



HOE!  
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March 2013

GRIMES COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 9, ISSUE III

IN THIS ISSUE

**Officers for 2013**

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**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 20<sup>th</sup> of each month. Send to:  
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Website: [txmg.org/grimes](http://txmg.org/grimes)  
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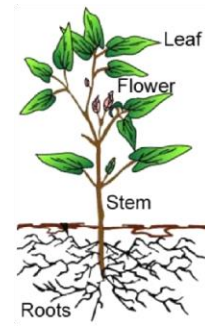
**Upcoming Events**

March 12 1:00 pm Monthly Meeting  
Virginia McClosky, Interior Plant Care  
Rose Bed Clean-up to follow meeting

April 10 10:00 am Field Trip  
Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens (Note: this is a Wednesday)

May 14 6:00 pm Social at Cathey Hardeman's

2013 Class Schedule and Speakers: please see next page



**Training Classes Have Begun!!**



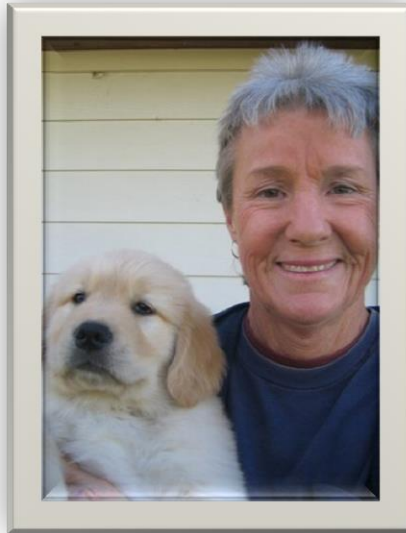
**Get to Know Your Fellow Master Gardeners!**

Visit with Carol Garnett and Cathey Hardeman

**TEXAS A&M  
AGRILIFE  
EXTENSION**

## Class Schedule

- Feb 26 Introduction to Program; Plant Growth and Development  
Jayla Fry, MG Coordinator
- Mar 7 Earth-Kind Program  
Dr. Mengmeng Gu, Texas A&M  
(Note: this class is on THURSDAY)
- Mar 12 Soil, Water & Plant Nutrients  
Sam Feagley, Texas A&M
- Mar 19 Vegetable Gardening  
Tom LeRoy, Extension Emeritus
- Mar 26 Entomology  
Dr. Bart Drees, Texas A&M
- Apr 2 Plant Health  
Dr. Kevin Ong, Texas A&M  
(This class will be held at the Plant Clinic at Texas A&M. Carpooling encouraged. Details to follow)
- Apr 9 Landscape Horticulture  
Nicky Maddams, Master Gardener
- Apr 16 Home Fruit & Nut Production  
Tom LeRoy, Extension Emeritus  
(This class will be held at the Montgomery Extension office in Conroe)
- Apr 23 Herbs  
Henry Flowers, Herb Society of America
- Apr 30 Lawns  
Dr. Tim Pannkuk, Sam Houston State University
- May 7 Propagation and Seeding  
Helen Quinn, Master Gardener
- May 14 Composting; Rainwater Catchment & Rain Barrel Demonstration  
Sharon Murry and TBD
- May 21 Short Program and Potluck; Visit Extension Office and Grounds  
Kim Hall, Grimes Extension Agent



CAROL GARNETT

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

I was born in Houston, TX and have lived in the Lone Star State my whole life except for two years when I lived in Colorado.

### Where is the farthest you have traveled from Texas?

The farthest I have traveled from Texas is probably the Orient.

### Where would you go on your dream vacation?

My dream vacation would be a whitewater rafting trip in the Pacific Northwest.

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

My favorite flower is the gardenia, and my favorite tree is the magnolia. I have magnolia trees in my yard, but no gardenia bushes. Sadly, after the drought, one of my magnolia trees looks like Charlie Brown's Christmas tree.

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

The prettiest gardens I have ever been to are those gardens in Europe at the old castles and palaces. I loved how manicured they were and how they enhanced the grounds of those old buildings.



Gardenia bloom

### What restaurant do you go to more than any other?

The restaurant I go to more than any other is Imhoff's General Store in Plantersville. I go there for the local gossip. My next one is Seven Leguas Mexican in Montgomery.

### What is your favorite season?

My favorite season is fall. I love the temperature and the smells. I can do without winter altogether because I hate being cold.

### Why are you a Master Gardener or Intern?

I joined Master Gardeners because I wanted education about plants so that one of these days when I landscape my yard, I'll know a little about what I'm doing. I also wanted the opportunity to make new friends with people in the community.

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

The closest I have been to a natural disaster was Hurricane Carla. But living in Houston, there were several other flood events such as Tropical Storm Allison.

