener

News from Genoa Friendship Gardens

I have just returned from Paris, London, and the lovely Cotswolds. The dahlias were in bloom everywhere. We would be just walking along and there would be a resplendent garden tucked away behind a church or museum. Miserden Estates in England was my favorite garden of all and I have included two photos. A memory that will be indelible in my mind was the contrast of the vividly hued flowers against the ancient stone buildings.



Red Dahlias (maybe "Red Fubuki")

I never thought dahlias could be grown in Houston but MG, **Valerie Depew**, told me she is! She gave me the names of two that have been successful for her: "Mignon Single Mix" from Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds and "Bishop's Blood" from Park Seeds

These can be ordered at: <https://www.rareseeds.com> and planting times are October-November and in March.



White and Raspberry Dahlia (maybe "Contraste")

We are so delighted that 2023 intern, **Jeanne Dunn**, has taken on the restoration and beautification of what we have called the Desert or Xeriscape Garden. Her ideas are to cover the entrenched torpedo grass (after weed-eating it down to the ground) with cardboard and then colored gravel. Her plantings will include sedums, sage, lantana, purslane and lavender. I am hoping we can get the metal giraffes painted, too.

cont'd on pg. 10



MG interns Jeanne Dunn and Maggie Mentakis in the Xeriscape garden

Getting Down to Earth - Genoa Friendship Gardens, cont'd from pg. 9



MG intern Mike Brezeale, working on the old greenhouse

Intern, **Mike Brezeale**, has chipped off the worst of the plastic siding on the old greenhouse and has plans to replace the side facing the gardens with a tarp-like fabric until we can rebuild the structure with funds from future sponsors. Sadly, it has long been an eyesore in the background of all the beauty at GFG.

Seen at GFG



Christa Kaiser and Evelyn Dravis in the Rose Garden working on companion plants.



Salt Marsh Mallow in the Butterfly garden

cont'd on pg. 11

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

Article and photos by Jack Goodwin, Master Gardener

Christ the Good Shepherd Garden - Spring, TX

At Christ the Good Shepherd Garden we are experiencing another month of extreme heat and dry conditions. Thankfully our drip irrigation system does a good job of keeping moisture in our 28 raised beds. Some additional watering is required on new plantings and our compost operations. Our overall vegetable production has been good considering the lack of rain and extreme heat. Red and yellow onions, tomatoes, yellow squash, zucchini, and various peppers have been harvested. Several beds of sweet potato are in progress for a hopefully good crop.

The current newer planting has been okra and cucumbers. Our okra is mature enough to harvest for the past few weeks.



Baxter Swenson is shown harvesting the okra.



Our new cucumber beds are being discussed by Dale Hudson and Jane Weatherford, two of our vegetable experts.

At CGS garden composting is an ongoing year round operation producing valuable nutrients for our vegetable beds. Shown here is John Zdansky our compost expert turning one of the silos filled with chopped leaves and grass clippings. Temperatures of the silos are taken regularly for determining when to rotate. This compost provides rich nutrients for our vegetable beds.

cont'd on pg. 12



John Zdansky manning the CGS compost area.

Getting Down to Earth - Christ the Good Shepherd Garden, cont'd from pg. 11

Let me tell you about Gorizia rosemary, a new Texas Superstar plant recognized by Texas A&M AgriLife as a plant well suited for Texas gardens and stems suitable for barbeque skewers. It is a selected variety from a town in Gorizia, Italy. Gorizia rosemary is known for its profusion of blue flowers making it a pollinator plant that attracts bees and butterflies. The upward growing stems can be used as barbeque skewers.

