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Co-op: Fred Vesperman

Farmers Market: Helen Quinn

Texas AgriLife Extension:

Rodney Finch : County Agent

Barbara Szymczak: Secretary

Newsletter Editor: Helen Quinn

Articles, photos and other information due by 27th of each month. Send to :

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HOE! HOE! HOE!

**Grimes County Master Gardeners Newsletter
VOLUME 5, ISSUE 5, MAY 2009**

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES & FUN MAY/JUNE 2009

May 12 GCMG Regular Meeting, Go Texan Building, Fairgrounds
9.00 am

Speaker: Sandra Williams, Native Plants

May 16 Grand Re-Opening of the Farmers' Market, 9.00 am

June 2 GCMG Evening Meeting, Quinn residence. Directions will be provided – **WILL BE CANCELLED IF RAINING**

June 4-13 Grimes County Fair

CLASS IS OUT!

Congratulation to all the trainees who now become Interns, working on volunteer hours required for certification. The final class was held April 21, with a General Q&A Forum, followed by a program on "Communications" by our County Extension Agent, Rodney Finch. A wonderful Pot Luck lunch rounded out the 2009 Training Class – photos below:



We do food well!!!!

MEETING SCHEDULE 2009

Regular meetings are held on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at the Go-Texan Building, Grimes County Fairgrounds, at 9.00 am, except as noted below. Other meetings are held in the evening at members' homes and on Saturdays. Whenever weather permits, work time at the various beds at the Fairgrounds will take place before or after meetings. Bring a brown bag lunch on those days!

- May 16 9.00 am at Go Texan. Speaker: Sandra Williams, on Native Plants. Business meeting.
- June 2 6.00 pm at Quinn residence. Bring lawn chairs, coolers, dish to share and your beverage of choice. NOTE CHANGE FROM REGULAR MEETING DATE – RAIN WILL CANCEL!!
- July 14 9.00 am at Go Texan. Speaker: Monique Reed "Belly Button Botany". Business meeting

FARMERS MARKET

Start up scheduled for Saturday May 16, at 9.00 am at the Cedar Creek Pavilion, Duke Street, Navasota. This is at the south end of the Brookshire Bros. parking lot, behind the Auto Parts store and Chinese Restaurant. We are still looking for vendors – if you have any spare vegetables, cut flowers, preserves, pickles, hand-made crafts, plants, etc. please let me know so we can save you a spot.



GRIMES COUNTY FAIR

June 4 – 13 2009

It's getting closer! Start polishing your pots, pruning your plants, reviewing your recipes and testing them twice! There are classes for all talents and ages, and once you become "Golden" (at 65) they even waive the entry fee. What a deal!!

For more information call the Texas AgriLife Extension Office 936-873-3907 or check Fair website www.grimescountyfair.com



MY NAME IS DYONNE "DEE" BENTZ
I AM A TEXAS TARRAGON ADDICT
[AKA MEXICAN MINT MARIGOLD - *Tagetes lucida*]

I admit I was powerless over Texas Tarragon – that my life had become unmanageable.

I came to believe that getting educated (through the Grimes County Master Gardeners) could restore me to sanity.

Having had an educational awakening as a result of the Grimes County Master Gardeners program, I try to carry the message about Texas Tarragon to everyone I see, and teach them how to grow and use it.

In the beginning I was an occasional social user. I maintained control. All self-control was lost after my very first experience seasoning my trademark dish with it. That first bite of buttermilk chicken seasoned this new way, brought rave reviews from family and friends. I began to experiment with the TT, using it with pork chops, catfish, scrambled eggs, goulash, chicken and dumplings, all types of gravies, stews, stuffings, sauces, etc. I crossed over into addiction by trying over and over again to get that same pleasure/taste fix from all types of foods – not just chicken.

It began to be a very expensive habit. I made a decision to grow a crop for my own use only. Problem here was, I did not know how to grow anything.

