

Urban Dirt

Gardening Events and Information for Harris County



GREEN BELL PEPPERS VS RED, ORANGE, & YELLOW BELL PEPPERS

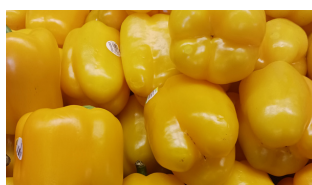
Article and photos by Terri Simon, Master Gardener



Green Bell Peppers



Red Bell Peppers



Yellow Bell Peppers

Bell peppers are one of the most common vegetables grown by commercial and home gardeners. Their versatility and appeal are hard to resist. Bell peppers can be sautéed, roasted, fried, stuffed, pickled, steamed, smoked, canned and dried. More colorful varieties are also available. Even mini bell peppers are available in different colors. Whether you grow them from seed or seedlings, bell peppers have a variety of uses and are tasty as well.

How long have bell peppers been around? Experts estimate between 6,000-9,000 years. Their place of origin is believed to be South and Central America. Pepper fossils have been found in Ecuador that are believed to date back 6,100 years. Columbus introduced hot peppers to Europe in 1493. Originally, he was supposed to be looking for another source for black pepper. In earlier times, black pepper was valued and could be used as currency in some instances along with salt. Portuguese and Spanish explorers introduced bell peppers to Europe and the rest of the world in the 16th century. Bell peppers belong to the *Capsicum annuum* species, but unlike hot peppers which are in the same group, they lack capsaicin. Capsaicin is the compound present in chili peppers that gives them their heat. Bell peppers are in the nightshade family.

continued on page 4

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Upcoming Events 2
- HCMGA Plant Sales 3
- Growing with Plants and Nature 5
- Native Plant Spotlight6
- Building a New Bed for Our Natives ...7
- Recipe Spotlight 11
- Bug Spotlight 12
- Getting Down to Earth 14
- Master Gardener Spotlight 17
- Master Gardeners in the City 18
- Herb Spotlight 19
- Ask a Master Gardener Events 21
- Genoa Friendship Gardens 22
- Gardening Calendar 23
- Green Thumb Gardening Series 24
- Ask a Master Gardener Online 25
- Houston Public Library Garden Series ... 27
- Planting Guide.....28

Upcoming EVENTS

Houston Public Library Lecture Series Green Thumb Gardening Series
 Genoa Friendship Gardens Educational Programs Plant Sales
 Public Gardening Lectures

Mar 7 10:30am Organic Gardening by Harris County Master Gardeners Moody Neighborhood Library 9525 Irvington Blvd Houston Available in person and online at <https://www.facebook.com/houstonlibrary/>

Mar 11 12:30pm Spring Vegetable Gardening by Harris County Master Gardeners Fonteno Senior Education Center 6600 Bissonnet St Houston

Mar 12 11am -12:30pm First Tuesday Meeting Lecture: Harris County Horticulture Agents Give Program Review Trini Mendenhall Community Center 1414 Wirt Rd Houston

Mar 13 10am Spring Vegetable Gardening by Harris County Master Gardeners Tracy Gee Community Center 3599 Westcenter Dr Houston

Mar 18 8:30-11:00am Open Garden Day at Genoa Friendship Gardens 1210 Genoa Red Bluff Rd Houston

Mar 18 10-11:30am Edible Landscaping HCC @Home Gardening Series Register in advance to receive the link: <https://hcc.idloom.events/gardening-series/register>

Mar 19 11am-12pm Edible Landscaping Harris County Public Library Facebook Live <https://www.facebook.com/harriscountyp/|events/>

Mar 20 10:30am Earth-Kind Landscaping by Harris County Master Gardeners Ring Neighborhood Library 8835 Long Point Rd Houston Available in person and online at <https://www.facebook.com/houstonlibrary/>

Mar 21 10am Plant Propagation by Harris County Master Gardeners Glazier Senior Education Center 16600 Pine Forest Ln Houston

Mar 26 10am Spring Vegetable Gardening by Harris County Master Gardeners Steve Radack Community Center 18650 Clay Rd Houston

Mar 26 10am Growing Roses in Our Climate by Harris County Master Gardeners Fonteno Senior Education Center 6600 Bissonnet St Houston

Mar 28 10:30am Growing Tomatoes by Harris County Master Gardeners Johnson Neighborhood Library 3517 Reed Rd Houston Available in person and online at <https://www.facebook.com/houstonlibrary/>

 **Apr 1-18 Southeast Perennials & Peppers Sale** <https://hcmga.tamu.edu/shop/>

Apr 4 10:30am Growing Peppers in Houston by Harris County Master Gardeners Tracy Gee Community Center 3599 Westcenter Dr Houston

Apr 8 10-11:30am Gardening in Containers HCC @Home Gardening Series Register in advance to receive the link: <https://hcc.idloom.events/gardening-series/register>

Apr 15 8:30-11:00am Open Garden Day at Genoa Friendship Gardens 1210 Genoa Red Bluff Rd Houston

Apr 16 11am Plant Propagation by Harris County Master Gardeners Fonteno Senior Education Center 6600 Bissonnet St Houston

Apr 16 11am-12pm Gardening in Containers Harris County Public Library Facebook Live <https://www.facebook.com/harriscountyp/|events/>

Apr 18 11am Growing Peppers in Houston by Harris County Master Gardeners Glazier Senior Education Center 16600 Pine Forest Ln Houston

 **Apr 20 9am to 1pm Southeast Perennials & Peppers Sale Online Order Pickup Day and In-person Shopping** at Genoa Friendship Gardens 1210 Genoa Red Bluff Rd Houston

Apr 23 10am Growing Peppers in Houston by Harris County Master Gardeners Steve Radack Community Center 18650 Clay Rd Houston

Apr 26 11:30am Growing Herbs in Houston by Harris County Master Gardeners Fonteno Senior Education Center 6600 Bissonnet St Houston

 **Apr 27 9am to 1pm Plant Sale Westside Summer Sale: Vegetables & Flowers!** Alabonson Park 9650 N. Houston Rosslyn Rd Houston



Texas AgriLife Extension Service
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**Harris County Master Gardeners
SE Perennial & Pepper Sale**

