



GRIMES COUNTY MASTER GARDENER'S NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 9, ISSUE II

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Officers for 2013

President: Jamie Bruns
Vice President: Kathy Laughlin
Secretary: Pat Randall
Treasurer: Cathey Hardeman

Committee Chairs

Administration: Nicky Maddams
Timekeeping: Martha Brogdon
Awards/Social: Scotty Bennett/Phyllis Pollard
Children's Activities: Phyllis Pollard/Marti Luedtke
Communications: Nicky Maddams
Class: Nicky Maddams/Jamie Bruns
Co-op: Fred Vesperman
Anderson Beautification: Janeth Nevill
Publicity: Peggy Sloan
Fundraisers: Phyllis Pollard/Dianna Westmoreland
Go Texan Landscaping: Mike Brame
County Fair Judging: Marti Luedtke
Historian: Sharon Murry

Texas AgriLife Extension

Extension Agent: Kimberly Hall
MG Coordinator: Jayla Fry
Secretary: Sandra Cox

Newsletter

Editor: Nicky Maddams
Article submissions, photos and information due by the 20th of each month. Send to: biplanechik@yahoo.ca

Website: txmg.org/grimes
Email: grimesmastergardeners@gmail.com

Upcoming Events

February 2 11:00am-3:00pm Directors Meeting in College Station, Texas A&M Campus

February 12 9:00am Monthly Meeting
Bill McKinley, Director of Benz School of Floral Design "Decorating with Things you can Grow"

February 26 8:30am – 12:30pm First Day of Class 2013

March 12 9:00am Monthly Meeting
Speaker - To be announced



Stop the Crape Murder!!

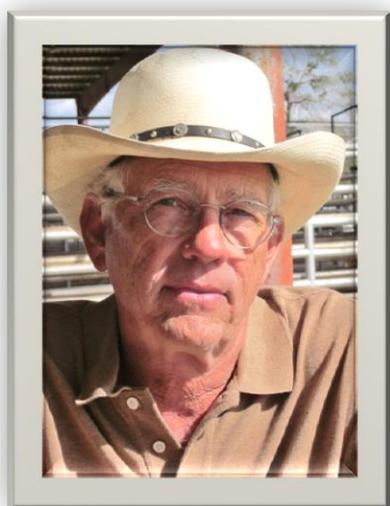


Get to Know Your Fellow Master Gardeners!

Visit with John Milligan and Marti Luedtke.

February Vegetable Planting Guide

Now - 3/5	Carrots
Now - 3/15	Asparagus
Now - 3/5	Beets
Now - 3/5	Broccoli
Now - 3/15	Garlic
Now - 3/10	Kale
Now - 3/10	Kohlrabi
Now - 3/15	Lettuce (head)
Now - 3/20	Lettuce (leaf)
Now - 4/15	Mustard
Now - 2/20	Spinach
Now - 4/20	Turnips
Now - 2/5	Onions (plants)
Now - 2/20	Peas (English)
Now - 3/5	Peas (Edible Pod)
Now - 5/5	Radishes



JOHN MILLIGAN

Where were you born and how long have you lived in Texas?

I was born in Houston, Texas and have lived in Texas all my life except for the time I was in the service.

Where is the farthest you have traveled from Texas?

Korea

Where would you go on your dream vacation?

Rocky Mountains

What is your favorite flower and tree? Do you grow them?

My favorite flower is the Passion Vine. I have a red one growing in the yard and the native ones grow wild in our pasture. My favorite tree is the mighty oak. I have planted 24 up the drive about that many more in the yard and pasture. Everyone is invited to help trim them.



Red passion vine

Where is the prettiest garden you have ever been to and what made it so?

The gardens at Versailles. The flowers and fountains are breath-taking. It is truly amazing that the gardens and fountains have been maintained for hundreds of years. The fact that we were able to rent a golf cart made it even more enjoyable.

What restaurant do you go to more than any other?

La Casita

What is your favorite season?

Whenever it rains.

Why are you a Master Gardener or Intern?

Because of all the good looking women.

What is the closest you have been to a natural disaster?

The only natural disaster that I can think of is Hurricane Carla that hit Houston in 1961.

When in your life have you needed an alibi?

Whenever I come home.

