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# HOE! HOE! HOE!

## Grimes County Master Gardeners Newsletter VOLUME 5, ISSUE 6, JUNE 2009

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**Current projects**

**New:**

- \*compilation of fact sheet of recommended vegetable varieties for Grimes County. Please complete and return the questionnaire to Helen by August 31st, listing the best varieties and days to harvest.
- \*Introduction of fact-photos section on website, starting with insects by Sandra Williams .

**Ongoing:**

- \*Rose beds and landscaping at Go Texan Building, Fairgrounds.
- \*Landscaping at Texas Agri-Life Extension Office.
- \*Painting Texas with Wildflowers

## Vegetable Planting Guide



Eggplant – through 6/10

Melons through 6/15

Peppers – through 6/15

Pumpkins – through 6/15

Summer Squash – through 6/15

Winter Squash – through 6/15

## Grimes County Fair

Last call!

By the time some of  
you read this, it  
could already be  
happening!

Last minute  
Questions?

936-873-3907

Texas Agri-Life  
Extension Office

## MEETING SCHEDULE 2009

Regular meetings are held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month  
At the Go Texan Building, Grimes Co. Fairgrounds, 9.00 am.,  
except as noted below. Two evening meetings held at  
Members' homes, and two Saturday field trips, enable  
Members who work to participate.

- |         |                                                                                      |
|---------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| June ?  | Evening Meeting – Time and Place to be notified                                      |
| July 14 | Go Texan. 9.00 am Speaker Monique Reed “Belly Button Botany”. Short Business Meeting |
| Aug 11  | Go Texan. 9.00 am Speaker Justin Mechell “Rain Gardens”. Short Business Meeting.     |

# Seed Saving

By Sandra Williams



If you garden, you have plants which go to seed. It certainly makes economic sense to harvest and save seed from year to year, especially when you look at the cost of seeds these days. A few simple steps will have you harvesting a large enough seed supply for your own garden as well as plenty of surplus to share with friends and family.

Flowers form seed heads or pods. When they dry, nature has devised a variety of ways for these seeds to disperse. Some just fall on the ground below; some are devised to attach themselves to moving creatures. A few have some sort of projectile device which propels them away from the parent plant and many are designed to be carried by the wind. Find and collect your seeds when they are dry, but before the dispersal process starts. You may be going back to the plant a number of times to collect dried seed. Just as a plant flowers over a period of time, its seeds also dry over a period of time. Finding the seeds is occasionally a problem, but careful examination will yield success and there are a number of websites and resources available to help if you have any difficulty. Googling “seed identification” will yield many different kinds of resources for your edification.

As you gather the seeds, spread them out on newspaper or paper towels to continue drying. This takes a week or so. As the seeds dry, separate them from the chafe or excess matter often surrounding them. A kitchen strainer might be helpful at this point. Place the cleaned seeds in a paper envelope and label your envelope as to variety and year. The best place to keep your seeds viable is in the refrigerator. Put the envelopes of seeds inside a glass jar with a lid. I've had good luck saving seeds in this manner. Many seeds remain viable for years kept this way. If you have any packages of desiccant which come with aspirin and other packaged goods, toss one in with your seeds just for good measure, though it's not necessary.

Get any bills or junk mail? You might use the envelopes for your seeds. I like to cut big squares from the two bottom corners. A fold and a little tape on the open edges will keep the seeds contained for storage.

Here's a good site for comprehensive seed information: [theseedsite.co.uk/](http://theseedsite.co.uk/)

## Pomegranate : *Punica granatum* by Helen Quinn

When Sandra and I were in Tunisia in October 2008, pomegranates were in season ; stalls lined the roadsides and the fruit markets were overflowing with the delicious and colorful fruits. I have since purchased a “Nana” dwarf cultivar, which apparently can be grown in a pot all its life if desired. It will stay under 4 ft tall, and may or may not produce fruit here. What I thought were fruits already forming turned out to be the flowers, which emerge out of a “hard shell”.

Pomegranates have a fascinating place in mythology. The genus name *Punica* is the name of the ancient city of Carthage (in Tunisia). Cultivated since ancient times, it was once known as the “Carthage Apple”.

In ancient and medieval worlds the pomegranate symbolized birth and death, being itself capable of “bleeding”. It was frequently associated with maidens and maiden-goddesses, for its bloodiness was often identified with the menses of an underworld goddess. It had simultaneous positive and negative associations, as chthonic divinities were the sources of Life and of Death, of Health and of Illness, of Fertility and Infertility. It was the fruit of Kore the Maid, or Persephone, whom even as an underworld divinity was beautiful and kind. In Christian iconographic paintings, the Virgin Mary often holds Persephone’s pomegranate, symbolizing Mary’s authority over the death of her son, much as Athena in her dark moods upheld a pomegranate in her left hand. In ancient Syria the god Rimmon, whose name means “Pomegranate” had a consort, Shala, whose name means “Bride” or “Rock”. Shala the Bride (or Rock) is thought by some to be the same as the maidenly Side (Pomegranate) who in Greek mythology vied with Hera in a competition of beauty. For her audacity she was punished, being made to believe she had caused the death of her own children. Consequently she threw herself from a high cliff onto a rock below. Where her blood spilled upon the rock, the first pomegranate tree arose. Stories abound concerning the pomegranate

A pomegranate fruit, when opened, reveals hundreds of tiny seeds packed tightly inside. Each seed (called an aril) is surrounded by a translucent coating, all of which is edible. No need to spit out the seeds, although for some this might be an amusing pastime! Rinds and flowers are used for textile dyes. The leaves, when mixed with vinegar produce an ink. The bark and stems contain high levels of the toxin tannin and have been used to combat tapeworms (don’t try this at home without consulting your doctor).