*April 1st - 18th
Order online at:
hcmga.tamu.edu/shop/*

*April 20th
9 am to 1 pm
In-person Sale & Online
Order Pickup*

**order online for the best selection*

**Genoa Friendship Garden
1210 Genoa Red Bluff
Houston 77034**

**Harris County Master Gardeners
Westside Plant Sale**

Vegetables, Herbs & Flowers



Saturday April 27th, 9am- 1pm

**Alabonson Park
9650 N Houston Rosslyn Road, Houston**



Visit Harris County Master Gardeners
Facebook page for event details!
www.facebook.com/HarrisCountyMasterGardeners



<https://hcmga.tamu.edu/>



info@hc-mga.org

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

Green Bell Peppers vs Red, Orange, & Yellow Bell Peppers

Continued from page 1



Bell Pepper Plants

Several years ago, I quit buying green bell peppers. Their taste is more pungent than red and yellow bell peppers, but the green ones gave me digestive problems. I was beginning to crave more colorful food and I soon realized the red and yellow bell peppers didn't cause stomach issues. The red bell peppers were sweeter, and the yellow bell peppers were somewhere between the green and the red. Later, I learned the red and yellow bell peppers had other desirable advantages as well.

Green bell peppers are cheaper than other colored peppers. The reason is because they appear first on the plants. It takes fewer resources to get them to market. Less labor, less water, less fertilizing. They also last longer. On pepper plants, at first the peppers are green, then they mature and become yellow, then orange and finally red as they progress through the maturation stages. Yellow, orange and red peppers have a shorter shelf life. They are more expensive since it takes more time and money to get them to market. There's a trade-off, though. The longer the pepper stays on the plant, the greater its nutritional value.

All bell peppers have vitamins A, B6, C, E, and K1 along with folate (vitamin B9) and potassium. Did you know bell peppers have more vitamin C than oranges? Remember, though, vitamin C is destroyed by heat. Eat bell peppers raw to get the highest nutritional value. Red bell peppers have double the amount of vitamin C, more vitamin A and 11 times more beta-carotene than green bell peppers. They are also rich in antioxidants, but the levels can change depending on the maturity level of the bell pepper. Green bell peppers have a larger amount of lutein and zeaxanthin. Yellow bell peppers have an increased amount of violaxanthin and the antioxidant capsanthin gives red bell peppers their bright red color. Overall, red bell peppers pack the most nutrients for your buck.

If you already grow bell peppers, after reading this article you may want to let them mature a little longer. If you haven't grown them before, give them a chance. They pack a wallop of nutrients and are worth a try. This issue also includes a recipe for the mini bell peppers. I hope you like it.

References:

Bell Peppers & Differences Between Color Varieties (<https://extension.msstate.edu/farm-and-family/audio/2019/bellpeppers-differences-between-color-varieties#:~:text=Red%20bell%20peppers%20are%20the%20sweetest%20of%20the%20bell%20pepper,less%20mature%20and%20unripe%20forms>)

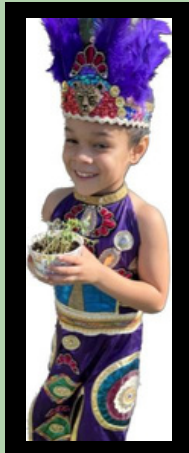
The History of Bell Peppers (<https://www.kitchenproject.com/history/Peppers/Bell-Peppers/index.htm>)

Growing with Plants and Nature

Article and photos by Regina Gardner, Master Gardener

Growing With Plants and Nature started the year with two January events. The first was with the HEB Live Well Program at their Buffalo Bayou store. Amanda Lee led a team including Julee Jackson, Darlene Massington, Terry Cole and Maria Trevino to provide an opportunity to approximately 40 children. The activity included learning about microgreens and planting a tray to take home for growing.

Later in January, this popular and informative activity was repeated for the children at the MLK Peace Through Pie Celebration. This was the third time our team participated in this annual community wide event. Pat Whipple, Rita Whipple, Julee Jackson, Diane Walker, Marcia Braschayko, Ana Lorena Jaramillo and Linda Persse contributed to the organizing and presentation of this event.



Happy faces from some of our many events throughout the year.

February was a month spent moving and organizing supplies to a central storage area. Having all of our supplies at this new location gave us the opportunity to organize and prepare an inventory of our supplies. From this, we have begun to plan our activities for the coming months. These will include participation in the Spring Break Events at Woodchase Park in March.

A final note is that Linda Persse is stepping down as Chair of the Growing With Plants and Nature Committee and a new Chair is needed. For anyone interested in learning more about this opportunity, Linda and Stephanie Gray will provide information and assistance with the transition. Also, the new Chair will have the support of an experienced and dedicated GPN team membership.

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, farmers markets, and other events.



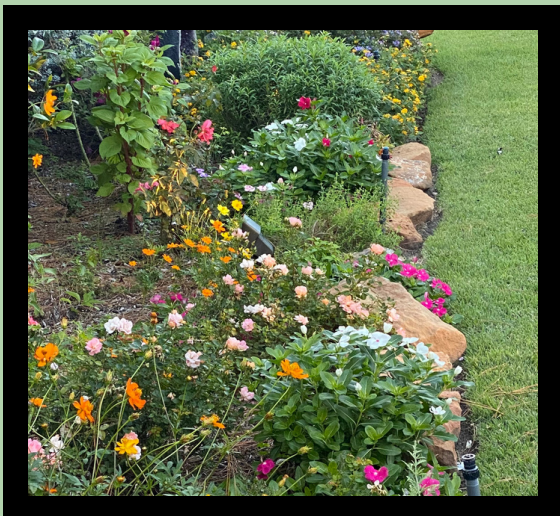
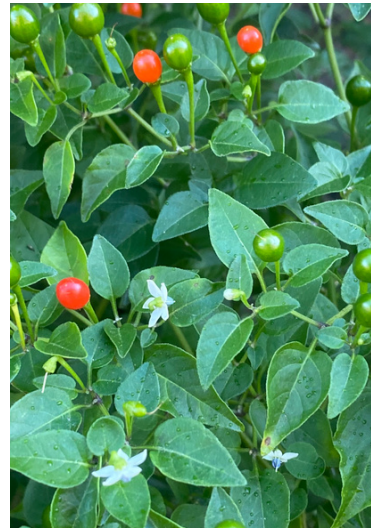
Native Plant Spotlight

Chiltepín Pepper

Article and photos by Jennifer Elfert, Master Gardener Intern

This native is a powerful pepper plant, in fact Chiltepin is the official native pepper of Texas and it includes the Chile Pequin. Chiltepin peppers are small and round but Pequins are slightly larger and pointed. If you haven't included this botanical gem in your garden yet, it's time to consider it.