Ann Wheeler was my first teacher, at a local plant business. I learned that Tarragon does not grow in Texas – Mexican Mint Marigold is the substitute, and to start it in the fall. I killed two or three plants in the beginning – now I have 5 plants that are in their third year. Ann also taught us that window sill herb gardens are a myth. She said “put that herb into a 12 inch pot.” I am so grateful for her and the knowledge she shares. Four of my TT plants share a 22 inch pot – they totally fill in all space in their full glory. I constantly harvest, so never have seen many flowers. I am told they are beautiful.

Herbs and propagation were my next short classes at the Community College. A Master Gardener taught both classes. One of the students was a MCMG and suggested that I become a Master Gardener. My choice was Grimes County because it was the closest, and I prefer small groups.

My journey has gotten me involved with many, many gardening addicts who do not want a cure. What a wonderful group of people to have in my life!

Projects this summer include learning how to make homemade tarragon vinegar, and how to properly dry the Texas Tarragon to preserve it for future use. The herb fresh from the garden will keep for over a week in the fridge in a plastic bag. Try the Buttermilk Chicken – you will be happy you did. The original recipe comes from one of my first massage clients, Betty Ford, of Sealy. Betty was a Gourmet Cook, and taught me this wonderful dish. I prepared this for over 25 years before the discovery of Texas Tarragon.

Pound boneless, skinless chicken breasts very thin, cover completely with buttermilk, and refrigerate over night. Shake the chicken in a plastic bag with white flour. Saute 'til brown on both sides in a pan with olive oil and butter. Strip the TT leaves off the stem, cover both sides of chicken about ¼ of surface. I cover surface about 1/3. While frying one side, place TT on up-side – place on other side when you turn it. Don't forget to salt and pepper. Stir drippings with some butter and flour. Add milk, salt/pepper/TT, burgundy cooking wine. Cook 'til it thickens. Enjoy! This recipe is equally wonderful with whole chicken pieces. Just remember to skin the entire chicken.

Happy Gardening,



Dee

Vegetable Planting Guide



Sweet Corn – through 5/5

Radish – through 5/5

Pinto Beans – through 5/5

Cucumber – through 5/5

Eggplant – through 6/10

Romaine Lettuce – through 5/31

Melons through 6/15

Peppers – through 6/15

Pumpkins – through 6/15

Summer Squash – through 6/15

Winter Squash – through 6/15

“Do not plant “

Here are three plants that should be avoided to help maintain a friendly neighborhood and environment:

1. Elephant ear (*Colocasia esculenta*).
Elephant ears have escaped yards and naturalized along the banks of bayous, lakes and streams, particularly Armand Bayou and Lake Houston.
2. Japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*)
This vine, pretty and fragrant as it is, reached into the canopies of forests, shading out most or all light for native trees.
3. Chinese wisteria (*Wisteria sinensis*).
The fragrant and beautiful purple wisteria is now strangling native trees and shrubs all the way through East Texas and western Louisiana.

The Vegetables less planted.

Now is a good time to think about planting something different this coming fall. Many vegetables can be started in the fall and will grow on through the winter to reward us in the spring and early summer. Between Thanksgiving and Christmas I planted leeks, parsnips, celery, beets, spinach and strawberries. The spinach was great, but has played out now the weather is heating up. The celery is ho-hum, the parsnips I haven't yet excavated. The beets are good, the strawberries are producing well on a mulch of pine straw, but I think the leeks look like they will be the star performers. Check the price in the grocery store, if you can find them, and you'll see a good reason to grow them yourself! If you are not familiar with leeks, they have a delicate onion-like flavor. They are often grown in sandy soil, and need thorough washing to clean between the leaves.



Helen Quinn

“Horticulture is, next to music, the most sensitive of the fine arts. Properly allied to Architecture, garden-making is as near as a man may get to the Divine functions.”

Maurice Hewlett