When was the last "back to nature" experience you have had?

When I went elk hunting in Wyoming and couldn't take a shower for a week.

Where would you like to go that is "off the beaten bath"?

Palo Duro Canyon on horseback.

What vegetable do you hate?

I eat everything.

What do you love the smell of?

Life

What is your favorite ice cream?

All flavors of Blue Bell

What chore do you absolutely hate doing?

Paperwork (Linda is filling this out for me)

What electronic gadget could you not live without?

My wrist watch but I don't know where it is.

Are you a social butterfly or do you prefer solitary endeavors?

Definitely a social butterfly.

Name one wonderful childhood memory involving gardening.

Tending the garden with Uncle Lewis in Alabama.

What would you say is your garden style? (Country, cottage, formal, sculptural, etc.)

Totally formal! (of course)



FEBRUARY brings us the following birthdays:

Dianna Westmoreland – January 30 (so sorry, Dianna, for missing you last month)
Ann DeWitt – February 10

Happy Birthday to both of you; may your year ahead be full of joy and happiness!



Thank you to everyone who willingly signed up to chair these committees. Your involvement is greatly appreciated. What a team!!

Administration – Nicky Maddams

- ❖ Coordination of GCMG office activities on Thursdays
- ❖ Check GCMG email on a daily basis and take necessary action

Timekeeper – Martha Brogdon

- ❖ Collection of volunteer hours
- ❖ Report hours to extension agent

GC Fair Judging – Marti Luedtke

- ❖ Assist with Horticulture Division of the Fair

Communications – Nicky Maddams

- ❖ Website (with Helen Quinn)
- ❖ Newsletter
- ❖ Facebook

Community Projects

- ❖ Go Texan Landscaping – **Michael Brame and Mike Arden**
- ❖ Anderson Beautification – **Janeth Nevill, Edmond McGee and Sharon Murry**
- ❖ Senior Day @ GC Fair – **Helen Quinn (Chair), Cathey Hardeman, Nicky Maddams**

Children's Activities – Phyllis Pollard and Marti Luedtke

- ❖ Junior Ag Day, Big Backyard at Grimes County Fair, Trunk or Treat, etc.

Fundraising – Phyllis Pollard and Dianna Westmoreland

- ❖ Present ideas to the association

Social/Awards – Scotty Bennett and Phyllis Pollard

- ❖ Coordination of refreshments at meetings
- ❖ Christmas party

Class of 2013 – Nicky Maddams and Jamie Bruns (Co-Chairs); Marguerite Corbello, Kathy Laughlin, Alvie Vesperman, Cathey Hardeman, Kathy Denning, Jennifer Corzine

- ❖ Coordination of speakers and classes

Mentoring – Marguerite Corbello

- ❖ Guide and assist new class members

Advertising – Peggy Sloan

Nominating – Carol Garnett and Kathy Denning

- ❖ Seek members interested in holding an officer position (for election in November)

Auditing – Kathleen Flick and Dianna Westmoreland

- ❖ Review year-end financial records for accuracy

Historian (NEW) – Sharon Murry

- ❖ Maintaining pictorial and written historical records of events.

Directors – Kathy Denning, Sharon Murry

Alternates – Helen Quinn, Marti Luedtke

- ❖ Attend quarterly TMGA meetings in College Station and provide report
- ❖ Vote regarding TMGA business

CRAPE MYRTLES

By Sharon Murry

Crape Myrtles (*Lagerstroemia indica*) are among the toughest, most adaptable and showiest plants that we can grow in our Texas landscapes. They come in many different colors and range in size from dwarf up to 35 feet in height. They have very few pests and can bloom all summer long. They require no supplemental irrigation and have an exfoliating bark that reveals spectacular smooth trunks. They can be trained to resemble a shrub (which it naturally is) or to grow into a tree shape.

Properly pruned crape myrtles can become wonderful accent plants in our landscapes. Pruning should be kept to a minimum. In fact, the only pruning a crape myrtle needs is to thin out the trunks on young trees, leaving 3 to 5 permanent trunks. Each spring; simply remove any new suckers that appear from the

ground or from the main trunks. If you prefer a tree style, thin out all but the 3 largest branches sprouting from one main trunk when the shrub is young. Shape your tree around the 3 main branches by keeping the lower lateral branches trimmed ("limbing up").