In the landscape it is a low maintenance tidy, tolerant, reliable performer almost anywhere. This is an easy to grow perennial pepper that tolerates sun or shade and offers a treat that the birds will enjoy all summer long, sometimes up until a frost. It responds well to pruning and shaping if desired, but there is no need to confine this gem to the vegetable garden because it has no problems fitting in among bedded flowers or used in a stunning mass planting.



No one suspects the chiltepin peppers that are quietly flourishing amidst the flowers in this charming cottage garden.

Besides beauty in the landscape, this pepper brings a fiery punch to your culinary creations for those who can handle heat. It's about 5–8 times hotter than jalapeños, just a couple of these pea sized peppers will elevate the heat in sauces, dips, dressings, salsa and more. I usually crush 1-2 dried peppers into a pot of simmering rice with 15 - 20 servings, so don't let its tiny size fool you.

As for Scoville Heat Units (SHU). Chiltepins have a SHU of 50,000-100,000, two times hotter than the Pequin (30,000-60,000) SHU and, for perspective, Jalapenos only measure 2,500-8,000 SHU.

To enrich your garden and culinary experiences, introducing the Chiltepin pepper is highly recommended. With its visual appeal, adaptability, and fiery flavor, this native Texan pepper is sure to charm both your eyes and taste buds.

Resources

https://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id_plant=caan4

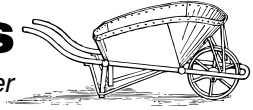
<https://www.centraltexasgardener.org/resource/chile-pequin/#:~:text=Chiltepins%20are%20small%20and%20round,its%20fruits%20that%20they%20love.>

<https://spicesinc.com/blogs/what-are-chiltepin-peppers#:~:text=Chiltepin%20chiles%20are%20smaller%2C%20about,comes%20on%20slowly%20and%20lingers.>

<https://spicesinc.com/blogs/what-are-chiltepin-peppers#:~:text=Chiltepin%20chiles%20are%20smaller%2C%20about,comes%20on%20slowly%20and%20lingers.>

Building A New Bed For Our Natives

Article and photos by Robin Yates, Master Gardener



In the fall of 2021, as a new intern, I eagerly accepted the opportunity to develop the native plant bed at the Genoa Friendship Gardens. My love for the plants that evolved here grew during the pandemic, and I looked at this as a way to show others what I was both learning and benefiting from. Yet, I had never done anything like this before. Won't you join me as I recount my adventure?

The previous native plant bed was overcome by the roots of a beautiful, mature bald cypress tree. Since I did not wish to disturb this majestic native tree, the experienced master gardeners on hand helped me select another location. I chose a spot near the entrance, next to the pathway, that was a mixture of turfgrass and what I will call 'miscellaneous vegetative matter.' The most notorious was what is commonly known as torpedo grass, *Panicum repens*. Its reputation for taking over GFG is well known in the community. A number of techniques and herbicides had been used, with limited success due to the nature of the plant. How to address this was first amongst the challenges that lay before me.

Each of us has attributes and weaknesses, and artistic design is the latter for me. Never being much of a right-brained, freeform artist type, I embarked on a training course that would help me enter the world of landscape design. The Native Plant Society of Texas offers a four level Native Plant Landscaping Certification (NPLC) program. In the spring of 2022, I took levels 1 and 2 (<https://npsot.org/our-work/class-schedule/>). In each class I learned to identify 45 native plants and 5 invasive species. Coupled with the book, *Planting in a Post-Wild World*, by Rainer and West, this gave me the tools to design a new bed. In the fall I completed level 3, leaving only level 4 for another year, when I am able to fit it in a busy schedule.

I chose as my theme a woodlands edge design. This became clear as I spent time walking the area and getting a feel for the land. A number of native trees had been planted years ago, and I found myself blessed with the presence of dogwood, possumhaw holly, Mexican plum, redbud, Mexican buckeye, live oak, and pecan trees on the northern edge of the GFG.

Initially, I chose a keyhole shape about 18 feet in length and found myself thinking about what I was hoping to achieve. As my intention was to draw folks out into our various demonstration gardens, including the xeriscape and tropical or shade gardens, I extended the length to 35 feet, and shifted to a more curvilinear, meandering, pathway design. I wanted it to be an invitation to come stroll through our gardens!



The site for the new native plant bed



My initial 'keyhole' design



Final layout became a natural meandering pathway design

Building A New Bed For Our Natives

Continued



The gardens manager, Evan Hopkins, took me to Adam's Wholesale and we came back with vinyl edging to construct the border of the bed. A professor at University of Houston-Clear Lake donated landscaping pavers, enabling me to make a wide border for the bed, effectively protecting the future plants from encroachment by torpedo grass.

Next, I took several layers of cardboard and 6 inches of leaves I collected from my neighbors over the fall and winter and let that compost over the summer and fall (one of my favorite sounds is turfgrass suffocating). This organic material cost nothing but deprived the miscellaneous vegetative matter of sunlight and air, successfully making it history.



Garden manager and past president, Evan Hopkins, surveys the new layout and vinyl edging



Vinyl edging in place and donated pavers ready to be installed



My trusty yard cart holds all I need for this project:)

By November of 2022, I had completed two levels of the NPLC course and had a weed free substrate to garden in. The design called for native grasses and perennials for structure with various wildflowers that would appear throughout the year. Over the summer and fall, while my new raised bed was composting, I completed my design and began gathering the plants and seed to be used to populate the new garden. Many of these would be donations from my own yard, and a few from Native Plant Society of Texas chapter plant sales.



The pavers are set in quikrete for stability in maintaining the design.



I added leaves, compost, and sand to smother the turfgrass over the summer



November and the bed is ready to plant!