### When in your life have you needed an alibi?

I have never needed an alibi. I guess I have a "look of innocence." Ha! Ha!

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

My last "back to nature" experience was about thirty minutes ago. Living on a ranch is continuously a "back to nature" experience.

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

I would like to go to Africa on a camera safari to see the wild animals.

### What vegetable do you hate?

I don't really hate any vegetables. Greens are not my favorite nor are some kinds of beans like lima, garbanzo, or kidney beans.

### What do you love the smell of?

I love the smell of yeast breads baking, steak sizzling on the grill and lots of different flowers.

### What is your favorite ice cream?

My favorite ice cream is homemade peach. I also like lots of flavors of Blue Bell ice cream such as cookies and cream, homemade vanilla and butter pecan.

### What chore do you absolutely hate doing?

The chores I absolutely hate doing are weed eating and house painting.

### What electronic gadget could you not live without?

The electronic gadget I could not live without is my phone.

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

I can be a social butterfly, but by the nature of my lifestyle as a rancher, mostly I am involved in solitary endeavors. There are many days that I talk to animals more often than people.

### Name one wonderful childhood memory involving gardening.

My childhood memories involving gardening are numerous. My mother was very active in several garden groups and I loved helping her do garden projects in our yard and flower beds both at our home in Houston and at our weekend home in the country. She was fantastic at flower arranging and I was continuously amazed at her beautiful creations. Somehow, I did not inherit her natural abilities.

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

I think my garden style is eclectic. I know what I like when I see it, but I don't care what style it is. Since my yard isn't landscaped, my style is simply a "work in progress."

## March Vegetable Planting Guide

Asparagus	through March 15
Beets	through March 5
Broccoli	through March 5
Cabbage	through March 10
Carrots	through March 5
Cauliflower	through March 29
Chard, Swiss	through April 20
Collards	through March 31
Garlic	through March 15
Kale & Kohlrabi	through March 10
Lettuce (leaf and head)	through March 20
Mustard	through April 15
Turnips	through April 20
Peas (edible pod)	through March 5
Radish	through May 5
Irish Potato	through March 15

## Ways to Prepare Hard-Coated Seeds for Planting

Source: Horticulture Magazine – The Art and Science of Smart Gardening

Seeds with hard outer coats surrounding them (like bluebonnets, shown) can be hindered in their ability to germinate because moisture and gases cannot penetrate through the coating. So what do you do? You scarify them.



Seed scarification helps weaken the hard coat surrounding the seeds in order to better achieve germination. There are three easy methods to scarify your hard-coated seeds: the mechanical, the acidic and the boiling water methods.

**Mechanical:** This method involves scratching, breaking through and/or weakening the seed coat surrounding the embryo so that the

embryo has a better chance during germination. Remember that you do not want to damage the embryo by crushing the seed's coat. You just want to weaken the hard coating enough for the embryo to break through during germination. In order to do this mechanically, you want to crack the surface with a knife or nick the seed with nail clippers to cut through the coating; you can also use sand paper or a nail file, and run it over the seed, scratching at the coat to weaken it. Sand paper and nail files work best with larger seeds. Sow the seeds right after the weakening of the coating is achieved.

**Boiling water:** Bring water to a boil in a pot, remove it from the stove and submerge the seeds into the hot water. Allow the seeds to soak in the water as it cools down to room temperature. Once the water has reached room temperature, remove the seeds and sow them. This process helps soften the coats.

**Acidic:** This method can be dangerous and should be carried out with caution. Place the seeds in a glass container and cover them with sulfuric acid. Stir gently and allow the seeds to soak in the solution for around 10 minutes—this can fluctuate depending on the seed. After the appropriate amount of time, or until the coating has thinned, remove the seeds, wash them and then sow them. To be safer, you can substitute vinegar for the sulfuric acid, however it is less effective.

Whichever method you use, remember to be cautious of not crushing the embryo within the hard-coated seed. Scarification can help with germination, however it is important to sow your seeds right after you have scarified them to help improve your chances of success.

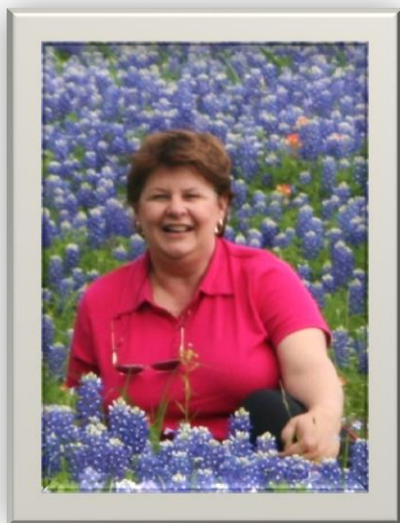


MARCH brings us the following birthday:

Fred Vesperman – March 27

May your year ahead be full of happiness and joy!