Crape Myrtles bloom on "New Wood or New Growth". If a crape myrtle is healthy, it does not need to be pruned to bloom, however it will produce larger flowers and bloom more profusely if *lightly* pruned. Do not prune any branches larger than a pencil. Any pruning should be done only to remove dead branches, old seed pods (although that is not necessary) or center branches that are rubbing together or preventing air flow.

The practice of lopping off the top of a shrub/tree to achieve a desired height, leaving a long trunk with a few short stumps on the top is commonly called "Crape Murder". Many believe this practice started when people, including professional landscapers, thought that the more you prune, the more flowers you'll get in return. This Crape Murder type of pruning, or whacking as it's called, weakens the shrub/tree and leaves it looking downright ugly. The resulting "chicken fingers" that sprout from the stubs will have larger, but fewer blooms. The new branches are so young and tender that they cannot support the weight of the flowers. The flowers droop and many branches break, causing more scars on the trunk and sometimes the shrub/tree dies. In a matter of 2-3 years, the "stub" of the pruned branch will crack. Each following year, the crack will become deeper and wider until the whole tree is diseased and rotted.



Crape Myrtles should be *lightly* pruned while it is dormant in late winter or early spring. February 14th is a good date to do this to ensure enough time for the new buds to set around May. Any time in early spring, preferably before March 5th, will benefit the

Crape Myrtle. Properly pruned crape myrtles can become wonderful accent plants in the landscape in all seasons of the year for many years.

Re-read the first paragraph then ask yourself; "Why would I intentionally harm and de-form something so versatile for our climate? Let's stop the Crape Murder!"



MARTI LUEDTKE

Where were you born and how long have you lived in Texas?

I was born in the deep East Texas Pineywoods, Sabine County in a small town called Pineland. I am probably one of not many life-long Texans. I have lived all over Texas all of my life.

Where is the farthest you have traveled from Texas?

I'm not sure which is the farthest – Washington State or Yucatan, Mexico.

Where would you go on a dream vacation?

Right now, anywhere away from my ranch and out of Navasota would be a "dream" vacation. But I probably would like to go on a road trip out west through New Mexico, Colorado, Arizona, Nevada, California and Utah, and then return through the Dakotas, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma and part of the Panhandle. See, I am a "cowgirl" at heart and would like to visit some of my Indian ancestor's "hunting grounds", with my "Sisters on the Fly".

What is your favorite flower and tree? Do you grow them?

My favorite flower has to be the rose – any kind, any variety – and camellias. But any flower is welcome in my garden, as is any tree. I even like the Chinese Tallow. Perhaps my favorite is the Red Bud and dogwoods.



Where is the prettiest garden you have ever been to and what made it so?

I haven't had the opportunity to travel to see too many of the world's most beautiful gardens, but the Hodges Gardens, in Florien, Louisiana, near the Southern part of Toledo Bend are one of my favorites. There is something beautiful and romantic about the old Southern Plantation gardens with withering oaks, Spanish moss and azaleas and camellias blooming everywhere.

Which is your favorite season?

I'm not picky – winter has its starkness and bleakness that is stunning; spring has its renewal and promise of beautiful growth and color; fall has its readying for the sleep time with its Joseph's Coat of Many Colors. Gorgeous. But summer has the fruit of all our labor, the color and abundance of fruition in orchestration.

What is the closest you have been to a natural disaster?

I went through Hurricane Carla as a little girl, and I remember my father couldn't leave his job, so Mom said she was staying with him – so we rode it out in the company's bunker. Our house lost its roof and almost everything in it was ruined. The most recent is the Dyer Mill wildfire, wherein we were put in 15-minute evacuation notice – and me with a pasture full of horses and only one trailer. Thank God the rains came.

What restaurant do you go to more than any other?

I got to Mexican, Mexican, Mexican, every time I can. Los Cucos in College Station is a favorite, anytime, anywhere.

When in your life have you needed an alibi?

That's not fair! You know I've never, ever had to have an alibi. Except I did breed one of my mares to a famous stud named Alibi and the foal's name became Alirulla.

When was the last "back to nature" experience you have had?