Building A New Bed For Our Natives

Continued



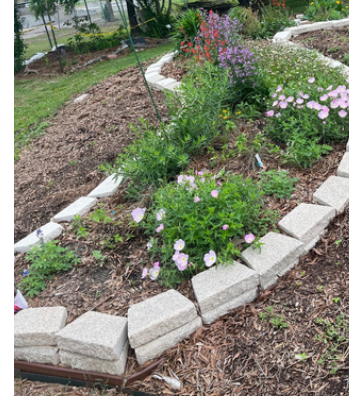
Noe Tristan, longtime garden handyman, helps me install irrigation



Gathering some of the initial plants for their new home



Initial planting was a success!



Some of the first blooms in spring

Over the last 8 years, I have been experimenting with different alternatives to turfgrass in my own yard. Initially, I tried to add soil and reseed with buffalograss, *Bouteloua dactyloides*, the only native turfgrass found in Texas. Unfortunately, it is too wet here, and it did not survive. Next came trials of clover, *Trifolium repens*, which has nitrogen fixing ability and is pollinator friendly, yet it is imported from Europe and central Asia. Knowing that I needed alternatives to turfgrass, I kept going. Over time, I have learned of several options that can replace portions of our lawns. I recommend starting with an area where St. Augustine doesn't do well and fill this area with a native groundcover. Thus, one objective for this demonstration bed was to show some of the different native groundcover options.



Further development as plants begin to fill in



The groundcovers are doing exceedingly well!

I wanted to showcase frogfruit, *Phyla nodiflora*, being the larval host plant for three butterflies. I had found it does not play well with others, needing its own well-defined space to thrive and display its pollinator friendly aura. I placed pink evening primrose, *Oenothera speciosa*, Corpus Christi fleabane, lyreleaf sage, *Salvia lyrata*, and powderpuff, *Mimosa strigillosa*, along the bed in front of the wildflowers. Along the outer southern edge of the bed, I again laid down cardboard and leaves, followed by hardwood mulch, and planted sprigs of frogfruit as a native groundcover. On the northern side, I planted horseherb, *Calyptocarpus vialis*, a shade tolerant native groundcover, which is common throughout the garden area. As time goes on, I learn more about each plant and where it will do well, and where it does a little too well! I learned that groundcovers that grow by rhizomes, or runners that develop roots at the nodes, such as frogfruit and Corpus Christi fleabane, need clearly defined borders to keep them separated from less aggressive wildflowers.

Building A New Bed For Our Natives

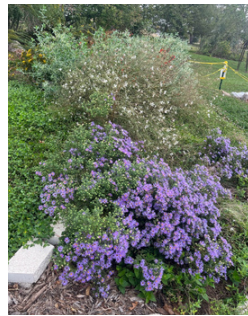
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In December of 2022 I did the bulk of the planting I had designed. One aspect I have learned is that any design will evolve over time. It is not static, but dynamic. Just as the plants come and go over each season, so the overall design will change as I adapt to what does well and what I prefer. For instance, I removed powderpuff from the bed when it began smothering the milkweed and common selfheal, thus changing my original design.



A pollinator delight



Fall continues with plenty of blooms



Beginning a natural pathway for folks to walk along and explore the planting



The beautiful possumhaw holly next to the new bed in its winter splendor

In natural settings, which unfortunately are extremely rare, native plants have survived without supplemental irrigation. This bed is not natural, as it is something that has been constructed by humans, thus the plants need support until they are established. Noe Tristan assisted me with installing irrigation to the bed. I have drip irrigation winding throughout the flowerbed. Once established they will survive drought, yet my goal is to demonstrate how these plant designs can thrive in our yards, so I am able to supplement through dry periods, when needed.

As I write this, I am about to do my winter gardening. Soon I will clean up the bed. I have let many of the plants reseed themselves and added more bluebonnet seeds in the front. I will thin out and pot up many of the new seedlings that are not needed and sell them from our greenhouse at our spring plant sales!

I hope you will come and visit GFG and check in on the native landscaping bed throughout the year. It is always fun to see what wildlife is circulating through the garden. Soon we will publish a document that will identify the native plants and include links to the pollinators that use it as a larval host. Stay tuned for more to come from our extension office. I hope to see you in the gardens:)

References:

Native Landscape Certification Program (<https://www.npsot.org/our-work/class-schedule/>)

Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center Native Plants Database (<https://www.wildflower.org/plants/>)

Planting in a Post-Wild World, Designing Plant Communities for Resilient Landscapes, by Thomas Rainer and Claudia West



Recipe Spotlight

Stuffed Mini Bell Peppers

Article and Photos by
Terri Simon, Master Gardener

Lately I've seen these stuffed peppers showing up on charcuterie boards, so I thought I'd give them a try. They are delicious. You can serve them raw or baked. I've had them both ways and they were good but I did like the raw one better because of the crunch.



Roast for 15 minutes in the oven. The cheese should be golden. Remove the sheet and allow to cool about five minutes. Garnish with the chopped chives. Move peppers to a plate and serve.

** This recipe is versatile. If you don't care for chives you can use parsley or cilantro as a garnish. You could even use chopped browned bacon or grilled breakfast sausage as a garnish.**



Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Line a baking sheet with foil or parchment paper.

Cut bell peppers halve lengthwise with seeds removed (a grapefruit spoon is great for this).

Using a food processor, pulse the cream cheese, cottage cheese, and the garlic and onion powder for 30 seconds. Add the grated cheese, the jalapenos and the salt and pepper. Pulse until all ingredients are smooth. Fill the halved bell peppers with the mixture and place them on the baking sheet.

Recipe

- 1 lb. mini bell peppers
- 8 oz cottage cheese
- 8 oz cream cheese
- ½ tsp garlic powder
- ½ tsp onion powder
- 4 oz jar pickled jalapenos, drained
- ¾ cup shredded Colby jack cheese
- 2 tbsp chopped chives**
- Pinch of kosher salt and pepper



Bug Spotlight

Ants

by Debra Caldwell, Advanced Master Gardener: Entomology

You may think once you've seen one ant, you've seen 'em all. You might be surprised to learn that there are an estimated 15,700 named ant species and subspecies in the world and at least 200 species in Texas. Ants belong to order Hymenoptera with their cousins the bees, wasps, and sawflies.



Tawny crazy ant *Nylanderia fulva*
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>

All ants are in the Formicidae family which is split into over three hundred genera. Your yard is home to a huge number of ants and most have a valuable role in the ecosystem. It can be difficult to fully appreciate them when fire ants attack your toes or leafcutter ants undermine the foundation of your house, but ants are truly remarkable creatures!

