

Urban Dirt

Gardening Events and Information for Texans

Victory Gardens – Winning Wars with Medicinal Dirt

by Cary Lam, Master Gardener

The ability to grow something from nothing is a skill that can win wars and feed the hungry. But something else happened in these gardens. The gardeners who were pulling the weeds, hoeing the rows and mounding the potatoes felt different. They felt good because they were fighting the war, sustaining themselves—and they felt good because dirt acts as a proven mood elevator.

In 1917, Woodrow Wilson declared “Food will win the war.” He was talking about WWI. America was feeding most of the world. It was the same story a generation later. For the average American in World War II, the Victory Garden was a practical way to contribute to the war effort. Some 20 million Victory Gardens were planted, and by 1943, these little plots produced 40 percent of all vegetables consumed in the US. It’s estimated that 8-9 million tons of food were grown.



The Need for Victory Gardens

Wartime needs stretched agricultural production. The United States not only had to feed its own civilian and military population, but many of the Allies relied on America’s bread basket. In addition, U-boats sank hundreds of food-laden ships bound for Britain.

Canned fruits and vegetables were rationed starting 1943, so civilians were encouraged to grow their own produce to supplement their rations. The use of fewer canned goods would decrease the use of precious tin and reduce the strain on the heavily taxed rail and road systems.

The Victory Garden Program

In December 1941, shortly after the United States entered World War II, the US Agriculture

Secretary began promoting Victory Gardens. The Department of Agriculture produced pamphlets to guide urban and suburban

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

UPCOMING EVENTS - NOVEMBER 2023

Educational Programs

Nov. 7, First Tuesday 11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Program: *Trees and Tree Care* by Alexa Haass, Harris County Master Gardener. Meeting in-person at Genoa Friendship Gardens, Education Bldg, 1210 Genoa Red Bluff Rd., Houston TX 77034

Public Gardening Lectures

Nov. 2, 2:00 p.m., *Shade Gardening* by Debra Caldwell, Glazier Senior Education Center, 16600 Pine Forest Lane, Houston 77084

Nov. 8, 6:00 p.m., *Native Plants* by Robin Yates, Looscan Neighborhood Library, 2510 Willowick, Houston 77027

Nov. 10, 5:30 p.m., *Organic Gardening* by Jean Fefer, Weekley Community Center, 8440 Greenhouse Rd., Cypress 77433

Nov. 14, 11:00 a.m., *Rainwater Harvesting* by Teresa See, Central Library, 500 McKinney, Houston 77002

Nov. 29, 11:00 a.m., *Fall (Cool Season) Vegetable Gardening* by Chevvy Tang, Robinson-Westchase Neighborhood Library, 3223 Wilcrest, Houston 7704

AgriLife Extension Events

Nov. 11, 9 a.m. -12 p.m., *Hydroponic Gardening*. Free virtual program. Register at <https://bit.ly/3MaZkG9>. Hosted by Texas A&M AgriLife Center at Dallas and Harris County AgriLife Extension

Nov. 30, 11 a.m. -12 p.m., *Living Holiday Tree Alternatives*. by Brandi Keller, Harris County Extension Agent - Horticulture, Central Library, 500 McKinney, Houston 77002

DECEMBER 2023

December Educational Event

Dec. 8, 8:30 a.m. -3:30 p.m., *Women In Agriculture Conference*, 2023 Fundraising Campaign for Urban Harvest, Inc., University Houston Downtown – Science and Technology Building. Register at: <https://give.urbanharvest.org/checkout/28862>

AgriLife Extension Events

Dec.12, 11 a.m., *Pre-Freeze and Post-Freeze Landscape Care* by Brandi Keller, Harris County Extension Agent - Horticulture, Central Library, 500 McKinney, Houston 77002

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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Victory Gardens, *cont'd from pg. 1*

gardeners; magazines and newspapers published helpful articles; and patriotic posters urged participation.

Neighborhood and community committees were formed with veteran gardeners guiding newcomers. These committees also helped with distribution of surplus food and sharing of equipment. Many garden tools were made of steel, which was in short supply, so sharing between families was encouraged.

Where Were Gardens Grown?

Victory Gardens sprang up on farms, in backyards, and on city rooftops. Even some window boxes were converted from flowers to vegetables. Communal gardens were planted in parks and vacant lots and baseball fields. War material manufacturing plants often planted gardens on their properties for use in company cafeterias, and schoolyard gardens provided fresh vegetables for school lunches.

DIY Victory Garden

The average small-town or city-dweller knew little about gardening. Pamphlets provided sample planting schedules and garden plans to show the newcomer how to grow enough to feed his family for a year without wasting seed or food. These pamphlets described how to choose the garden site, prepare the soil, fertilize, plant properly, weed, and harvest. The Department of Agriculture and the War Production Board prepared a special Victory Garden fertilizer for home use.

Food Preservation

The ideal Victory Garden produced fresh vegetables in season and plenty to be preserved for winter. Women's magazines published articles about how to can, store, dry, pickle, and

freeze the bounty. People were encouraged to share their surplus with others in their neighborhoods.

Is Dirt Like Medicine?

Nature's "antidepressant" is found in a dirt-bound bacteria, and it can lead to feelings of calm, happiness and relaxation. Twelve years ago, the psychological effects of *Mycobacterium vaccae* were discovered by a doctor treating lung-cancer patients. *M. vaccae* thrives in typical backyard garden environments or anywhere soil is enriched with organic matter. This tiny micro-organism is a living creature that acts like a drug once it enters the human body. It has been shown to boost the levels of serotonin and norepinephrine circulating in the systems of humans and mice. The good news, you don't have to feel the effect by eating it, just simply breathe in the smell of good dirt or compost. It functions like supplements to boost your mood. Who knew?