Sweetheart, I have a "back to nature" experience every day. If it's not chasing 'coons out of the barn, to running off coyotes in the pasture, to killing nuisance armadillos – but probably the most horrific was when I was snake-bit summer before last. Ten o'clock at night; didn't have on boots, dressed for bed, and it hit me three times. I don't know what kind except it was a big one – 1-1/2" between fang marks.

Where would you like to go that is "off the beaten bath"?

I've always wanted to go to Costa Rica, Alaska, Australia and Hawaii. However, hunting in the Navasota River Bottom is pretty off track!

What vegetable do you hate?

I don't even want to smell turnip greens or mustard greens – uk, uk!

What do you love the smell of?

I love to smell fresh vanilla, strong coffee, clean, crisp bed linens, after the rain, fresh-cut grass, clover, alfalfa, freshly-plowed pasture, good horseflesh, leather...the earthy things.

What chore do you absolutely hate doing?

I hate weeding Bermuda grass – anywhere. I just want it to grow where I want it to grow – in my pastures, not my flower bed!

Are you a social butterfly or do you prefer solitary endeavors?

From my association with this group of friends, I'll let you decide. I think you know. Solitude is precious, but not forever.

Name one wonderful childhood memory involving gardening.

Coming from a long line of gardeners in my family, my early remembrance is picking my Grandmother's prized irises and camellias to give to Mommy and getting a good swatting for it, I might add. The best of times were helping pull the hoses with my Dad to water our three-acre vegetable garden in 100+F weather and shelling peas and snapping beans

on the back porch with my brothers. More hit the ground than Mama wished, but quality time = priceless.

What would you say is your garden style? (Country, cottage, formal, sculptural, etc.)

I wish I had one – I like a plant, it goes anywhere there is a spot; and usually I try to put it where it will be spotlighted. I like the “country-style” perhaps, most.

LANDSCAPE DESIGN STUDY SERIES

**FEBRUARY 18 & 19, 2013
LANDSCAPE DESIGN COURSE II**

This course will feature some of the best and most popular instructors from the past as well as an outstanding featured speaker for our "outside" topic.

Master Gardeners who complete a course may apply 12 hours of credit to their requirements for continuing education.

This is Part II of the course, but they do not need to be taken in any particular order.

Watch for more information: <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu>

Extension Office News

The Master Gardeners Executive Board made the decision to no longer staff the Extension Office on Thursday mornings. Instead, we are doing two-week rotations wherein a Master Gardener will accept emails and phone calls (forwarded from the Extension Office) for that time period.

At the end of the two weeks, an email is to be sent to the Administration Chair (Nicky Maddams) with the queries dealt with during that rotation.

There are still two-week time slots that need to be filled. Please sign-up at the February meeting.

CLASS OF 2013

Time is running out to register for our next class!!



Speakers are booked and dates are set: The Master Gardeners Classes for 2013 begin on **Tuesday, February 26th** from 8:30am – 12:30pm.

CLASS SCHEDULE:

- Feb 26 Introduction to Program; EarthKind Landscaping
- Mar 5 Plant Growth & Development
- Mar 12 Soil, Water & Plant Nutrients
- Mar 19 Vegetable Gardening
- Mar 26 Entomology
- Apr 2 Plant Health
- Apr 9 Landscape Horticulture
- Apr 16 Home Fruit & Nut Production
- Apr 23 Herbs
- Apr 30 Lawns
- May 7 Propagation and Seeding
- May 14 Composting; Rainwater Catchment & Rain Barrel Demonstration
- May 21 Short Program and Potluck; Visit Extension Office



**Humanitarian of the Year
Dianna Westmoreland**

Congratulations to our own Master Gardener, Dianna Westmoreland, for being awarded Humanitarian of the Year for Navasota! So proud of you!!



*Dianna and her family
Photo courtesy The Navasota Examiner*

Tomato Plants for Sale

Ann DeWitt has submitted the following:

“I have planted tomato seeds and will have the tomato plants for sale the first week in March. (I'm trying to recoup the cost of the seeds, soil, pots, etc...basically my gardening addiction). Some of the plants came from seed I saved from last year's plants (Stupice, Cherokee Purple, and Arkansas Traveler). I got to plant these first and the seedlings are up!”