I wanted to test the barbeque skewer claim so I purchased a Gorizia rosemary plant and potted it in a large container. When it matured enough I cut two stems, stripped the leaves off for a basting recipe and skewered vegetables for cooking with lamb chops. I chopped the leaves from the plant, blended with salt and pepper plus olive oil to make a basting for the lamb chops. Vegetables included are green and red bell peppers, yellow



Gorizia rosemary

Texas A&M AgriLife photo by Mike Arnold

squash, mushrooms, and cherry tomatoes. The lamb chops are basted on both sides with mixture. Bring to room temperature before cooking. I like to grill the chops on lower heat to cook through the meat. The vegetables can be placed on the grill after the meat is about half done cooking. The finished product was fascinating and a great example of combining gardening and cooking for fun eating.



Lamb chops and veggie kabobs

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.

We provide programs to community organizations, plant sales, fairs, farmer's markets, and other events.

Growing with plants and Nature had the pleasure of welcoming Master Gardener students and Interns to our team meeting in September. This gave us an opportunity to talk about the range of upcoming activities that include plant sales, Towne Lake Farmer's Market, and a large community event, the KBR Kids Day organized by the Buffalo Bayou Partnership for October 21st. As in prior years, we will represent AgriLife Extension Services and Master Gardeners with hands on gardening experiences for the children. These events will give an opportunity for our new and continuing members to get to know and learn from each other.

Our Master Gardener Coordinator, Stephanie Gray, also joined our meeting to describe opportunities to work with the LGEG (Learn, Grow, Eat, Go) extension staff to add a gardening experience to their programs for Head Start locations around the country.



Master Gardener Intern, Malgorzata Dziel-ski, with her children at Towne Lake Farmer's Market. The children enjoyed planting while Malgorzata assisted at the AAMG table.



Successful plantings by happy children at the Towne Lake Farmer's Market

Also, at Towne Lake Farmer's Market, Master Gardener, Nerandra Cordova, prepared a companion planting lesson demonstrating that Marigolds, an excellent companion plant, can be planted near lettuce to prevent the invasion of slugs and bugs that can harm the lettuce.



‘BUG’ OF THE MONTH

Southern Pine Bark Beetle

Article by Debra Caldwell, Advanced Master Gardener: Entomology

The severe drought and high heat we experienced this summer stressed many trees and made them susceptible to insects. The Southern Pine Bark Beetle (SPB) *Dendroctonus frontalis* is one insect that takes advantage of weakened trees. Three species of engraver beetles (the six spined ips, *Ips calligraphus*, eastern fives pined ips, *Ips grandicollis*, and small southern pine engraver, *Ips avulsus* may cause similar symptoms. For a comprehensive guide to Wood Boring Insects go to the Texas AgriLife extension fact sheet: <https://extensionentomology.tamu.edu/publications/wood-boring-insects-of-trees-and-shrubs/>

How do you know if a Southern Pine Bark Beetle is ‘bugging’ your pine tree? You may notice small holes in the bark and reddish-

brown dust at the base of the tree or in crevices in the bark. Trees may ooze sap and the needles turn yellow or reddish brown as the trees dry from lack of water reaching them. White pitch tubes that look like pieces of popcorn may form at the entrance hole. The key characteristic of an infestation by southern pine bark beetles is S-shaped tunnels under the bark.



Photo by Ronald F. Billings, Texas Forest Service

Adult southern pine bark beetles are about the size of a grain of rice at 1/8 inch long. The chunky little beetles are dark brown to black in color. Beetles emerge from an infested tree, fly to another tree and burrow into the bark where they create their typical S-shaped tunnels. They seem to like company because they release pheromones that attract other southern pine bark beetles.

Soon, the hoard of beetles overwhelms the tree’s ability to resist the infestation and it succumbs. <https://texasinsects.tamu.edu/southern-pine-bark-beetle/>



Southern Pine Bark Beetle

Photo by Erich G. Vallery, USDA Forest Service - SRS-4552, Bugwood.org licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 License

The beetles have a holometabolous life cycle (egg, larva, pupa, adult). Females lay eggs in the tunnels which hatch into white grubs (larvae) with a reddish-brown head. Over a period of two to six weeks, the larvae go through several instar stages until they pupate. In Texas, the beetles can produce seven to nine generations in one year!