Victory Gardens in World War II were more than therapeutic and a way to increase morale. They produced a significant amount of healthy food, allowing agricultural produce to be used for the military and the Allies, and reducing the use of tin and transportation. Despite rationing, the average American ate better during the war than before. The Victory Garden was part of the reason. Feeling blue on a rainy day—go smell some good dirt!

Sources:

Lingeman, Richard R. *Don't You Know There's a War on?* The American Home Front 1941-1945. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1970.

Snyder, Andy. "The Secret Way America Won WWII." Manward Press. February, 2019.

Sundan, Sarah. "The Victory Garden in WWII." 2017. <http://sonomamg.ucanr.edu>

Kagan, Kennedy. TheAtlantic.com. "How To Get High On Soil." Jan. 2017. <https://www.theatlantic.com.health/archive/2012/01/how-to-get-high-on-soil/251935>.

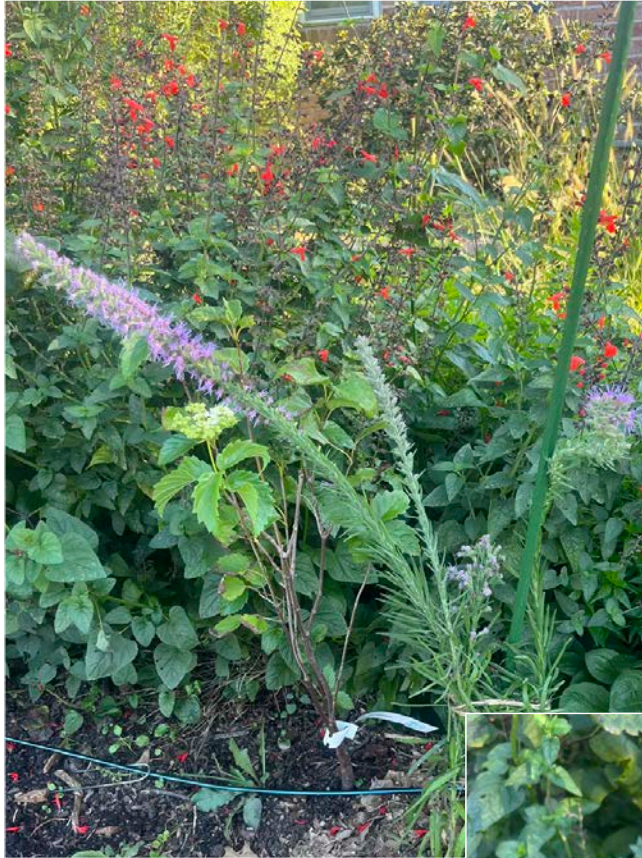
NATIVE PLANT OF THE MONTH

Prairie Blazingstar (*Liatris pycnostachya*)

Article and photos by Robin Yates, Master Gardener

Once we begin to consider the effects of our plant choices on the local wildlife, we open ourselves to a host of other questions, and a treasure trove of wonderful possibilities. Many people enter the world of home gardening through what I call the butterfly porthole. With their gorgeous colors and delicate flight patterns, butterflies win our hearts and make us smile. The monarch butterfly, *Danaus plexippus*, is the poster child for and most popular of the Lepidoptera, or scale-winged insects. We learn of the fall migration of the Monarch, and we want to support the super generation, who fly thousands of miles without stopping to reproduce. So, what can we plant that will provide the nectar the adult butterflies will need? If we go to our

local nursery, we will often find flowers that come from other parts of the world or other areas of the Americas, not native to the Texas Gulf Coast. If you want to provide the resources that the local butterflies have survived with for thousands of years, one needs to consider that the Texas Gulf Coast used to be coastal tallgrass prairie, and find plants that are native to our ecosystem, bloom in the fall, and can survive our extreme weather conditions. In past *Urban Dirt* articles we have learned about several such options for our landscapes—Seaside Goldenrod (*Urban Dirt*, September 2022, page 27), Fall obedient Plant (*Urban Dirt*, October 2022, page 31), Snow-On-the-Prairie (*Urban Dirt*, November 2022, page 11) are dependable native fall bloomers.



Liatris pycnostachya in Robin and Nancy's yard

Prairie Blazingstar, *Liatris pycnostachya*, is another native wildflower that fills the needs of the local pollinators and adds a burst of soft purple color to our fall flower beds. *Liatris* is a perennial herb in the Asteraceae (Aster) family, growing 2-5+ feet tall. I have found that it does best if grown alongside other plants for support, or it may trail along the ground. You can see the stake I have provided the newly planted *Liatris* in our front yard. The flower is on the top half of the long stalk, a cluster of densely crowded pink to purple flower heads from June through December. *Liatris* performs best in full sun, yet it will grow in part shade or dappled sun. It grows in most well drained soils with medium water requirements.

We are finding that monoculture, planting the same species repetitively throughout a neighborhood, is harmful to the ecosystem in many ways. Biodiversity, achieved by planting a variety of native species in your own yard can prove beneficial to the resiliency of your landscape to weather extremes and pests. It

will also provide nectar and shelter for the pollinators who are on the decline worldwide. By experimenting with 'new to me' native plants, we can make a difference, one yard at a time. For more information on this topic, see Doug Tallamay's website regarding Homegrown National Park- <https://homegrown-nationalpark.org/>

I find *Liatris* an easy to grow, beautiful, pollinator friendly, garden addition to most any yard. I hope you will consider it for yours!