Beneficial ants help to mix and aerate soil. Some are scavengers that remove dead material from the environment and help recycle nutrients. They disperse seeds and move them into soil where they can germinate. Many are predators that control pest populations. For example, recent research shows that ants kill grubs and cutworms in turfgrass.

Ants are social insects that live in a colony with tens of thousands of ants and up to millions of other closely related ants. Most colonies include the queen, her wingless, adult daughters (who function as workers) and her eggs, pupae, and larvae. In a mature colony, winged, reproductive ants may be produced which include males that only live for a day and females that can establish their own colonies. We often notice a colony when the swarms of winged ants emerge and fly away to mate.

We may also notice ants when they are foraging. The workers that leave the colony produce chemical trails that other workers follow. Most ants forage outdoors and come into our homes when searching for food or water. Prevention is your first line of defense against these ants. Block access by sealing cracks and crevices and eliminate food and water sources. Cleaning up crumbs, repairing water leaks, and taking up pet food all remove the incentive for ants to enter our homes.



Bug Spotlight Continued

Ants in the garden can usually be ignored. If there are problem ants such as fire ants, you can employ Integrated Pest Management (IPM) methods ranging from physical, cultural and chemical control methods. Texas A&M has a website with several good resources on ants as well as other potential pests. <https://citybugs.tamu.edu/factsheets/landscape/ants/>

Problems occur when we encounter ants in our homes and gardens. Most are just a nuisance and do little damage but they can contaminate food. Invasive ants, such as fire ants produce painful bites and can cause severe reactions in some people. Some leaf cutter ants can severely damage gardens. Pharoah ants are known to carry a number of disease-causing organisms including salmonella. <https://texasinsects.tamu.edu/pharoah-ant/>

In 2002, Harris County became home to a new invasive ant species, *Nylanderia fulva* which has now spread to surrounding counties. They are commonly known as the tawny crazy ant or raspberry crazy ant. They form huge colonies outdoors with millions of individual ants and sometimes invade houses. They are a serious threat to wildlife and may become agricultural pests. In some areas, the crazy ants have driven out fire ants! Which would you prefer—fire ants or crazy ants?

You might see large, yellowish, black, or black and orange carpenter ants following trails along the ground or a wall. They are equally at home in hollow tree trunks and branches or fence posts, porches, or wooden structures in houses. They don't eat the wood but use their mandibles to chew cavities to make their homes. You can manage these ants by keeping piles of wood away from the house, pruning plants that touch structures and repairing or replacing wooden structures that are decaying.

Other types of ants that you might see trekking through your house or garden are Argentine ants, acrobat ants, odorous house ants, and rover ants. We have just scratched the surface with our look at ants! In future articles we will focus more on specific types.



Fire ant nest. Photo by Debra Caldwell.

Getting Down to Earth



News from Genoa Friendship Gardens – Houston, 77034

Article and photos by Pam Longley, Master Gardener

Some of you may have attended the February First Tuesday meeting with a Native Plants lecture by The Nature Conservancy’s Jaime Gonzalez. In his presentation, he introduced us to the website <https://www.naturequant.com/naturescore/>, where we can put in our home address and see if our property is Nature Deficient (a parking lot), Nature Light, Nature Adequate, Nature Rich, or Nature Utopia (GFG!). The proximity to park space, live vegetation, tree canopies as well as noise and light pollution affect the score. The website also notes, “Nature Score predicts the positive impact nearby nature may have on your health and longevity relative to a base of a nature deficient area.” It is very user friendly. Just put in your address and it will instantly give you a score. I was disappointed when a friend, who has only a few shrubs in the front yard, a couple of trees and grass, got a higher score than my yard with many gardens and lots of native plants. Why? His house backs up to a greenbelt on a cul-de-sac and mine is in the middle of a city block.

Like many of your own gardens, those at GFG looked sad and brown the week we came back after the January freeze. We covered the vegetable gardens with wet leaves and picked the few ripe fall tomatoes beforehand. The carrots, snow peas, and strawberries fared well.



These calendula plants started blooming right after the freeze as if they were energized by the cold blast.

Calendula in perennial trial garden.



Mike Breazele continues to work on re-siding the old greenhouse one board at a time.

Bless Michael Breazele who continues to work on re-siding the old greenhouse building board by board.



The following is a look at the first few days’ online tomato orders waiting in the greenhouse for pick-up.

First week’s tomato orders for February sale.

Getting Down to Earth Continued 

We have been preparing for the GFG Fruit Tree and Tomato Sale on February 17. We still cannot sell citrus due to the USDA quarantine, but we are counting once again on “The Voice of the Fruit”, Doug McLeod, to get the entire inventory sold, sold, sold! We had most of our regulars on hand to unload the trees from the delivery truck and follow Janice Muhm’s placement instructions. 



Left to right: Noah Ingram, Doug McLeod, Janice Muhm, Mary Stokman, Kathryn McLeod, Dianne Lawrence, Robin Yates, Pam Longley, Patricia Metzinger and Carolyn Boyd

Christ the Good Shepherd Garden – Spring 77379

Article and photos by Dale Hudson, Master Gardener

Let’s get going on another year of community gardening! For a strictly vegetable gardening site like Christ the Good Shepherd (CGS) the first quarter of the new year was not our time to shine. I will not spill a lot of ink talking about our harvest. A quick update will suffice.

The garden took it on the chin during the January cold snap. Even though our volunteers responded en masse and buried all our green stuff under piles of leaves, we still felt the effects of two nights in a row with temps in the mid-teens. Almost everything survived, including our trial beds of carrots and strawberries, but the shock of the chill caused things to come to a standstill for several days.



The tomato and pepper starts are looking good in our brand new greenhouse.

The main thing I want to talk about this issue is a couple of site upgrades that we are proud to have. First is our new greenhouse. Unexpectedly, we received a call from a friend of the garden saying that during a spring-cleaning event, a greenhouse-in-a-box kit turned up and was free to CGS garden. Our existing greenhouse was a hand-me-down from several years ago and was showing its age. We happily accepted the new model. Wes Carr, a long-time gardener at CGS, promptly stepped up to assemble a small crew of fellow gardeners. In a matter of a couple of days, things came together (pun intended). It’s nice to be reminded that not all of life’s surprises are the bad type.