Seeds will typically germinate easily, and propagation is also by root cuttings or suckers from adult plants. There are many varieties of the pomegranate bush/shrub/tree, and they come in all shapes and sizes. In USDA Zone 8b there is a fairly good chance of fruit developing, but there are many variables. It is probably best to just enjoy the flowers and then get really excited if fruit comes to maturity.



Lilium longiflorum  
Easter Lily, with  
Ipomea batatas Sweet  
Potato Vine “Blackie”,  
and Rudbeckia amplexicaulis  
Cone-flower



### List of Medicinal Herbs

Since prehistoric times, in all ages, in all civilizations and in all quadrants of the globe, plants have been proven to have or have been thought to have medicinal properties. There are more than one thousand four hundred plants including trees, shrubs, and groundcovers in the plant kingdom that are considered to be medicinal plants. In the Linneal binomial system of plant taxonomy, more than sixty plants have been given the species name *officinalis*, *officinale* or *officinarum*. The group has a great deal of diversity and it includes a rose, a peony, several culinary herbs, and several vegetables.

### Etymology of *Officinalis*

*Officina*, a noun, is a Medieval Latin word derived from the noun *opificina* that was later shortened to *officina*. It referred originally to a workshop, later to a monastic storeroom, then to an herb store and finally to a pharmacy. The adjective, *officinalis*, in all of its declined forms is used in botanical Latin to mean used in medicine in the sense of used in the practice of medicine.

*Officinalis*, *officinale*, *officinarum*, all adjectives, are the same word with different endings and they all mean used in medicine. The word ending changes because in Latin the adjective modifying the noun must agree with the noun in gender, case and number. All three forms, *officinalis*, *officinale*, and *officinarum* are in the genitive case. If the noun is singular and the gender is either masculine or feminine, the modifying adjective is *officinalis*. If the noun is neuter, the modifying adjective is *officinale*. If the noun is feminine and plural and belongs to the first declension, the modifying adjective is *officinarum*.

**Dandelion, *Taraxacum officinale*: Did you know  
Dandelions are richer in potassium than bananas?**

## Knock-Out Roses

By Emily Pridgeon

In the last 10 years, no plant has caught on quicker than the Knock-Out Rose. Who would think that this rose would stand out among over 500 other rose varieties? Thanks to the efforts of the Extension service, which vigorously tested this plant, the Knock-Out Rose has proven to be the best all-around rose for Texas. Businesses, landowners, homeowners and more are using it for more than just a pretty flower. The Knock-Out Rose can be used as a hedge, a screen or as a replacement for another type of plant that has failed you. These roses are also extremely disease resistant and drought tolerant. There are 7 types of Knock-Out Roses; here we will discuss 5 of them.

The Red Knock-Out Rose is a carefree rose with excellent disease resistance and a light, spicy fragrance. It has fluorescent cherry red blossoms which bloom profusely throughout the summer. In the fall, the flowers give way to deep purple fall foliage. This rose also self-cleans, so you don't have to worry about removing spent blooms. The Double Red Knock-Out Rose has all of the same great characteristics of the Red Knock-Out, along with fuller blooms. The Double Knock-Out has twice as many petals per bloom when compared to the basic Red Knock-Out.

If pink is more your color, then try the Pink Knock-Out Rose. With bright pink flowers, this rose goes well in any garden. This rose is also self-cleaning, so say goodbye to hours spent hunched over in the garden removing old blooms. The Pink Knock-Out is a continuous bloomer from spring until frost. It also has excellent disease and drought tolerance. There is now a Double Pink Knock-Out, which mirrors the Double Red. The Blushing Knock-Out Rose is a soft, light pink rose with all the same great characteristics that make the Knock-Out roses so popular. Disease and drought-tolerant, this repeat bloomer would make a great addition to your yard. For a two-toned bloom, try the Rainbow Knock-Out. This rose has light pink petals turning bright yellow at the center of the blooms. The Rainbow is a bit more compact than the other Knock-Outs, but it still boasts excellent drought and disease tolerance.

New for 2009 is the Sunny Knock-Out! This highly anticipated rose blooms bright yellow and fades to a creamy yellow-white. The yellow color is more intense and fades less quickly during cooler times of the year. The Sunny has a slightly more compact and upright habit than previous Knock-Outs. It also boasts all the great attributes of the rest of the Knock-Out roses. Sunny grows to 4 feet tall and wide.

If you are looking for a plant that is a profuse bloomer, can take the heat of the summer and not need constant maintenance, then the Knock-Out line of roses are for you! Use them sparingly for color, in large numbers for a hedge or privacy screen, or to fill in holes in your landscape. Good Luck, and Happy Gardening!