“The second batch of seeds I planted was purchased based on Bill Adam's (author of The Texas Tomato Lover's Handbook) personal recommendations based on his 2012 garden. So I'm excited to try them out! These tomatoes are Marianna's Peace, German Johnson, Rowdy Red, Cherokee Chocolate, Juliet Hybrid, and Momotaro (hybrid)”.

Drop Ann an email if you are interested in obtaining some of her tomato plants. ann.dewitt@gmail.com



DirtDoctor.com | Natural Organic Gardening & Living

(Submitted by John Milligan)

ROSE PRUNING



In most cases, the best time to prune roses is late winter. The specific time recommended by most rosarians is mid-February. During this time, the last frost supposedly has past thus avoiding cold damage. In reality, more freezing weather can happen after this date, especially in the north. Others offer that pruning shouldn't begin until the buds have begun to swell in the early spring.

In my opinion, the timing isn't that critical and roses can be pruned whenever the need is there. Roses are much tougher than many people think. For maximum individual flower size on certain varieties, the late winter pruning may help, but I prune my roses whenever I have time and whenever they need it – and they do very well.

Here are some basic guidelines for bush roses whenever you do the work. Begin by pruning out and removing dead and damaged canes. They are usually shriveled, blackened or just brown in appearance. In contrast, a live healthy cane will be green outside with a cream or green color in the center of the cane. If only part of the cane is damaged, try to prune as close to the bud union as possible, removing only the injured tissue. Use good pruning shears and if you clean between cuts or between bushes, use hydrogen peroxide, not bleach.

On grafted plants, which most the hybrids are, suckers can be a problem. Suckers are new plants growing up from the roots of the old plant (host plant). If left alone, they will suck vital nutrients from the host plant and hinder its growth process and they will be different plants than the tops of the bushes. Prune any remaining canes that are thinner than a pencil,

cross or rub against each other. Crossing or rubbing of canes creates spots where diseases can get started.

For the canes to be left, select four to six canes and prune to create the desired shape, leaving anywhere from one to four feet of cane depending on personal preference.

For old roses, the process is quite different. These are roses that are growing on their own roots. All I recommend for these roses is to prune for size and shape. You can carefully pi-prune or shear the plants. Climbing roses, whether hybrids or antiques, can be managed this same way.

The bottom line is that roses are tough and much easier to manage than many people think. I recommend everybody plant some and of course use the natural organic program. Here are the details on the overall program. [Organic Rose Program](#). If you run into any serious disease issue, here's the newsletter I did on curing rose rosette. [click here](#)

Garden Checklist for January/February 2013

Dr. William C. Welch, Professor & Landscape Horticulturist
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension



Paramutabilis x 'Ryan's Pink>

- Now is an excellent time to transplant mature or established trees and shrubs while they are dormant.
- Make flower and vegetable garden plans now before the rush of spring planting. Time spent in armchair gardening before the fireplace will pay off in improved plant selection. Besides, it is fun to page through the garden catalogs.

- Sow seeds in flats or containers to get a jump on plant growth before hot weather arrives. Petunias, begonias, and impatiens should be sown in early January. Warm temperature plants, such as tomatoes, peppers, marigolds, and periwinkles, should be sown in late January or early February.
- Apply a light application of fertilizer to established pansy plantings. Use one-half pound of ammonium sulfate per 100 square feet of bed area. Repeat the application every 4 to 6 weeks, depending on rainfall. Dried blood meal is also an excellent source of fertilizer for pansies.
- Prepare beds and garden area for spring planting.
- Select and order gladiolus corms for February/March planting. Plant at two-week intervals to prolong flowering period.
- Check junipers and other narrow-leaf evergreens for bagworm pouches. The insect eggs overwinter in the pouch, and start the cycle again by emerging in the spring to begin feeding on the foliage. Hand removal and burning of the pouches are ways of reducing the potential damage next spring.
- The life of the plant received as a Christmas gift can be prolonged with proper care. Keep the soil moist, but provide drainage so that excess moisture can flow from the pot. Keep the plant out of range of heating ducts and away from heating units. Keep in a cool room at night, preferably at 60 to 65 degrees F.
- Don't fertilize newly set out trees or shrubs until after they have started to grow, and then only very lightly the first year.