Getting Down to Earth Continued 



The CGS greenhouse construction crew is all smiles once the job is done. left to right - MG Baxter Swenson, volunteer crew chief Wes Carr, volunteer Mark Weatherford, volunteer Charlie Dorchak, MG Jack Goodwin. **Great Job Guys!!!**

The second site upgrade I want to talk about is our bee neighbors. Gardeners have talked frequently over the years about the benefits of having our own pollinators on site, but we never got past the talking stage until the arrival of Baxter Swenson. Baxter was an old hand at beekeeping and jumped into the task of getting a swarm established at CGS. The initial attempt to attract a wild swarm was not successful, but Baxter quickly moved on to plan B-ee which involved relocating an existing swarm to their new environs at the garden. Even though they were introduced last Fall, it was touch 'n go with the cold January freezes. However, things are going great now and I'm happy to report that honey is in our future.



Like most castles, at the CGS bee castle most of the work goes on inside.



As expected, the CGS bees are hard at work inside the Bee Castle filling those cells with honey.

Reference:

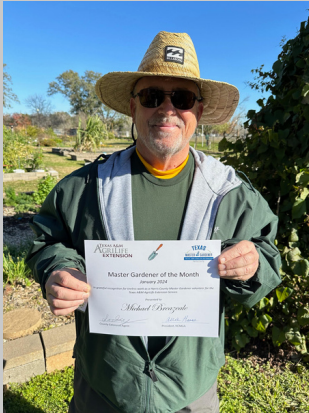
Discover your NatureScore™ <https://www.naturequant.com/naturescore/>

Master Gardeners Spotlight

Article by Karen Breneman, Master Gardener

≡ January ≡ *Master Gardener of the Month*

Congratulations!



Michael Breazeale, a member of the 2023 class, is the Master Gardener of the month for January. He was born in New Orleans and has lived in many places including Florida, California, Hawaii, New York City and North Dakota. He served four years in the U.S. Coast Guard and worked in financial services for almost thirty years. He is a certified Master Scuba Diver. He is currently working as a gardener for the Hermann Park Conservancy.



He is very active at GFG working with the gardens and has taken on the greenhouse. Michael brings diverse experience and willingness to work in the gardens. Thank you, Michael, for all you do!

≡ February ≡ *Master Gardener of the Month*

Congratulations!

Lucia Hansen, a 2005 graduate, is the Master Gardener of the month for February. Lucia, with her horse trailer and campers, has provided working space at the plant sales. She has also provided bucket cutting space for cylinder gardening. Lucia was born and raised near the family farm in Walla Walla, Washington and says, "Apparently, I cannot get the dirt out from under my fingernails." She has always enjoyed gardening, no matter where she has lived. She and her hubby have enjoyed fifty + happy years together; forty-five of which have been in the Houston area. She was lucky to stay home, raising three "pretty nice kids", then taught French in the Cy-Fair school district. For about 10 years, Lucia and her daughter competed in Hunter Jumper (the horses are now pasture ornaments). Aside from gardening Lucia is involved in family genealogy, training her golden retrievers, and traveling abroad and on the West Coast. Thank you, Lucia, for all your help.





Texas A&M AgriLife Extension
in partnership with
Hermann Park Conservancy
are pleased to present

Master Gardeners in the City at McGovern Centennial Gardens

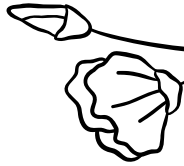
The Harris County Master Gardeners maintain the vegetable, herb, berry, and citrus beds in the Family Garden on Tuesday and Thursday mornings, so if you see one of us working there, feel free to say hi.

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.

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!](#)



Herb Spotlight

Article and Photos by Chevy Tang, Master Gardener

**Name a Vegetable that
is an Herb and a Spice**

Fennel!



I was intrigued with the taste of small bright yellow flowers in an umbel offered by an herb vendor in the farmers market in Salt Lake City. Nothing is like it. It has a crunch, mildly sweet with notes of citrus and light anise-like licorice flavor. I had no clue that it was edible but I knew the fennel blooms attract black swallowtail butterflies. Fennel pollen is expensive, about \$35 an ounce and often sought after for garnish. Freshly collected pollen can be frozen.

Foeniculum vulgare mill, fennel belongs to the Apiaceae (carrot or parsley) family. A short-lived perennial in our area, Zone 9 and 10 that loves full sun, moist, fertile and well-drained soil and tolerates light frost. It grows to 6 ft tall, compact, feathery linear fronds with a white bulb. It can be grown in a large container, at least 12" deep.

Soak seeds for 24 to 48 hours before planting. Use biodegradable pots if starting inside. Fennel seedlings do not like to be moved because of the tap root. Sow seeds about ¼" deep in thin trench space 6 to 10" apart in moist soil after the last frost and again in late summer for fall harvest. Do not plant near dills as they can cross pollinate. Mulch and do not let the soil dry out.

Fronds (leaves) can be harvested anytime. Seeds are collected when they turn greenish brown. Bulb is ready when it is the size of a tennis ball, about 70 days from seed. New growth may sprout from the root after cutting the bulb at the base.

Grown for the bulb, Florence fennel has cultivars like 'Cantino,' 'Orion,' 'Fennel Antares F1.' Some popular herb cultivars are 'Sweet Fennel,' 'Purpureum' (bronze to red foliage), and 'Rubrum' (bronze foliage) has smaller bulbs and leafier top growth. The latter two are great for ornamental planting.



Herb Spotlight Continued

All parts of fennel are edible and high in nutrition. Bulbs and fronds are great in salads, raw or grilled. Add in to soup, stew, pasta and even pastas. Stalks can be made into candy and syrup. Seeds are commonly used as spice in Italian sausage, Indian curry, Chinese 5 spice, Swedish meatballs, Mexican mole and vegan dishes. Dried seeds are made into tea and oil for medicine. Pollen and fronds are delish in desserts.



Fennel has been documented in the history of times across cultures for medicinal, culinary and inspirational uses. It is also a great pollinator plant to include in the edible landscaping garden. Try Fennel!