The damage caused by beetles tunneling under the bark disrupts the flow of nutrients through the vascular tissues of the tree and usually kills the tree in two to four months. Sadly, once the tree is infested, spraying is usually ineffective. The tree should be removed. Insecticides are sometimes used to prevent infestation of surrounding trees.

Before taking any action, you want to correctly identify the problem with a tree and if there is a pest, you want to accurately identify it. You may want to contact an arborist to help in identifying the species of pests and recommend the next steps. You can find a certified arborist near you by using “Find an Arborist” on the Trees Are Good website. <http://www.treesaregood.org/>

What can you do to protect your pines from pests? Keep them healthy by mulching and watering in extremely dry weather. Dense stands of trees are more susceptible to infestation so thinning a group of trees may also help protect them.

Green Thumb 2023 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 9 – <i>Soil and Food Web</i> | June 12 – <i>Pollinator Gardening</i> |
| February 13 – <i>Spring Vegetable Gardening</i> | July 10 – <i>Fall Vegetable Gardening</i> |
| March 20 – <i>Benefits of Growing Native Plants</i> | August 14 – <i>Exploring Ethnic Vegetables</i> |
| April 10 – <i>Tips for Great Lawns</i> | September 11 – <i>Growing Roses in Texas</i> |
| May 8 – <i>Gardening with Less Water</i> | October 9 – <i>Trees and Tree Care</i> |

Third Tuesday, 11:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.
Harris County Public Library Facebook Live
No reservation required – facebook.com/harriscountypub/events/
Third Tuesday of each month

- | | |
|---|--|
| January 17 – <i>Soil and Food Web</i> | June 20 – <i>Pollinator Gardening</i> |
| February 21 – <i>Spring Vegetable Gardening</i> | July 18 – <i>Fall Vegetable Gardening</i> |
| March 21 – <i>Benefits of Growing Native Plants</i> | August 15 – <i>Exploring Ethnic Vegetables</i> |
| April 18 – <i>Tips for Great Lawns</i> | September 19 – <i>Growing Roses in Texas</i> |
| May 16 – <i>Gardening with Less Water</i> | October 17 – <i>Trees and Tree Care</i> |



Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service provides equal opportunities in its programs and employment to all persons, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, or gender identity. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas cooperating. Individuals with disabilities, who require an auxiliary aid, service or accommodation in order to participate in any Extension activities, are encouraged to contact the Harris County Extension Office at 713-274-0950 for assistance five working days prior to the activity.





Ask A Master Gardener Online

by the AAMGO Committee

Q: Our HOA wants us to “raise the canopy” on our oak tree in the front yard. We were planning on doing this in the Fall when it is cooler. Is this a valid concern or should we go ahead and trim/ prune it now? There is no question that it needs to be done. It’s just a question of when. Thank you.

A: Thank you very much for your email. I have some articles that will give you great information about tree pruning, as well as caring for your trees in our current hot, dry conditions:

[*Earth-Kind Landscaping, Follow Proper Pruning Techniques*](#) - probably our best publication on how and when to prune everything.

[*Drought and Trees - Explained*](#)

If at all possible, it’s a good idea to be gentle with our trees in the heat of the summer and make sure they are receiving proper, deep watering at least once every two to four weeks in the absence of sufficient rainfall. As the information in the articles indicates, under normal conditions, trees can be lightly pruned at any time of the year, but the better, healthier practice is to save pruning for the tree’s dormant period in the late fall into early spring. Given our current weather conditions, we do not recommend doing any pruning now, other than removing damaged or dead branches or limbs.

We also recommend that trees be evaluated and pruned by certified, professional arborists so that pruning can be performed properly for your trees and as safely as possible. If you don’t already have a certified arborist, we recommend using the Find An Arborist search feature at [*TreesAreGood.org*](#). We also recommend talking to several arborists, checking their references, and getting all details and proposals for tree pruning and care in writing. Best wishes!

