



What's Growing On?

BASTROP COUNTY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION

Layering with Lasagna Gardening

By Sherie Clarkson, Bluebonnet MG

The first time I heard of Lasagna Gardening, I thought this would be about plants used in Italian cooking such as basil, oregano, tomatoes, garlic and peppers, which would have been an interesting program. Boy, was I in for a big surprise! Lasagna gardening does not have anything to do with the ingredients but the gardening technique.

Developed by Pat Lanza and explained in her book, *Lasagna Gardening: A New Layering System for Bountiful Gardens: No Digging*, the method is one of the easiest and most effective ways of gardening I have ever used – no kidding! I don't know why I never even considered it before. The book is a great reference tool but the concept is so easy that you don't have to purchase the book. Plus, it's a great way to recycle. There are several ways that you can achieve this gardening method but I will explain here what I discovered with my experiment. I had an area that was nothing but Bermuda grass and no amount of weeding and mulching with newspaper helped so this was the perfect place for trying this

layering technique. After all, what did I have to lose?



First, I collected cardboard and newspapers, which if you are like me does not take much time, and any form of cardboard will work as long as you can lay it flat. If you have a recycle center this is a great source for both products. And I discovered that catalogs and magazines make great layering material because they are thick and what a great way to make them useful. Next, I weed-whacked the grass as close to the dirt as I could get. You can also use a product like Roundup® on the grass but I found just weed-whacking worked well and there were no chemicals. Then, I layered the area with the cardboard making sure that I overlapped each piece carefully. This is key to keep the grass from creeping up through a crack.

Once you have that layer down, I would use the magazines and catalogs, spreading them open and flat making sure they were also overlapping. The next

layering step was the newspaper which can be done two separate ways, either watering the newspapers after you put them down or by wetting them first. I found if I would wet the newspapers first, the wind would not blow them away. After layering the wet newspapers, I put a good layer of compost on top of all this. You can do this by sections, but plan to finish each section to the compost stage.

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When you finish the bed, you can plant right away if you use small transplants or seeds. Larger plants need to wait until the materials break down some as it is easier to dig the hole. After I had finished the bed, I planted my fall garden which had included cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli and beets. This was late autumn. I had a few Bermuda grass and weed

roots come through but because of the layering they were easy to pull. Otherwise, no weeds and I had some of the best produce ever. Since then I have done many other beds including herbs and

seeds. Each time I have had the same results. I don't know why I had never considered this method before. So, if you have a problem area or just want to refresh an area, you should try this layering technique. You can

even plant a garden that includes plants to make lasagna.

Oxblood Lilies

Oxbloods are native to South America. An early German-Texan horticulturist named Peter Oberwetter is believed to be the first to import the oxbloods from Argentina. Due to his efforts, the oxblood has been very popular in the areas of Texas originally settled by German settlers. While they are gaining acceptance around the South and Central US, they have flourished in places like Brenham, La Grange, Independence, Round Top and Austin for the last 150 years. Oxbloods naturalize and reproduce readily. In fact, they are so hardy and so prolific that Scott Ogden says "No other bulb can match the fierce vigor, and adaptability of the oxblood lily". Because of their "tenacity and adaptability", oxbloods have become one of the most common "pass along plants" in Texas. Most of the people that have them got them as a division from someone else. Finding a friend with a well-established bed is still the best way to get them for your own garden as they are somewhat difficult to find in the nursery trade.

Oxbloods are very easy to grow and they are very reliable. Their growth habit is just like that of other fall blooming bulbs. The flowers appear on a single "bald" stalk in the fall. Two long leaves often accompany the stalk. After the flowers die, the rest of the foliage begins to appear. The foliage grows into a clump of long, thin, deep green leaves that resemble Mondo or liriopoe that lasts until June. After that, the foliage dies back and the bulbs become dormant. So, if you are going to divide them, June is the optimal time. However, unlike many other bulbs, they can be dug and divided just about any time.



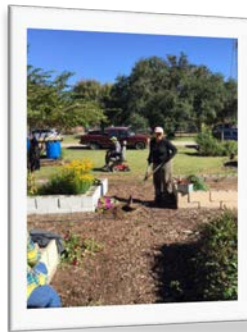
Oxblood bulbs have a dark black skin that makes them fairly easy to identify. The bulbs prefer full sun but can tolerate light shade. In fact, most of the ones I see are massed around the trunks of old live oaks. Oxbloods do best in rich, well-drained soil but they will grow in just about anything. Plant your mature bulbs about three inches deep with the neck slightly exposed. Medium and smaller bulbs can be planted a little shallower. Once planted, water regularly for the first year. Once established, they will survive (and even thrive) on normal rainfall.

Bastrop County Master Gardeners have these tough-as-nails amaryllis relative for sale beginning November 14th. Packaged either one large bulb (\$6) and two small/med bulbs (\$8) [Cash or check]. Shop at the Extension office from 9a-6p on Nov 14 and 21 and at the Lunch & Learn, Nov 16, while supplies last. Our Lunch & Learn will be at the Courthouse Annex, Basement Conference Room from 11:30a-1p.

Projects



Bastrop Community Garden



Smithville Community Garden



Friendship Bible Baptist Church



Bastrop Animal Shelter

Gardening Tips for November:

Now is a good time to ready the garden for winter and next year's garden. The weather has become rather unpredictable so it is best to take precautions. Here are a few items to consider:

1. Cover and/or disconnect and drain hoses and faucets for a possible freeze.
2. You can make new garden beds or enrich old ones by covering with newspapers, topping with compost or mulch/leaves to prevent weeds from growing over the beds in the winter.
3. Clean beds by pulling weeds and discard, they can have way too many seeds to disperse.
4. Clean your tools; prepare mowers for winter, etc.
5. Make sure you have a place for tropicals/container plants in a hurry if we should get an unexpected freeze.
6. Check plants that you will bring inside for ants or other insects that you don't want in your house. Consider having a saucer in place to prevent damage to floors when watering.
7. Reap the benefits of pine cones – create bird feeders using peanut butter, make wreaths, miniature Christmas trees etc.

What's Happening!

- **November 9** – BCMGA will be creating a landscaped entrance to Cedar Creek Park in cooperation with Bastrop County.
- **November 14** – Oxblood Lily bulb sale at Extension office 9 a.m.
- **November 16** – Lunch & Learn (11:30 – 1:00) @ Bastrop County Courthouse Annex Conference room located in the basement. Free to public. Grab a sandwich and come!



Other Master Gardener Events around the State:

November 16 - Bell County - Bokashi Composting

Want to know more about bokashi, go to: <http://www.compostguy.com/bokashi-resource-page/>



Smithville Historic Home Tour

November 11, 2017

BCMG Rick Gast's home and gardens will be on the tour

Airing of the Quilts: 10am to 3pm

Home Tour: 12pm to 4pm

(maps available on Main Street)

Tour six historic locations in Smithville TX. Includes three homes, a bed and breakfast, a historic schoolhouse and a church with beautiful stained glass windows. See these beautifully preserved buildings with architecture in a variety of styles, including Italianate, Spanish Revival, American Gothic, Romanesque Revival and Victorian. Cost is \$10 to visit all. Event is in conjunction with the annual Airing of the Quilts. "Invite" your friends!

"Come Grow With Us"

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