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April 2013

GRIMES COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 9, ISSUE IV

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#### Newsletter

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Email: [grimesmastergardeners@gmail.com](mailto:grimesmastergardeners@gmail.com)

### Upcoming Events

2013 Class Schedule and Speakers: please see next page

April 10 10:00 am Field Trip to Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens (Note: this is a Wednesday). Meet in the parking lot at 9:45am. 22306 Aldine Westfield Rd, Humble, TX 77338  
<http://www.hcp4.net/mercer/>

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



### Specialist Training Opportunities



Get to Know Your Fellow  
Master Gardeners!

Visit with Kathy Denning and Ann DeWitt



TEXAS A&M  
AGRILIFE  
EXTENSION

## MG Intern Class Schedule

- Apr 9 Landscape Horticulture  
Nicky Maddams, Landscape Designer
- 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  
Nicky Maddams, Master Gardener
- May 14 Composting; Rainwater Catchment & Rain Barrel Demonstration  
Sharon Murry and TBD
- May 21 Short Program and Potluck  
Extension Office and Grounds Tour  
Kim Hall, Grimes Extension Agent



KATHY DENNING

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

I was born in North Carolina, have lived in 9 states, and have been in Texas for over 30 years.

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

At 20, I traveled to the Ivory Coast one summer while my father was working there.

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

I love Dogwood trees and flowers – it is the state flower of N.C., my birth state. But I also love the legend surrounding it, that the bracts on the flowers resemble a cross and the cleft-like tears symbolize the nail marks from the Crucifixion.

I do not have any in my own yard, but there are many in the woods surrounding my property, in full bloom now.

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

I loved the gardens at Monticello. The history of gardening by Thomas Jefferson was so interesting, and the beds, lovely in their own right, are laid out to take advantage of the beautiful views.



Dogwood Tree in Bloom

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

Panera with friends and Chick-Fil-A with my grandchildren, but I much prefer Carrabba's.

**What is your favorite season?**

Spring, when everything comes to life again. But I also like the heat of late summer, the slowing down of fall, and the sleepy rest of winter.

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

Never having been a gardener and finding myself in the country, I signed up for the class to learn how to garden and also to meet people. I stayed for the friendships I have made and the interest I've developed in all things garden related.

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

I've experience a couple of hurricanes where we lost power for days, being snowed in by a few blizzards, and the Grimes County wildfires from which I had to evacuate.

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

A copperhead greeted me on my back porch as I arrived home late one night. I won.

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

I would love to visit Montana. Bozeman would be my first choice but really anywhere in the state.

I don't know that I hate any, but one can only eat so much kale!

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



## April Vegetable Planting Guide

Beans, Green	through May 5
Beans, Lima	through April 10
Beans, Pinto	through May 5
Celery	through April 30
Chard, Swiss	through April 20
Corn, Sweet	through June 15
Cucumber	through June 15
Eggplant	through June 10
Lettuce, Romaine	through May 21
Mustard	through April 15
Peas, Southern	through June 15
Peppers	through June 15
Radish	through May 5
Squash	through June 15
Tomatoes	through April 20
Turnip	through April 20

Orange blossoms on my orange trees, anything baking in the oven, freshly brewed coffee, roses.

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

Washing windows and screens. But I love clean windows!

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

I think I'm a mix of both – I love a party and a season of being often with people, but need to be alone to recharge, whether I'm working or relaxing.

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

As a child, I lived in Pittsburgh. I remember my best friend's grandmother cutting fresh rhubarb stalks for us from her garden so we could chew on them as we played. And at my house, we had a strawberry patch in which a bird built her nest, and the babies would run under the leaves of the plants before they could fly. I never was fast enough to catch one of the babies, but they sure did like the strawberries!

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

Country, with a little bit of cottage. I like properties with garden "rooms", paths that lead from one garden to the next, arbors, fences and rocks. I like a little planned chaos!



APRIL brings us the following birthday:

Kendra Pate – April 14

May your year ahead be full of happiness and joy!

## Master Gardener Specialist Training Conclave

Texas A&M Campus  
May 28-May 31, 2013  
\$225/session before April 15, 2013

The MG Specialist Conclave is an opportunity for certified Master Gardeners to gain specialist training in one or more subject areas in a conference setting. Three specialist courses will be taught concurrently at the Texas A&M Horticultural Sciences Department building on the Texas A&M University Campus at College Station, Texas. Certified Master Gardeners with approval and support of their county coordinator may register for one or two training sessions listed below.

**Vegetable:** The vegetable specialist training will address topics necessary to increase knowledge and improve skills in vegetable gardening. Topics covered include soil building, garden location and setup, insect, disease, and weed management, organic options, and raised bed gardening. The workshop will also consist of a hands-on tomato grafting session where participants will graft their own plants and then take home for planting.