Flower spike of *Liatris pycnostachya*

Resources:

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

HERB OF THE MONTH

Sage (*Salvia officinalis*)

by Karen McGowan, Master Gardener

The single herb most commonly associated specifically with the holidays might be this month's featured, sage. Sage's velvety texture and soothing color tone make it an excellent edible to pair with the season's ornamental garden colors.



Sage

An aromatic, woody perennial in the mint (*Lamiaceae*) family, sage is native to the shores of the northern Mediterranean, where it has been used for thousands of years both for medicinal and culinary purposes. Over the years, "sage" has come to mean "wise" or "a wise or learned person." The plant's scientific name, *Salvia*, means "to be in good health", "to save", or "salvation" while *officinalis* is an old reference to an herb store, pharmacy, or drugstore.

There are a multitude of different cultivars of sage, differing in leaf size, plant habit and leaf color. The purple or golden varieties make fantastic ornamental houseplants. Smaller plants than the green or gray varieties, the flavor of the purple and golden sage plants' leaves is just as good. Some of the more commonly offered varieties include:

- **Golden sage 'Aurea'** – has chartreuse-yellow leaves enhanced by dark green areas around the veins. Only hardy to zone 6.
- **Berggarten'** – was discovered growing at the Berggarten Mansion in Germany. It has larger-than-average, gray-blue silvery, round leaves and a bushy habit that stays full down to the base of the stems. It is mildew resistant. Hardy to zone 5.
- **'Icterina'** – has golden variegated leaves and is used mainly as an ornamental.

- **'Compacta'** – has smaller leaves and more compact habit than regular sage, growing only 10 inches high, but with the same sage flavor. It is excellent for small areas, rockeries, and borders. It is propagated by cuttings only; seeds are unavailable.
- **'Holt's Mammoth'** – is similar to the standard variety but the leaves are larger.
- **Purple sage ('Purpurea' or 'Purpurascens')** – has purple leaves that are strongly flavored and grows 18 inches tall. It is also nice as an ornamental to complement yellow blossoms in the garden. Not as winter hardy as common sage (only to zone 6).
- **'Tricolor'** – has green leaves edged in white and with rose streaks. It can be grown as a houseplant and is not as hardy as common sage (only to zone 6).

Sage can be successfully grown here in Texas year-round, placed in well-drained soil in full sun or partial shade, bearing in mind that the plant does need some shelter from hot afternoon sun, in the warmest months.

Once sage is established, it usually does well on rainfall alone. Well-drained soil is key; some growers even suggest planting sage on a small mound. The plant is susceptible to nematodes and root rot.

Since I am a landscape designer as well as a chef, have a mind toward functional, edible beauty. Hands down, my favorite go-to edible plant to combine with holiday color is sage. The bright pops of color available just now in, for example, seasonal cyclamen, pairs for an absolute design win with sage. And, being able to hand harvest directly into holiday dishes lends flavor, texture, and aroma sings of the season. Enjoy!



Sage

References:

- <https://hort.extension.wisc.edu/articles/sage-salvia-officinalis/#:~:text=Sage is an attractive culinary,garden sage, or garden sage>
- <https://www.britannica.com/plant/sage-plant>
- <https://extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.html?number=B1170&title=herbs-in-southern-gardens>



November Gardening Calendar

by Karen Shook, Master Gardener

“And all at once, summer collapsed into fall” - Oscar Wilde

Like most of you, I am truly grateful for the beautiful fall weather we are enjoying as I write this note in mid-October. But remember, November comes with a chance of frost so be sure to have your frost supplies ready. Historically, first frost in Zone 8 is November 7 to November 28. First frost in Zone 9 is November 25 to December 13. Keep beds mulched to discourage weeds. Watch for and treat pests before they settle in for the winter.

Perennials and Ornamental Grasses

- Finish dividing spring blooming perennials. Most perennials perform best if divided every couple of years.
- Thin and transplant volunteer seedlings.
- As chrysanthemums and other perennials finish blooming, cut the stalks to the ground.
- You can still seed wildflowers in zones 8b to 9 in early November. Rake the soil, scatter seeds, lightly rake in and water.

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 Sept, some say October, others say you may want to wait until November. Personally, I needed the color boost so it was mid-October for me. Fertilize and mulch.

Bulbs

- Finish planting spring bulbs (except tulips and hyacinths... wait until December for those). Note tulip bulbs should be refrigerated for at least three weeks. While bulbs are often planted in clusters or drifts, I sometime plant a bulb or two individually. I love the surprise each year when they bloom.
- Cut back foliage that has browned. Mark the location of dormant summer bulbs. It is also a good idea to mark where you plant spring bloomers so you don't accidentally dig them up or damage them digging in the vicinity.

Gather those fallen leaves (yours and your neighbors if they don't use) and use them as mulch or as the “brown” in your compost. I admit to knowing which neighbors have weed free (or at least low weed) yards.

If you are planning design changes, now is a good time to dig and prepare planting beds to be planted in the spring. Remember soil preparation is critical to garden success.

Shrubs and Trees

- It is a good time to plant or move woody ornamentals including shrubs, roses, trees and woody vines.
- Avoid severe pruning. You don't want to signal a plant to set out new growth as the weather is cooling.
- Celebrate Texas Arbor Day on Saturday, November 4 by planting a tree.

Lawns

- Gather fallen leaves so they don't shade your lawn. Or using a mulching mower, mulch them down into the lawn to help cover the soil surface and deter cool season weeds. Or gather them for mulch or composting.
- Apply preemergent herbicide in early November if you didn't do in October.