Q: These pictures are of a leaf of a Mexican Sycamore, top and bottom. The problem on these leaves are at a pretty advanced stage. It usually starts as soon as it gets hot. Please help in identifying and fixing the problem. Thank you!!



Top of Mexican sycamore leaf



Underside of Mexican sycamore leaf

A: Thank you for sending photos of the leaves and giving the species of the trees that are having problems. Your Mexican sycamore has sycamore lace bugs. [*Featured Creatures*](#), from Univ. of Florida, is a publication with photos that look just like your little guys. The dark spots on the underside of the leaf are frass (waste) from the insects. Unfortunately, they can be difficult and costly to eliminate. [*Sycamore Lace Bug*](#), from NC State, is an article that states, “Most of the time, treating sycamores is unnecessary and unwarranted. Despite the visual impact of severe damage, the impact on tree health by occasional defoliation on otherwise healthy sycamore is minimal.” Many plants are suffering from pests now because of the extreme heat and lack of water. The stressed plants become hosts for a variety of insects. Your sycamore may look ‘sick’ for a while and drop leaves, but it should recover.

I hope your tree will begin to perk up with cooler temperatures and rain. Please contact us again if you have additional questions.

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If you are a Harris County MG, interested in volunteering for AAMG Online and want to be trained, please contact coordinator.harrishort@gmail.com.

Ask a Master Gardener – In Person Activities

by Margie DiGiacomo, Master Gardener

Our Farmer’s Market table hosting activities have resumed. Prospective volunteers and interns: if you see that an event is full and it is one that you would really like to attend, please reach out to Margie DiGiacomo so that we can add you to the volunteer

list. Please remember that we want to provide many opportunities for you to earn your hours and interact with the public!

The SignUp is available here: <https://signup.com/group/7369887112200440118>

The full AAMG schedule for October

- Sat., Oct. 7** **Mercer Botanic Gardens**, 22306 Aldine Westfield Rd., Humble, 77338 – 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.
 Urban Harvest, 2752 Buffalo Speedway, Houston, 77027 – 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.
- Fri., Oct. 13** **Garden Club of Houston Bulb Sale**, The Church of St. John the Divine, 2450 River Oaks Blvd, Houston, 77019 – 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- Sat., Oct. 14** **Tomball Farmers Market**, 205 West Main St., Tomball, 77375 – 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.
 Garden Club of Houston Bulb Sale, The Church of St. John the Divine, 2450 River Oaks Blvd, Houston, 77019 – 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
 Mercer Gardens Annual Pollinator Festival and Plant Sale, 22306 Aldine Westfield Rd., Humble, 77338 – 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- Mon., Oct. 16** **GFG Open Garden Day**, 1210 Genoa Red Bluff Rd., Houston 77034 – 8:30 to 11:30 a.m.
- Thurs., Oct. 19** **Westchase Farmer’s Market**, 10503 Westheimer Rd., Houston, 77042 – 3 to 7 p.m.
- Sat., Oct. 21** **Harris County Master Gardeners Southeast Sale Plant Pick-up day**, *plus* in-person shopping of remaining plant inventory at Genoa Friendship Gardens, 1210 Genoa Red Bluff Rd., Houston, 77034 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
 Christ the Good Shepherd Annual Festival, 18511 Klein Church Road, Spring, 77379 – 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.
 Mercer Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine Westfield Rd., Humble, 77338 – 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.
 Towne Lake Farmers Market, 9955 Barker Cypress Rd., Cypress, 77433 – 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
- Sat., Oct. 28** **Memorial Villages Farmers Market**, 10840 Beinhorn Rd., Houston, 77024 – 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Recipe of the Month

Chocolate Stuffed Baked Apples

Article and photos by Jo Ann Stevenson, Master Gardener

What foods come to your mind when you think of Fall? Pumpkin? Maple syrup? Butternut squash? Cranberries? Sweet potatoes? Parsnips? Personally, I like all of those, but I like apples most of all.