**Earth-Kind Landscape:** The Earth-Kind® Landscape training will expose Master Gardeners to landscape principles and prepare them with basic knowledge on how to identify and solve common landscape problems. This training will also focus on one of the Earth-Kind® principles, proper plant selection, as proper plant selection and care reduces landscape inputs in the future. Plant materials will include a wide range of woody and herbaceous plants, and a 'tree walk' on campus will be part of the training.

**Pecan:** The pecan specialist training is intended to prepare a Master Gardener to recognize common home pecan production problems (insects, nutritional disorders, and diseases) commonly seen in county extension offices and to provide guidance to homeowners in water, fertilizer, tree training and other basic pecan cultural practices. The course also prepares the specialist to coordinate and assist in management of a county or regional pecan show with directed training in the area of pecan variety identification, sample preparation and judging.

For on-Line Registration please click on the link: <http://agriliferegister.tamu.edu> (keyword Master Gardener). More information [here](#).

## WEEDING TIME

Submitted by Edmond McGee, MG

Spring is right around the corner but the weeds have already gotten a head start. Gardening is like a marriage, you must take the bad with the good. We all love the beautiful blooms but hate the weeding and maintenance. If you are like me, weeding is high on the list of things I dislike most.

Last year a friend suggested a new weeding procedure which can be used when the wind is blowing 30 mph; and also prevents over spray. His suggestion was to apply the herbicide mixture with a 4 inch wide paint brush. I took his idea and improved by mixing the herbicide stronger for more stubborn weeds. My change was to pour the mixture into a latex paint tray and use a long handle latex paint roller to apply the solution. This saves the old back and prevents killing the knees. Next, I would load the roller with mixture and carefully roll it over the weeds, being sure to thoroughly wet all the weeds.

I would suggest not getting the mixture nearer than 2 inches from the stalk of the rose or other flowers you want to protect. This small area can be easily hand weeded before or after the treatment as per your preference. I tested this on part of my beds last year and was delighted at the ease of application and also with the end results.

I, being the LAZY GARDENER, am always seeking short cuts and labor saving ideas. I hope you are successful with this weeding tip!

## Questions Received at Extension Office

**Q. My small pond gets green algae – it turns red and looks like a crust on top of pond. How do I get rid of it?**

A. Question forwarded to Dr. Masser, TAMU

**Q. The foliage on my citrus trees is turning yellow. Why?**

A. This is likely caused by a nitrogen deficiency. Nitrogen is a nutrient used in almost every process of life for citrus and fruit trees, from growth to the production of fruit. A lack of nitrogen in the soil will affect the tree's health, beginning with the leaves. Add a nitrogen-rich fertilizer to the soil.

Secondly, iron is a vital nutrient for citrus. Citrus trees that lack iron in the soil will produce stunted, small and yellowish leaves that weaken the tree due to their lowered capacity for photosynthesis. Adding iron-rich fertilizers or compost to the soil around the citrus tree helps increase the soil's nitrogen content and improves the health of the tree. Compost and fertilizer should be applied in early spring.

**Q. How do I get rid of goat weed in my acre garden? I want to plant watermelon and vegetables. What can I get legally, since I do not possess a pesticide license?**

A. Wait until late APRIL to spray. Using a 5-gallon sprayer, fill the sprayer with 4 pints of an herbicide containing the active ingredient 2,4-D amine. This amount of solution should treat one acre. If after 304 days the weed are not dying (limp and sickly looking) spray the weeds again using a 5-gallon sprayer, fill the sprayer with 8 pints of the herbicide. It should not take more than two sprayings to kill the weeds.

Do not harvest anything from the garden for at least 7 days after spraying. It is recommended that you wash all produce thoroughly before eating.

2,4-D is a common herbicide and you should be able to find it just about anywhere. We are unable to recommend specific brands.

**Q. I am interested in a mulberry tree and have a few questions: is it native to Zone 8; where can I purchase; do I need two for pollination; anything else I need to know?**

A. Mulberry trees are either male or female. It is impossible to tell which gender the tree is until they flower, but that could be as long as ten years. The best way to know gender is to buy from a reputable nursery that has propagated the tree from either an existing male or female tree. In some cases, the tree could be monoecious, which is one tree that has both male and female flowers on different branches. Also nearly impossible to identify until flowering. Therefore, you will likely need one male and one female to ensure you have proper pollination.