Vines and Groundcovers

- You can plant hardy perennial groundcovers and vines. They may not show growth, but will establish roots for better growth in spring.
- Mulch tender vines covering the roots and lower stems.

Edibles (vegetables, herbs, berries, fruits)

- 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

'BUG' OF THE MONTH

Crape Myrtle Bark Scale

Article and photos by Debra Caldwell, Advanced Master Gardener: Entomology

Our beloved crape myrtles have been hit by a double whammy of cold winter temperatures and a very hot dry summer. Because they are so stressed, they are susceptible to an invader called the crape myrtle bark scale, *Acanthococcus* (= *Eriococcus*) *lagerstroemiae*.



Crape Myrtle bark scale and black sooty mold.

These sap sucking insects are native to Asia but first appeared in Dallas, Texas in 2004 and now have reached us in Harris County. Like aphids, they excrete honeydew, a sugary waste, that provides food for a type of fungus called black sooty mold. The bark and leaves of the crape myrtle turn black as the mold spreads. The white scale insects are easy to see on the black background. Females are larger and oval shaped, while the males are smaller and longer. When you squash them, they 'bleed' pink liquid.

Adult females cover their bodies and cluster of eggs with a mat of white threads. They don't have wings and are immobile. CMBS males have wings and fly to mate with females. After mating, the females lay eggs which hatch into immature larvae. They are small, pink and are referred to as 'crawlers' because they move. Unfortunately, the insects have found other hosts in our landscapes including pomegranates and persimmons, fig and apple trees, boxwood, hackberry, St John's wort, and beautyberry.

What should you do if you find scale on your crape myrtles? Maybe nothing! Although the scale and the black sooty mold are very unattractive, your crape myrtle probably won't be harmed. The vigor of the tree and the number of flowers might be reduced, but the tree will survive.



Crape myrtle bark scale.

You can try physical control by washing the trunk and limbs with a soft brush and soapy water. This method has the advantage of removing crawlers and adults as well as cleaning off the black sooty mold. Natural predators, such as lady beetles gobble up the crape myrtle scale insects. One study showed that they can remove as much as 75% of the CMBS.

For heavy infestation, an application of a soil drench of a systemic pesticide can be done in spring when the crawlers are at their peak beginning in March, when buds break, through early May. Imidacloprid or Dinotefuran are recommended by AgriLife Extension. Carefully read and follow directions before using any pesticide. Also be aware that these pesticides can be harmful to bees and other beneficial insects.

As always, your best line of defense is to reduce stress on the plants by watering, mulching, and fertilizing properly and providing good air circulation. If you find CMBS on your crape myrtles or other plants, you can report them to the Crape myrtle Bark Scale Team at <https://stopcmbs.com/report/>.

References:

<https://extensionentomology.tamu.edu/insects/crapemyrtle-bark-scale/>

<https://citybugs.tamu.edu/files/2010/05/EHT-049-Crape-myrtle-bark-scale.pdf>

Getting Down to Earth

Article and photos by Pam Longley, Master Gardener

News from Genoa Friendship Gardens

I would like to spotlight our Butterfly Garden Lead, **Linda Pearson**, as she just returned from a very far-flung adventure with her husband, **Greg**, to East Africa for three weeks. The following is her memory of the Serengeti:

“The picture of these two cheetahs was taken with my phone in the Central Serengeti. The camp we stayed at was a two-hour drive over bumpy dirt roads from the airstrip. We had spent two nights at this camp and were leaving, disappointed because we had not seen the cheetahs. Forty-five minutes into the drive, our guide, Paul, spotted these two sisters on an old log. They were surveying the savannah for prey. He told us they would move to the tallest kopje, a large granite outcropping on the plains “over there”. He had our driver move just below the kopje and we waited for ten minutes. Sure enough, the two sisters came over to the highest point on the savannah to have a look. We were in an excellent spot to take pictures! These cheetahs posed for us for fifteen minutes and we only left because we had a plane to catch. That is a memory I will keep forever.”



Two sister cheetahs on the Serengeti

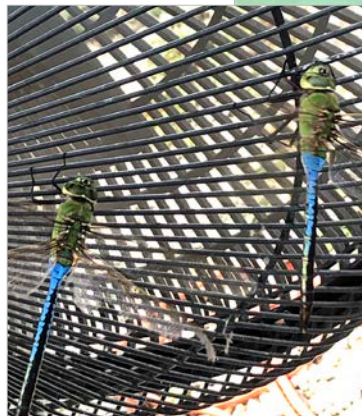
Photo by Linda Pearson

The vegetable production team will be planting a trial of carrots and strawberries soon in tandem with Dale Hudson’s group at Christ the Good Shepherd Garden. Here are the varieties of carrots that the Extension has selected: *Carnival Blend, Shin Kuroda, Red Cored Chantenay, Cosmic Purple, Danvers, Little Ringer, Atomic Red and Tonda di Parigi.*

We have seen lots of dragonflies since the rain and cooler weather made the garden more hospitable, and they are trusting! Check out these photos.



▲ Mary Stokman wears a dragonfly corsage.



◀ Two dragonflies cooling themselves on a fan.



We welcomed Noah Ingram, a 2023 MG intern, as the newest volunteer at GFG. He is majoring in Horticulture Leadership at Texas A&M and works part-time for a local non-profit.