### CATHEY HARDEMAN

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

I was born in Crowley La., county seat of Acadian Parish. Fourteen and a half years ago, due to a transfer of my husband, we moved Houston and to the great state of Texas.

**Where is the farthest you have traveled from Texas?**

I have vacationed in China.

**Where would you go on a dream vacation?**

At this moment I think any beach in Florida. But I prefer the lovely Ana Marie Island on the west coast of Florida!



*Camellia*

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

I truly love the camellia. As a young couple, Sparky and I lived on a real plantation. The

grounds were lovely, kept up by a full time gardener. The owner loved camellias and had every variety. I learned to appreciate their beauty. I am developing a bed where I will attempt to grow them here. Oh, and I love daffodils too. My favorite trees may be the Chinese Elm and Sycamore.

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

I love to visit botanical gardens in different cities and I think New York City Botanical Garden was most lovely. There are many simulated climates, such as desert, tropical, etc. The floral gardens are also wonderful, particularly Peggy Rockefeller Rose Garden.

**What restaurant do you go to more than any other?**

At the moment, we are stuck on Montgomery County Grill in Magnolia. However, for special occasions, my favorite would be Perry's.

**Which is your favorite season?**

My favorite season is fall. Isn't it everyone's? Spring is next, of course!

**Why are you a Master Gardener or Intern?**

I love learning new information about gardening and I love being with people that love gardening.

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

Hurricane Andrew produced tornadoes in our town. It was rather intense!

**When in your life have you needed an alibi?**

Many, in my teenage years! Of course, my dad saw right through them.

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

I love to kayak in the marshes on the Gulf Coast.

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

When we travel, we love the road trips and always take the back roads. So, I would love to "back road" Nova Scotia.

**What vegetable do you hate?**

I have tried but still hate butter beans! Too chalky!

**What do you love the smell of?**

I love the smell of jasmine and the sweet pea vine, when in bloom, of course.

**What is your favorite ice cream?**

Moo-Ilenium, Blue Bell.

**What chore do you absolutely hate doing?**

I dislike window washing and dusting.

**What electronic gadget could you not live without?**

Anything with an "I". My son works for Apple.

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

I think I am somewhere in between.

**Name one wonderful childhood memory involving gardening.**

As a little girl, my dad made flower beds just for me to plant flowers and radishes. Also, when we were very young Sparky and I had a huge veggie garden and it was fun learning what not to do!

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

Country and cottage, weeds are less evident!

### Garden Checklist for March 2013

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

- Often, tomato and pepper plants started outdoors from seed will grow so quickly they will catch up with commercial plants in size within a few weeks. For many gardeners, this is the only way to obtain rare or heirloom varieties. But because this has been a winter with erratic weather patterns, it's best to keep an eye on young tomato transplants so that they may be covered if the threat of a late frost occurs.
- Don't be in a hurry to set out young pepper plants. Wait until the temperatures seem to be settled.

- Pruning of evergreens and summer flowering trees and shrubs should be completed in early March. Prune spring flowering trees and shrubs as soon as they finish blooming.
- Start hanging baskets of petunias, ferns and others for another dimension in landscape color. One attractive begonia plant can yield a number of others through careful rooting of stem cuttings.
- Plant dahlia tubers in fertile, well-drained soil.
- In North Texas there is still time to plant seeds of your favorite annuals in flats to be transplanted out-of-doors when danger of frost is past.
- Select and order caladium tubers as well as coleus plants for late April and early May planting. Do not plant caladiums until soil temperature reaches 70° F.
- As camellia and azalea plants finish blooming, fertilize them with three pounds of azalea-camellia fertilizer per 100 square feet of bed area. Check mulch on azalea and camellia beds and add where needed.
- Fertilize roses every 4 to 6 weeks from now until September.
- Beware of close-out sales on bare-root trees and shrubs. The chance of survival is rather low on bare-root plants this late in the season. Your best bet at this time of year is to depend on container-grown or balled-and-burlapped plants for landscape use.
- Plant Blue Plumbago (*Plumbago capensis*) now for season-long low maintenance color. It is usually cold hardy to Zone 8 and sheltered places elsewhere. Although tolerant of sunny conditions, blue plumbago prefers a little protection from the hot afternoon sun. It is quite drought tolerant and blooms from spring till frost.
- Now is a time to thin larkspur, zinnia, cockscomb and cosmos seedlings. Plants will bloom much better if thinned to about 4" apart. Transplant or share the extras with gardening friends.

## LANDSCAPE DESIGN STUDY SERIES

**PLAN AHEAD!! Dates for fall session just released!**

**SEPTEMBER 23 & 24, 2013  
LANDSCAPE DESIGN COURSE III**

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 III of the course, but they do not need to be taken in any particular order.

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