References:

10 Science-Based Benefits of Fennel and Fennel Seeds
<http://www.healthline.com/nutrition/fennel-and-fennel-seed-benefits#1.-Highly-nutritious>
The Herb Society of America Quick Facts Fennel.
https://www.herbsociety.org/file_download/inline/520b142e-66f4-45dc-b151-59283956b21e
Fennel, *Foeniculum vulgare* <https://hort.extension.wisc.edu/articles/fennel-foeniculum-vulgare/>



Visit us at these social media pages:

Harris County Extension Horticulture Facebook Page

Harris County Master Gardeners Facebook Page

Harris County Family and Community Health Facebook Page

Ask A Master Gardener In Person Events

- Feb 27-Mar 17 10a-7p 2024 Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo Houston
- Mar 2 8a-12p Urban Harvest 2752 Buffalo Speedway Houston
- Mar 2 10a-12p Mercer Botanic Gardens 22306 Aldine Westfield Rd Humble
- Mar 9 9a-1p Tomball Farmers Market 205 West Main St Tomball
- Mar 16 9:30a-4:30p Towne Lake Farmers Market 9955 Barker Cypress Rd Cypress
- Mar 16 10a-12p Mercer Botanic Gardens 22306 Aldine Westfield Rd Humble
- Mar 16 11a-2p Delta Sigma Theta Sorority “Wellness Expo”
12512 Walters Rd Houston
- Mar 18 8:30a-11:30a GFG Open Garden Day 1210 Genoa Red Bluff Rd Houston
- Mar 21 3p-7p Westchase Farmers Market 10503 Westheimer Rd Houston
- Mar 22 8a-4p Mercer March Mart Plant Sale
Mercer Botanic Gardens 22306 Aldine Westfield Rd Humble
- Mar 23 8:30a-1p Memorial Villages Farmers Market 10840 Beinhorn Rd Houston
- Apr 3 9a-12p Gardeners by the Bay Garden Club Plant Sale
Webster Presbyterian Church 201 Nasa Rd 1, Webster
- Apr 6 8a-12p Urban Harvest 2752 Buffalo Speedway Houston
- Apr 6 10a-12p Mercer Botanic Gardens 22306 Aldine Westfield Rd Humble
- Apr 13 9a-1p Tomball Farmers Market 205 West Main St Tomball
- Apr 13 12p-4p Dellrose Community 17312 Springfield Meadow Dr Hockley
- Apr 17 10:30a-1:30p Earth Day Celebration 210 Schlumberger Dr Sugar Land
- Apr 18 3p-7p Westchase Farmers Market 10503 Westheimer Rd Houston
- Apr 20 9a-1p HCMG Southeast Perennials & Peppers Plant Sale
GFG 1210 Genoa Red Bluff Rd Houston
- Apr 20 9:30a-4:30p Towne Lake Farmers Market 9955 Barker Cypress Rd Cypress
- Apr 20 10a-12p Mercer Botanic Gardens 22306 Aldine Westfield Rd Humble
- Apr 22 8:30a-11:30a GFG Open Garden Day 1210 Genoa Red Bluff Rd Houston
- Apr 27 8a-1:30p Westside Perennial, Peppers & Herbs Sale
Alabonson Park 9650 N Houston Rosslyn Rd Houston
- Apr 27 8:30a-1p Memorial Villages Farmers Market 10840 Beinhorn Rd Houston

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.



Gardening Calendar

By Karen Shook, Master Gardener

Spring in the garden is a joy! Bluebonnets, amaryllis, iris and azaleas in bloom. Harvesting cool weather and planting warm weather vegetables. Greening grass and budding trees. The warmth of the sun as I work in the yard. Spectacular!

Average temperatures in March/April are mid 60's to 70 deg F. Average rainfall is 3 to 4 inches. Weather forecasts (as I write this at the end of January), predict near normal for both temperature and rainfall.

Perennials and Ornamental Grasses

- Perennials should be divided every 3 to 5 years. Divide late summer and fall blooming perennials when you start to see new growth in the spring.
- Fertilize established perennials and ornamental grasses.
- Remove spent blooms regularly to keep plants attractive and avoid using plant energy "going to seed". Shear back by 1/3 if plants are getting leggy.

Annuals

- March and April are crossing the season between cool and warm weather annuals. In March, plant cool weather annuals if well established (in 4" pots) and start warm weather annuals from seed or transplants. In April, cool season annuals can be pinched back and fertilized for extended flowering time, but I typically move to warm weather bedding plants.
- Fertilize new plants to give them a strong start and fertilize established plants to give them a boost.

Bulbs

- Provide a light application of fertilizer for spring blooming bulbs when you start to see active growth.
- Plant gladiolus (and other summer flowering bulbs). Plant gladiolus bulbs every 2 weeks from Jan through May for successive blooms. When cutting flowers, leave at least four green leaves on the lower part of the stem.
- Most bulbs will do best if divided every 2 to 3 years.
- As with perennials, remove fading flowers and developing seed pods on spring blooming bulbs.

Roses

- Once you see new growth, it is time to start your weekly (every 7 to 10 days) fungicide spray (or treatment) program for blackspot, powdery mildew, etc.
- Fertilize monthly.

Shrubs/Trees

- Prune spring flowering shrubs like azaleas after they finish flowering. For azaleas and other acid loving plants, it is also a good time to check and adjust soil acidity.
- New shrubs or trees should be planted by March to give them a chance for roots to grow before hot weather arrives. They may need supplemental watering as they establish root systems.
- Fertilize established shrubs every 6 to 8 weeks. (3:1:2 or 4:1:2 good choices)
- Fertilize young, but established trees this month when you see new growth (if you didn't fertilize in February). Most well established, older trees generally don't need fertilization.
- Fertilize citrus trees when you see new growth.

Lawns

- Guidelines say to start mowing when grass is greening. I mow infrequently through the winter into March. Don't overwork the lawn in March; give the developing roots time to grow.
- The lawn can be fertilized after a second mowing of actively growing grass. Note if you have weeds in the turf, bag and compost clippings from these first two mowing's.
- Broadleaf weed killer can be used in April but check the label. San Augustine can be sensitive to weed killer at warmer temperatures.

Edibles (vegetables, herbs, berries, fruits)

- A joy of spring gardening is the combination of harvesting cool weather crops while planting warm weather crops.
- Prepare the soil by blending in compost and fertilizer. I plant beans, tomatoes, cucumbers, squash, and melons. Tomatoes need to be planted early enough that you can harvest them before hot weather causes the plants to stop setting fruit. See the following link for recommended plantings times:
 - [Harris County Veg Planting Guide](#)

Groundcovers and Vines

- Finish up ground cover planting, division, transplants to establish plants before summer heat is with us.
- Fertilize established ground covers. If they are looking ragged, March is late, but not too late, to trim.
- Most woody vines bloom in the spring. Prune spring flowering vines after they finish flowering. Snip back, wind vines through support to keep looking neat.