Noah Ingram

cont'd on pg. 9

Getting Down to Earth, *cont'd from pg. 8*

Article and photos by Dale Hudson, Master Gardener

Christ the Good Shepherd Garden - Spring, TX

Welcome to Fall, the second most loved gardening season of the year. This is the time when it's out with the old and in with the new.

When I say old, I mean things like sweet potatoes that have been occupying eight of our raised beds for the past 125 days. Sweet potatoes are one of the most anticipated deliveries from our garden to the neighborhood food pantries, and last year we had a disappointing crop. After a favorable growing season this summer (sweet potatoes love hot weather) we were excited to see the latest results. The news was good, but not great. Yields were much improved over last year but still shy of our best years in the past. We are searching for an explanation, but this year we either got huge potatoes or small potatoes with nothing much in between. We are asking around, but so far it is a head-scratcher.

Considering the South Texas heat dome that tested the A/C capacity of both our homes and automobiles, we, together with our drip irrigation system kept the CGS garden looking good and delivering the ol' summer favorites, okra and peppers and eggplant.

When we say 'in with the new' let's talk first about our recently announced HCGMA vegetable trials. We had a pause in



A portion of the sweet potato crop racked up and drying

our trial activities earlier this year but for the Fall/Winter season we will be looking at three things. Mid-October we kicked off a carrot trial including four varieties; Danvers 126 and Red Cored Chantenay are familiar to most vegetable



Two trial beds of carrots, planted and flagged for future data collection

gardeners but Atomic Red and Carnival Blend will be fun to watch for a burst of color not common in carrots.

Later this Fall we will be kicking off a strawberry trial and lettuce trial, both starting from transplants provided by commercial growers or from our own greenhouses. Full details on these trials will be shared in our next newsletter along with an update on our typical Fall/Winter planting activities at CGS including brassicas, onions, and even some hardy green leafy things, and turnips.



An experiment with Roselle (*Hibiscus sabdariffa*) this summer was a surprising success!

First the flower, then the tea, then the seeds for next year. Love it!



The 2023 Green Thumb Gardening Series lectures have concluded. Below is the 2024 schedule to assist in your gardening plans for the coming year.

Green Thumb 2024 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: <https://hcc.idloom.events/gardening-series/register>

Second Monday of each month

- | | |
|---|---|
| January 8 – <i>Intro to Aquaponics</i> | June 10 – <i>Seed Saving and Starting</i> |
| February 12 – <i>Success with Spring Vegetables</i> | July 8 – <i>Fall’s Best Vegetable Garden</i> |
| March 18 – <i>Edible Landscaping</i> | August 12 – <i>Growing Bulbs in Texas</i> |
| April 8 – <i>Gardening in Containers</i> | September 9 – <i>Heirloom and Pass-along Plants</i> |
| May 13 – <i>Identifying “Good and Bad” Bugs</i> | October 14 – <i>Gardening for Extreme Weather</i> |

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

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

Third Tuesday of each month

- | | |
|---|--|
| January 16 – <i>Intro to Aquaponics</i> | June 18 – <i>Seed Saving and Starting</i> |
| February 20 – <i>Success with Spring Vegetables</i> | July 16 – <i>Fall’s Best Vegetable Garden</i> |
| March 19 – <i>Edible Landscaping</i> | August 20 – <i>Growing Bulbs in Texas</i> |
| April 16 – <i>Gardening in Containers</i> | September 17 – <i>Heirloom and Pass-along Plants</i> |
| May 21 – <i>Identifying “Good and Bad” Bugs</i> | October 15 – <i>Gardening for Extreme Weather</i> |



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Ask A Master Gardener Online

by the AAMGO Committee

Q: Can an Acres Home pear tree pollinate a Shinseki Asian pear tree?

A: Thank you for sending in your interesting question about pear pollination. Those two varieties of pears that you mentioned are very well suited to our area.

In theory there is no reason that an Acres Home (European variety) pear tree could not pollinate a Shinseki Asian pear, but in practice it is not common. There is a slight differential in the bloom time that is usually enough of an inhibition to cross pollination between these two varieties. Consequently, Acres Homes is not found to be a listed pollinator for Shinseki. In years in which bloom time is impacted by weather and the two bloom somewhat simultaneously, they could cross-pollinate if within a reasonable proximity to each other.

Of course, Shinseki pear trees do not require a pollinator at all, as they are self-fertile. However, as with many self-fertile fruit trees, they will likely benefit from another pollinator by setting more fruit and bearing a heavier crop. The most commonly recommended European pear to pollinate Shinseki is Twentieth Century.

This is explained in this guide to [PEAR TREES](#) from Urban Harvest as well as these articles from the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service:

[Home Fruit Production: Pears](#)

[Asian Pear - Archives](#)

I hope that you find this information helpful, and that you have a wonderful pear harvest in the future.

Q: I was gone for 3 weeks and returned to find a dead spot in my Oak tree. Since I was gone, my sprinkler ran as normal, so the watering stayed the same. My other two Oak trees in the same area, although a different kind don't show this problem.

A: Thank you for sending in your question. I can imagine that you were disappointed to see that dead spot considering that your tree made it through most of the summer without



Dead spot on Oak tree is visible at top of photo.

showing stress. However, there is every reason to believe that this one spot will not hamper the overall health of your tree.

Thousands of trees in our area have suffered due to the extreme heat and drought that we have experienced. While it is helpful that you have had your sprinkler system running, that alone cannot provide the deep soaking that a tree needs during such exceptional weather. In this article for *Houston Public Media*, Brazos County Extension Agent Skip Richter talks about the drought and how to help trees survive it: [Prolonged Summer Heat Wave Taking a Toll on Houston Trees](#). Also, this article from *AgriLife Today*, [Drought and Trees Explained](#), discusses the impact of drought stress on a tree and how to prevent it in the future.