Apples are the most widely consumed fruit in the world and are very versatile. They can be eaten raw, tossed in salads, pressed into cider or juice, baked into pies, dipped into peanut butter, preserved into jellies, jams or apple butter, and baked whole for dessert. I'm sure there are numerous other uses as well.

The health benefits of apples are almost as many as the number of apple varieties. That is an exaggeration, of course, because I read there are more than 7,000 cultivars of apples. Apples may lower your chance of developing cancer, diabetes,

and heart disease. Research says apples may also help you lose weight while improving your gut and brain health.”¹

I remember baked apples filled with cinnamon, brown sugar and butter, but these are packed with coconut, lightly salted almonds, and rich dark chocolate. Imagine eating these with a scoop of vanilla ice cream on top – yum! We used Honeycrisp apples, but you can use a sweeter or tarter variety of your choice. I found this recipe at <https://www.maebells.com/chocolate-stuffed-baked-apples/>.

We can grow certain varieties of apple trees in Harris County, and the Master Gardeners offer them for sale in January/February. Be on the lookout for our upcoming fruit tree sales: <https://hcmga.tamu.edu/plant-sales/>

In a season of pumpkin spice everything, be an apple instead – a chocolate stuffed baked apple!

Chocolate Stuffed Baked Apples

4 servings

Ingredients

- 4 Red Delicious Apples, cored -- but the bottom left intact
- 1/4 cup coconut
- 1/4 cup mini chocolate chips (dark or your choice)
- 1/4 cup lightly salted almonds, roughly chopped
- 1/4 cup fat free sweetened and condensed milk

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Lightly spray a cast iron skillet or baking dish with non-stick spray.
3. Core your apples so the inside is hollow but the bottom is intact.
4. In a small mixing bowl, combine your filling ingredients and carefully spoon into the apples.
5. Place the stuffed apples into the skillet and pour 1/2 cup water in the skillet.
6. Bake 45 minutes.
7. Serve warm.

Nutrition Facts

Amount per serving

Calories: 364 Fat: 10.8g Cholesterol: 0mg Sodium: 45.4mg
Carbohydrates: 63.1g Net Carbohydrates: 54.8g Fiber: 8.3g
Sugar: 50.1g Protein: 3.7g



Whole baked apple



Cut baked apple

¹ <https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/10-health-benefits-of-apples>. For more nutrition info about apples, go to <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/food-features/apples/>.

MG of the Month - *Liz Pozzi*

by Karen Breneman, Master Gardener

Congratulations! Liz was born and raised in Victoria, Texas. Growing up on a farm, I learned about vegetable gardening with the resulting canning and freezing



Liz Pozzi

of vegetables at an early age. My mother had a green thumb and we always had beautiful flowers around our home. I wanted my own garden so my mother set aside a small space in the garden for my garden – which I used to grow flowers.

I graduated from The University of Texas at Austin with a BBA degree in Accounting.

I began my accounting career in Houston and became a CPA. I worked in the accounting department of corporations in the Houston area including as a Division Controller for Pennzoil and Controller for Service Inc. – a local printing company.

My volunteer work while I was working was in my professional organizations. I served as President of the local chapter of the American Society of Women Accountants. I served on the national Board of Directors for the American Woman’s Society of CPAs in various positions including National President. I also volunteered on committees for the Houston CPA Society, a chapter of the Texas Society of CPAs.

Upon retirement, the top item on my “TO DO” list was to become a Master Gardener – so I could pursue my interest in

plants and gardening and have the time to learn more and share this knowledge with others. I was accepted into the Volunteer Training Class for Spring 2011 and graduated in 2012.

I began my volunteering by working in the various gardens at Bear Creek while taking the class – including the butterfly garden, herb garden and vegetable garden – as well as the plant sales. After completing the class, I became involved with the Cylinder Gardening committee – including organizing the process from seed ordering to distribution to the schools. Also worked with the teachers and students at some of the schools. I have most recently been involved with the Growing with Plants and Nature Committee. Both committees involved projects for and with children – helping them learn about gardening and planting - getting hands in the soil.