For our area of Texas, Texas A&M suggests that you get a Red Mulberry, Moral Mulberry or Lampasas Mulberry. They are all native to the streams and creek bottoms of the eastern two thirds of the state. They are not as drought-resistant or tolerant of poor, thin soil as the Texas Mulberry however. Texas

Mulberry, Red Mulberry, Littleleaf Mulberry, Wild Mulberry, Dwarf Mulberry and Mexican Mulberry can tolerate different soils as long as they are fairly moist but well-drained. These are native to the western two-thirds of Texas. All are hardy to Zone 5.

I am unable to recommend specific nurseries, but suggest you call around your area to find the mulberry that you choose.

**Q. I have a question on how to handle Wild Rose bushes after they have been killed off. I have sprayed them and they are dead, but I am not sure what the best thing to do with them now (spray them again, burn them, scrape them, mow them). I have heard all things and wanted to get your opinion.**

A. Since you have already killed the bushes, TAMU advises that you dig up the roots and destroy them by burning or by saturating with herbicide. It appears that even though you kill the top of the bush, the roots are capable of living unless they are also destroyed.

It is not advised to mow live bushes as they will spread seed when mowed and continue to produce new bushes, so I would be wary of doing the same to dead bushes.



ANN DEWITT

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

Garland, Texas; born and raised

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

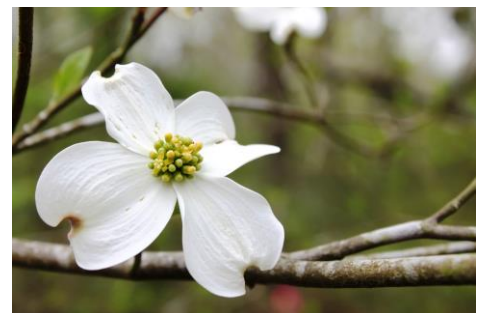
Costa Rica. Thom and I got married on the beach in Costa Rica. I would love to explore the country more.

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

Europe; because I haven't been, but I would want to go "off the beaten path" in the countryside of Italy, Belgium, Switzerland, Ireland. I'm not much for cities.

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

I love conifers such as redwoods, spruce, and fir. But since I am nowhere near that environment, I feel blessed to live among the pines.



*We have only found one dogwood on our property; we treasure it*

**What is your favorite season?**

Spring and fall; anything but summer here in Texas.

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

I have a passion for plants and flowers so I wanted to learn more about gardening, bring my passion for gardening to others in the volunteer work I do, and have fun with those who share my interest.

**What is your favorite ice cream?**

Mocha Almond Fudge

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

Both. I like exploring the countryside, an antique shop, or plant nursery with a friend or small group. I'm not much for crowds nowadays though.

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

I remember when I was a child that daffodils were the first flower to bloom. They signified spring to me. My mom would wrap up the first daffodil in tissue paper and a pretty ribbon so I could take it to my teacher. When my son was small, I continued that tradition. I told him, "The first daffodil is always for your teacher".

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

My landscape is focused on native plants. I also have a kitchen garden where I combine flowers, herbs, and vegetables in raised beds.



## Grimes County Fair June 1-8, 2013

Anyone wishing to enter plants in the Horticulture Division at the County Fair must be in possession of such at least 3 months prior to show. That means by March 1<sup>st</sup>. All entries must be in good condition, free from dirt, disease, and insects, and pots should be squeaky clean!! Plant categories are:

- Class 39 Container Plants (ex. Cactus, Fern, Violets, etc.)
- Class 40 Terrariums
- Class 41 Hanging Baskets
- Class 42 Cut Flowers
- Class 43 Herbs
- Class 44 Miscellaneous (one item other than those listed)

For details of other classes in Creative Arts & Living Division, check the website [grimescountyfair.com](http://grimescountyfair.com), or the Fair Book at the Extension Office.



Our new class is several weeks into training sessions and once again, we have a great group of students!



*Interns Cheryl, Kim, Lacy, Alice, Angela, Stephanie, Dia and Michael (missing: Rosalia and Scott)*



*Class Committee: Kathy L, Jamie (Co-Chair), Kathy D, Jayla (MG Coordinator), Nicky (Co-Chair) and Cathey (missing: Alvie and Marguerite)*



*Our first speaker was Jayla Fry, Master Gardener Program Coordinator*



*Scott, Dia and Michael were great at demonstrating plant growth!*



Have you considered attending the TMGA State Conference? This year it is being held in McAllen, Texas and is hosted by Cameron and Hidalgo Counties Master Gardeners on October 17 – 19, 2013.

Experience the Blooms, Birds and Butterflies of South Texas!

Please email [Nicky Maddams](mailto:Nicky_Maddams) for more information if you are interested in attending; we are booking a block of hotel rooms together.