At this point we have made it through the worst of the summer, and we have also been receiving a good amount of rain recently. It would be a good idea to check the ground around your tree to make sure that the water is reaching a soil depth

cont'd on pg.12

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 November

- Fri., Nov. 3** **Hedwig Village Arbor Day Celebration**, Hedwig Park, 930 Corbindale Road Houston, 77024
10 a.m. to 11 a.m. 8 – 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.
- Sat., Nov. 4** **Mercer Botanic Gardens**, 22306 Aldine Westfield Rd., Humble, 77338 – 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.
Urban Harvest Farmers Market, 2752 Buffalo Speedway, Houston, 77027 – 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.
Bridgeland Harvest Festival, 10519 Fry Rd, Cypress 77433 – 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Thurs., Nov. 9** **Exxon Sustainability Event**, 22777 Springwoods Village Parkway, Spring, 77389 – 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- Sat., Nov. 11** **Tomball Farmers Market**, 205 West Main St., Tomball, 77375 – 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- Thurs., Nov. 16** **Westchase Farmer's Market**, 10503 Westheimer Rd., Houston, 77042 – 3 to 7 p.m.
- Sat., Nov. 18** **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., Nov. 25** **Memorial Villages Farmers Market**, 10840 Beinhorn Rd., Houston, 77024 – 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Ask a Master Gardener Online, *cont'd from pg. 11*

that will help your tree. To do this, take a long screwdriver and insert it into the ground somewhere underneath the tree canopy. If it goes into the ground easily then your soil is receiving adequate moisture. If you encounter resistance, then you may have to use supplemental water at some point. Since more rain is predicted, keep an eye on your yard and try this test once the rains have passed through.

Another important tip for your tree's health is to make sure that you have a good 2"-4" layer of mulch spread around the bottom of the tree. When you consider that trees grow well in a forest, the forest floor is littered with fallen leaves that serve as a mulch. You can replicate this condition to a certain degree by using a good, organic mulch. While the mulch retains moisture,

over time the mulch will break down and enrich the soil. Take care when mulching your trees that you do not pile it up at the base of the tree. You will want to see the natural flare of the tree trunk at the very bottom. Piling too much mulch around the tree can lead to rot and insect damage.

Mulching Your Tree from the Texas A&M Forest Service will help you with this.

If for any reason the dead spot in your tree expands, or if you would simply like an assessment from a certified arborist, you can use this site, [TreesAreGood](https://www.treesaregood.com), to locate an arborist in your area.

I hope that your tree will stay healthy in the future.

Big or Small, I Visit Them All

Article and photos by Terri Simon, Master Gardener

What do Tony Avent and Tonya Richardson have in common? They both love plants and they both sell plants. Tony and his wife Anita own Plant Delights Nursery (PDN) and the Juniper Level Botanic Garden in Raleigh, North Carolina. Tonya Richardson sells plants on a much smaller scale from her home. Tonya sells her plants through her Facebook page Junk and Plants. Within a week's time, I visited both of them.



Tony Avent and tour group
Photo courtesy of gcvirginia.org



Tonya Richardson

Ten years ago, I flew to North Carolina for a plant propagation workshop at Plant Delights Nursery. It's one of my favorites. The instructor was Aaron Selby. The workshop was wonderful and a few months ago I signed up for fall plant propagation workshop taught by Aaron. He is an excellent instructor and the time passed quickly. The workshop was well worth the money I took a short walk about after the workshop. PDN has numerous greenhouses scattered throughout the property. The landscaping on the property is phenomenal. One of my favorites is a small grotto that has a waterfall. It beckons. There is also a section I referred to as agave alley. It has gorgeous, rare agaves and is stunning.



Aaron Selby leading a 2013 workshop

Aaron Selby leading a 2013 workshop

Tony Avent is a horticulturist, a plant breeder, a voracious writer, an educator and a lecturer. His parents gave him his first greenhouse when he was young. Tony travels around the world to look for more perennial plants. Unique, exotic plants are often featured at the nursery. Plant Delights is known for its hostas, but it also carries a variety of other plants. The website has more than 1500 perennial plants, including many native plants. The site has won numerous awards and offers tours and workshops.



Waterfall at Plant Delights Nursery



Gigantic flowering agave

In 1986, Tony established the Juniper Level Botanic Garden. It sits on 28 acres, and is a non-profit garden set up for research and education purposes. It has a display garden with more than 28,000 plants. The garden is open for tours but only at specific times. If possible, see if you can arrange a tour the next time you visit Raleigh, North Carolina. It's certainly worth it and the staff is very helpful.

At the other end of the spectrum is Tonya Richardson, a small plant dealer who sells plants from her home. Tonya is a retired school teacher. She retired from Alvin independent school district. While there, she worked in different areas but finished her career as a fifth grade school teacher. She lives in Friendswood.

Tonya loves gardening and her approach is slightly different. She loves quirky, eclectic looks when setting up her plants. Tonya will upcycle nearly anything and make it a plant container. She uses many sources to get her plant pots and has been known

cont'd on pg. 14

Big or Small, I Visit Them All, cont'd from pg. 13

to drive around on trash day. She also goes to Round Top to get things from the vendors there. Got an old garden hose? Put it out by the street and don't be surprised if Tonya drives by to claim it. She makes wreaths out of them. Need to get rid of some bowling balls? Tonya will claim them. Once she spotted a rusty bed spring someone had discarded. Tonya loves rust. The bed spring was too heavy so she returned later that night with her husband to claim it. It had giant springs



A real garden bed!

and Tonya lined them to use as planters. She has an arrangement of telephone pole insulators in her yard. Tonya loves nature. She enjoys experimenting with her plants and favors unusual compositions. Her favorite plants are crown of thorns (in our area they bloom nearly year round), hoyas and philodendrons. Wandering through her yard is a treat for the soul as well as the eyes.