I live in the Katy area and have been involved in volunteer activities in the community and in my church. I just recently completed a 3 year term on the Advisory School Council as the Finance Chair for the elementary school that is a part of my church in Katy. I continue to be involved in various volunteer activities in my church.

“My primary objective in becoming a Master Gardener was to learn more about plants and gardening. I have been able to share this knowledge with others and hopefully instill in them – especially the children – the joys of gardening. The added benefit is the opportunity to meet and work with some truly wonderful people who also share an interest in gardening and helping others.”

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!

Genoa Friendship Gardens



The Flower Trial Garden



The Water Garden



The Greenhouse

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

The Genoa Friendship Gardens

located at

1210 Genoa Red Bluff Road
Houston, Texas 77034

Weekly Garden Hours: Open all year round, Monday and Wednesday mornings,
9 a.m.-11a.m. (weather permitting).

We welcome professional organizations, schools, churches, and individuals tours of the
garden! If interested in a tour, please email the HCMGA Program Coordinator at
coordinator.harrishort@gmail.com

Open Garden Days

are on the 3rd Monday of the month, March *through* October, 8:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Admission to the Exhibit Gardens is free, and register at the Welcome Table
to receive additional monthly notices for children and family events.

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

*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.

McGovern Centennial Gardens at Hermann Park

1500 Hermann Drive

Houston, Texas 77004

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.

Home Grown Podcast

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. The podcast can also be found at the following site:

www.listennotes.com/podcasts/

home-grown-podcast-paul-OM7PKqityX/

Log on to listen to a recent interview with Master Gardener volunteer Rick Castagno. He shares his experiences at Houston demonstration gardens, and a few stories of what's been grown in the vegetable beds.

<https://bit.ly/3w4cUAR>



HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS

2023 FALL PLANT SALES

WEST SIDE SALE

September 23rd

9 am to 1 pm

Bear Creek Park
3000 Bear Creek Dr.
Houston, TX 77084

In Person Sales Only

SOUTHEAST SALE

Genoa Friendship Garden
1210 Genoa Red Bluff
Houston 77034

October 1st - 19th

Online sales:
<https://hcmga.tamu.edu/shop/>

October 21st
Online sales pickup
In-person sale of
remaining inventory

2 Sales - 2 Locations!

Vegetables, Herbs,
Perennials and Ornamentals

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



Hurricane Season is here!

Our hurricane season is June 1st through 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>.

For Harris County Master Gardeners Only!



GFG Workdays

Monday & Wednesdays

8:45 a.m. – Noon

1210 Genoa Red Bluff Road, Houston TX

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 garden leads will be on hand to guide you through the tasks.

For some of you who consider this a distance you can't commit to on a regular basis, you can drop in any time. You will see old and new friends!

Please join us at our GFG Garden Workdays!



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>

Our monthly newsletters are jam-packed with information. The *Urban Dirt* is now indexed by various gardening categories. Go to <https://hcmga.tamu.edu/urban-dirt-index/> to dig deeper into past *Urban Dirt* issues.

If you would like to receive new editions of the *Urban Dirt* newsletter each month, please add your name to the mailing list [HERE!](#)



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

Toni Anderson, Nancy Ayers, Robin Brady, Pat Daniel, Bev DeMoss, Mike Donnelly, Terry Garner, Celeste Germany, Becky Guillory, Bruce Heiburg, Dale Hudson, Bruce Johnson, Liem Nguyen, Christine Smith-Byerly, Stan Stevenson, and Marsha VanHorn

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

English Spanish/Espanol
Mandarin

TEXAS A&M AGRI LIFE EXTENSION

TEXAS A&M AGRI LIFE

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. You will avoid the need to track down planting guides and other gardening resources if you subscribe, and you can easily share information with others. This is 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 work in a variety of gardens. They include a large vegetable production garden, Texas AgriLife research plant trial beds, wildflower area, native plant landscape, Perennial and EarthKind gardens and the greenhouse. Feel free to drop in to earn service hours!

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