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 – *Intro to Aquaponics*
February 12 – *Success with Spring Vegetables*
March 18 – *Edible Landscaping*
April 8 – *Gardening in Containers*
May 13 – *Identifying “Good and Bad” Bugs*

June 10 – *Seed Saving and Starting*
July 8 – *Fall’s Best Vegetable Garden*
August 12 – *Growing Bulbs in Texas*
September 9 – *Heirloom and Pass-along Plants*
October 14 – *Gardening for Extreme Weather*

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

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

Third Tuesday of each month

January 16 – *Intro to Aquaponics*
February 20 – *Success with Spring Vegetables*
March 19 – *Edible Landscaping*
April 16 – *Gardening in Containers*
May 21 – *Identifying “Good and Bad” Bugs*

June 18 – *Seed Saving and Starting*
July 16 – *Fall’s Best Vegetable Garden*
August 20 – *Growing Bulbs in Texas*
September 17 – *Heirloom and Pass-along Plants*
October 15 – *Gardening for Extreme Weather*



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Ask A Master Gardener Online

by the AAMGO Committee



Q: (Note: this question is from a Harris County resident who is currently living and gardening in another country – we've enjoyed being able to help this gardener via email several times). Hello, it's summertime now and temperature is between 75F to 90F. My cucumber plants have a lot of flowers and tiny cucumbers. Cucumbers grew to about 1" to 2", then turned yellow and died. I never got any decent size cucumbers. Do you know what is the issue? Thank you very much.

A: It's very nice to hear from you again! I think we can give you some help with your cucumbers and I'm going to give you some great links that can help you problem-solve if other issues arise.

From the description of your cucumber situation, I think the problem is a lack of pollination. Cucumbers, like many of the cucurbits (squashes, gourds, etc.), produce male and female flowers on the same plant, and depend on bees to move the pollen from the male flowers to the female flowers. The male flowers are produced and bloom first, and the female flowers have the little cucumbers beneath them. There is a narrow window when the male and female flowers are open at the same time and if the female flowers aren't pollinated, the flower and the little cucumber will drop off.

If you observe your garden and don't see bees "working" the flowers, then you can hand pollinate your cucumber flowers - probably the easiest way is with a soft paintbrush or cotton swab. Just touch the inside of the male flower with the paintbrush to gather pollen, and then touch the paint brush to the inside structure of the female flower. [HERE](https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/HS398) (<https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/HS398>) is a good article from the University of Florida that has pictures of the flower structures and offers another hand pollination technique where you remove the male flower and touch it to the female flower.



If you don't think pollination is the problem, then there could be some cultural conditions that aren't allowing the new cucumbers to thrive, such as insufficient fertilizer, or watering issues. [HERE](https://harris.agrilife.org/hort/publications-links/veggies-herbs/) (<https://harris.agrilife.org/hort/publications-links/veggies-herbs/>) is a link to all of the vegetable and herb publications on our Harris County Horticulture website. I think you'll find a lot of helpful information there that can be applied to your current garden. Even our Vegetable Planting Calendar will be helpful, since you already know how to translate the differences in the gardening seasons between the Houston area and where you're living now. If you select the link for the Easy Gardening Fact Sheet Series, then you'll see a publication on cucumbers (along with many other topics). That will give you advice on watering and fertilizing, and a discussion about some of the problems. Back on the main Veggies & Herbs page, you'll also see a link to our Cucurbit Problem Solver - the information is classified by the plant part that is affected.

I hope all of this information will help you troubleshoot so you can start getting some summer produce from your plants!

Q: Hello, we are in the food business, based in Houston. Does garlic grow in Texas? If yes, what is the yearly garlic production in the State of Texas? Where in Texas is garlic grown? Thanks a lot.

A: Thank you for your interesting questions! Garlic can be grown in home gardens all across Texas. Cloves are usually planted in raised beds in the fall, and depending on the variety, might take 200 days until harvest. Some varieties do better in some parts of the state than others. Our Master Gardeners who are experienced in growing garlic in Harris County say that the softneck varieties, such as California White, California Early, and Inchelium Red Softneck grow better in the Houston area than the hardneck varieties.

There is some commercial production of garlic in Texas, but we don't have much information about the amount. Here is the only production reference I found, and the year for the information isn't given: Vegetable Resources - Bulb Crops (<https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/vegetable/guides/the-crops-of-texas/bulb-crops/>).

This publication, Garlic (<https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/vegetable/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/2011/10/garlic.pdf>), is geared more towards commercial growers, and gives you an indication of the types of issues that commercial growers would be concerned about in Texas – pest and disease management, soil fertility, irrigation, storage, etc. Home gardeners have some of the same issues with growing garlic, but managing those issues is often a little easier on a smaller scale.



If you are looking for a consistent local source of garlic, you might want to inquire at the various local farmers markets, to see who might be growing it on a larger scale in our area. I hope this answers your questions, and best wishes!



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

Thank you for your support.
<https://www.youtube.com/channel>

Spring Lecture Series with
TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION
AND THE HARRIS COUNTY

MASTER GARDENERS



STARTING PLANTS FROM SEEDS

Melcher Neighborhood Library
Thursday, February 15, 2024 | 10:30 AM-11:30 AM

SPRING VEGETABLE GARDENING

Walter Neighborhood Library
Thursday, February 22, 2024 | 1:00 PM-2:00 PM

ORGANIC GARDENING

Moody Neighborhood Library
Thursday, March 7, 2024 | 10:30 AM-11:30 AM

EARTHKIND LANDSCAPING

Ring Neighborhood Library
Wednesday, March 20, 2024 | 10:30 AM-11:30 AM

GROWING TOMATOES

Johnson Neighborhood Library
Thursday, March 28, 2024 | 10:30 AM-11:30 AM



Lectures are available in person with livestream
available via [facebook.com/houstonlibrary](https://www.facebook.com/houstonlibrary).



Linking YOU to the World | www.houstonlibrary.org



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)	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											
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.

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>