Tonya's mother was a gardener, but Tonya's main influence was her grandmother. She followed her around when she was about seven and that's when her love of gardening was "seeded." I asked her what she loved about gardening and she replied that she considered it an art and that one of her favorite things was pulling different things together to make compositions and experimenting with her plants. She has spent about 18 years developing and planning her garden. She continues to work on it though. When Covid came, Tonya retired as a teacher and now spends much of her time working in her garden and selling plants.



Vignette featuring Crown of thorns

At first, Tonya sold her plants by "porch drop offs." Then she realized she wanted more. She wanted to meet and mingle with other gardeners, she wanted others to learn more about gardening; she needed more gardeners in her life. Her hairdresser, Lauren Belter, works at Salon Renew in Kemah. It was Lauren's idea for Tonya to use Facebook



Adorable fence panel

to increase her footprint in the gardening world. Lauren helped Tonya set up her Facebook page, *Junk and Plants*. Her page now has 1.7K members and it continues to grow. Tonya also posts tutorials on her page. She has two open houses a year at her home,



Tonya's pool plants

one in spring and one in fall. You can also contact her through Facebook to buy plants yearlong and arrange for a tour of her back yard. While wandering through her

yard at her recent open house I bought several plants and I picked up some great landscaping ideas as well. Tonya is also available for lectures and her home was included in the Friendswood garden tours. Her most recent presentation was for the League City Garden Club on October 11th. The topic was *Gardening with Whimsy, Art and Upcycling*. Her talk was excellent.

Tony Avent and Tonya Richardson are kindred souls. They are at opposite ends of the plant selling spectrum, but they brighten our world and increase our knowledge through their love of plants. Visiting both of them was a special "delight".

A Visit to the North Carolina State Fair

Article and photos by Terri Simon, Master Gardener

On a recent trip to Raleigh, North Carolina, I visited the North Carolina State Fair. There, I stumbled across the Flower & Garden Show. Aside from a quick trip to the Antique Farm Machinery exhibit, I spent the bulk of my time touring the beautiful flower and garden exhibits. I'm not

sure why I love looking at old tractors, but that part was exciting. The flower and garden exhibit was a treat for my eyes and the scent from the roses was a gift for my nose. The rose exhibit was fantastic.



Sheila's Perfume

All roses were supplied by the Witherspoon Rose

Culture company. I found my favorite rose of all time, the Double Delight. It has beautiful colors and an enticing scent.

Established in 1853 at a different location in Raleigh, the fair moved to its current location in 1928. It is open for ten days and will attract approximately one million visitors during that time. There are 344 acres at that location. I caught a free shuttle in and, as a senior citizen, it was five dollars for entry. Cheap thrills. Raleigh Master Gardeners had a booth and I purchased three pairs of garden gloves. The price was five dollars a pair, what a deal! I



Beautiful color presentation



Humongous prize winning dahlia



Winning Dish Garden



Mum's the Word

have not been to a state fair before. Next year I hope to have an entry at either the Harris county fair or perhaps the Brazoria county fair. I feel certain I could submit a fairy garden and win a top prize. I saw cut blooms that were entered and would like to try that category also. If you can stay until 9:45 p.m., there is a fireworks display. Unfortunately, my knees didn't allow me to stay that long. Join me as I take you on a stroll through the North Carolina State Fair Flower and Garden Show.



Innovative trailing plants backdrop

Recipe of the Month

Fresh Plum (or Pear) Kuchen

Article and photos by Jo Ann Stevenson, Master Gardener

We enjoy fresh plums here in Texas during the summer. I learned during our recent cooking group with an Oktoberfest theme that plums are in season in Germany only during the fall. So, we made this German type of cake (“kuchen” in German) with fresh plums. Because pears are in season right now in our part of the world, we made a second cake with pears. Both were

delicious. You could also make it with apples for another seasonal taste, and I imagine it would be equally delicious made with peaches or berries in the summertime.

This recipe is originally from the Taste of Home magazine and can be found at <https://www.tasteofhome.com/recipes/fresh-plum-kuchen/>. I hope you enjoy it as much as we did.

Fresh Plum (or Pear) Kuchen

12 servings

Ingredients

- 1/4 cup butter, softened
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 2 large eggs, room temperature
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/4 cup 2% milk
- 1 teaspoon grated lemon zest
- 2 cups sliced fresh plums (about 4 medium)
- 1/2 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- Confectioners' sugar, optional

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a small bowl, cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy, 5-7 minutes. Beat in eggs. Combine flour and baking powder; add to the creamed mixture alternately with milk, beating well after each addition. Add lemon zest. Pour into a greased 10-in. springform pan. Arrange plums on top; gently press into batter. Sprinkle with brown sugar and cinnamon.
2. Place pan on a baking sheet. Bake until top is golden and a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean, 40-50 minutes. Cool for 10 minutes. Run a knife around edge of pan; remove rim. Cool on a wire rack. If desired, dust with confectioners' sugar just before serving.

Nutrition Facts

Amount per serving (1 piece)

Calories: 185 Fat: 5g (3g saturated fat), Cholesterol: 46mg
Sodium: 89mg Carbohydrates: 33g Net Carbohydrates: 54.8g
Fiber: 1g Sugar: 24g Protein: 3g



Plum Kuchen



Pear Kuchen

Oops! I took both photos before sprinkling with powdered sugar and they were devoured before I could get a better photo.

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.

Fall/Winter Lecture Series with
TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION
AND THE HARRIS COUNTY

MASTER GARDENERS



NATIVE PLANTS

Henington-Alief Regional Library
Monday, October 9, 2023 | 4 PM-5 PM
SPEAKER: ROBIN YATES

Looscan Neighborhood Library
Wednesday, November 8, 2023 | 6 PM-7 PM
SPEAKER: ROBIN YATES

HERBS

Heights Neighborhood Library
Thursday, October 12, 2023 | 4:30 PM-5:30 PM
SPEAKER: CHEVY TANG

Central Library
Monday, October 16, 2023 | 1 PM-2 PM
SPEAKER: KAREN GERLACH

CONTAINER GARDENING

Hillendahl Neighborhood Library
Monday, October 23, 2023 | 11 AM-12 PM
SPEAKER: STEPHANIE GRAY, MASTER GARDENER COORDINATOR

McGovern-Stella Link Regional Library
Saturday, December 9, 2023 | 11 AM-12 PM
SPEAKER: TERESA SEE

PRE-FREEZE AND POST-FREEZE LANDSCAPE CARE

Central Library
Thursday, November 9, 2023 | 11 AM-12 PM
SPEAKER: BRANDI KELLER,
COUNTY EXTENSION AGENT - HORTICULTURE

RAINWATER HARVESTING

Central Library
Tuesday, November 14, 2023 | 11 AM-12 PM
SPEAKER: TERESA SEE

FALL (COOL SEASON) VEGETABLE GARDENING

Robinson-Westchase Neighborhood Library
Wednesday, November 29, 2023 | 11 AM-12 PM
SPEAKER: CHEVY TANG

LIVING HOLIDAY TREE ALTERNATIVES

Central Library
Thursday, November 30, 2023 | 11 AM-12 PM
SPEAKER: BRANDI KELLER,
COUNTY EXTENSION AGENT - HORTICULTURE



Lectures are available in person with livestream available via [facebook.com/houstonlibrary](https://www.facebook.com/houstonlibrary). Garage Parking will be free of charge during lectures at Central Library.



Linking YOU to the World | www.houstonlibrary.org



Fall/Winter Lecture Series with
TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION
AND THE HARRIS COUNTY

MASTER GARDENERS

CONTAINER GARDENING

You don't have to have a large yard—or any yard—to garden. Whether you want to grow vegetables or ornamentals, learn how to best grow them in containers.

FALL (COOL SEASON) VEGETABLE GARDENING

Learn how to get your Fall Vegetable Garden started. See how easy it is to grow your own tasty fall vegetables and cut down on that grocery list.

HERBS

Learn the best practices on how, when, where and why to grow herbs in the Houston area, including how to use herbs.

LIVING HOLIDAY TREE ALTERNATIVES

Learn about traditional cut holiday trees vs. alternative living tree options. Plantable tree varieties will be covered, along with care and planting guidance.

NATIVE PLANTS

We will discuss the many benefits of putting native plants in our gardens and yards, where we can find them, and how we can make a positive impact on our own ecosystem!

PRE-FREEZE AND POST-FREEZE LANDSCAPE CARE

Learn how to prepare your landscaping for a freeze and what steps to take afterwards.

RAINWATER HARVESTING

Rain is the best water for your gardens. Learn to capture some of it to help you save money and be prepared during droughts.

Lectures are available in person with livestream available via [facebook.com/houstonlibrary](https://www.facebook.com/houstonlibrary).
Garage Parking will be free of charge during lectures at Central Library.

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.



Linking YOU to the World | www.houstonlibrary.org



*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.



Topics include:
System types
Suitable crops
System costs
Production estimates
System maintenance
Q&A

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

HYDROPONIC GARDENING

Join us for a VIRTUAL program designed for beginners interested in learning more about hydroponics or starting a new business. Existing hydroponic producers will also benefit and have the opportunity to share future programming needs.

TEXAS A&M
AGRILIFE
EXTENSION

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2023

9:00 A.M. TO 12:00 P.M.

FREE VIRTUAL PROGRAM

REGISTER AT

<https://bit.ly/3MaZkG9>

**Hosted by Texas A&M AgriLife Center at Dallas
and Harris County AgriLife Extension**



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..

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-OM7PKqiyX/

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>



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!



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!





JOIN US DECEMBER 8, 2023 FOR OUR 2ND ANNUAL WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE CONFERENCE

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON DOWNTOWN



A **FEW** of the Focus Topics this year:

- Medicinal Herbs
- The Fresh Cut Flowers Business
- Urban Beekeeping
- Therapeutic Gardening
- What to Consider Before Purchasing Land
- Small Acreage Goat Farming

To Register Please Scan the QR Code

OR

Visit www.urbanharvest.org




The First
10 People to Register
Will Receive a
SPECIAL
GIFT!



Limited scholarships are available.

For more information, please contact

Sharon Stinson at education@urbanharvest.org

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 *November* include the following. Wish them **HAPPY BIRTHDAY** when you see them!

Wendy Barr, Deepali Cykowski, Nancy Graml, Toni Lawrence, Bea Lindzon, Patricia Metzinger, Fatma Ozgel, Aida Pita, Rebecca Spurlock and Chevy Tang,

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