



HOE! HOE! HOE!

Grimes County Master Gardeners Newsletter VOLUME 6, ISSUE 2, February 2010

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### **Officers, 2010**

*President: Jennifer Corzine  
Vice President: Donna Hebert  
Treasurer: Fred Vesperman  
Secretary: Helen Quinn*

### **Committee Chairs**

*Go Texan Beds: Kathy Enning & Linda Jolly  
Ext. Office Beds: Julia Cosgrove  
Communications: Helen Quinn  
Children's: Linda Jolly  
2010 Seminar: Sandy Robillard  
Scholarship: Sandra Stuckey  
Admin: Emily Pridgeon  
Class: Jennifer Corzine  
Painting Texas w/wildflowers: Edmond McGee  
Co-op: Fred Vesperman*

### **Texas AgriLife Extension:**

*Flora Williams : (Acting) County Agent  
Sandra Cook:: Secretary  
\*\*\*\*\**

### **Newsletter Editor:**

**Helen Quinn**

**Articles, photos and other  
Information due by 27<sup>th</sup> of each month.  
Send to:**

**[horti@qmail.com](mailto:horti@qmail.com)**

### **Website:**

**[www.grimesmastergardeners.org](http://www.grimesmastergardeners.org)**

### **Ongoing Projects:**

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

After the January meeting we held a Craft Workshop to make plant labels for the Spring Seminar in February.





## VEGETABLE PLANTING GUIDE

12/20 – 3/5 Carrots  
1/15-3/15 – Asparagus  
1/5-3/5 – Beets  
1/20-3/5 – Broccoli  
1/1-3/15 – Garlic  
1/20-3/10 - Kale  
1/20-3/10 – Kohlrabi  
1/20-3/15 – Lettuce (head)  
1/15-3/20 – Lettuce (leaf)  
1/20-4/15 – Mustard  
1/20-2/20 – Spinach  
1/15-4/20 – Turnips  
1/15-2/5 – Onions (plants)  
1/20-2/20 – Peas (English)  
1/25-3/5 Peas (Edible Pod)  
1/25-5/5 – Radish

### GRIMES COUNTY FAIR ..... HEADS UP!

The 2010 Grimes County Fair will take place June 3 – June 12, with check-in and Judging of Creative Arts (including horticulture) taking place on Saturday June 5th. As always, plants for the horticulture classes must have been in the exhibitors' hands at least 90 days prior to the event.

We are holding a seminar for kids planning to exhibit in the horticulture classes on February 27<sup>th</sup> at the Fairgrounds. Help will be needed with this event. We will cover container planting, fruits and vegetables.

We are also planning to have a booth on Senior Citizens' Day on June 9th.

Please help to make 2010 the best year ever for Master Gardener participation In our County Fair.

## Killing Fire Ant Colonies

For those not familiar with Walter Reeves, he is from the University of Georgia agriculture department, specializing in home gardening.

I know fire ants are picky eaters and any type poison that is effective takes seven feeding steps before the queen receives it. Plus, if the bait is stored in close proximity to any petroleum or fertilizer products they won't touch it. Contact poisons that are on the market just cause the colony to move away. A well developed colony can be as deep as 30 feet and spread out some 20 to 50 feet from the mound center... This was documented by studies done in the early 60's when they were first sighted in South Alabama.

An environmentally friendly cure for fire ants has been announced by Walter Reeves on his Georgia Gardener radio program. Testimonials that it REALLY WORKS are coming in.

Simply pour two cups of **CLUB SODA** (carbonated water) directly in the center of a fire ant mound. The carbon dioxide in the water is heavier than air and displaces the oxygen which suffocates the queen and the other ants. The whole colony will be dead within about two days.

Besides eliminating the ants, club soda leaves no poisonous residue, does not contaminate the ground water, and does not indiscriminately kill other insects. It is not harmful to your pets, soaks into the ground. Each mound must be treated individually and a one liter bottle of club soda will kill 2 to 3 mounds.

This article was shared by Joan Konecny, former GCMG Auxiliary member, and Master Naturalist

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Fire Ant Facts – from [www.fireant.net](http://www.fireant.net)

Masters of the Earth

Every year, the world's ants dig up more than 16 billion tons of dirt!

That's enough to fill 3 billion dump trucks! Fire Ant Information. Got Fire Ants?

Ants have been digging through the dirt for eons. Tunneling out of jungles and forests and into back yards of humans on every continent except Antarctica. Ant fossils date back to the times of dinosaurs.

They are one of the strongest animals on Earth, with the ability to lift a seed five times its weight. Elephants are only able to lift objects one fifth their weight.

There are more than a million different kinds of insects in the world, most of them solitary insects. Fireants are social insects. They live in communities and depend on one another to gather food, help build the nest, raise and care for their young, and protect themselves from enemies. Without the support of their colony, a single fireant could not survive for very long.



## KARKADE

While traveling in Egypt, we were frequently offered cool drinks or hot tea made from “Karkade” (pronounced KARkah-day), the dried calyces of the *Hibiscus sabdariffa*. The tea has a mildly tart flavor and is very refreshing. It is high in vitamin C and caffeine-free. If you obtain the dried flower parts, mix one cup with 5 cups of water, adding sugar to taste. Simmer all together for 5 minutes. Cool and strain before serving over ice as a cooling summer drink. The hot tea is also very tasty. Hot or cold, the beverage is a deep ruby color. Our Egyptian guide insisted that the proper way to prepare the karkade is to let it steep in cold water overnight in the refrigerator. He recommended it as a treatment for high blood pressure and it is widely used as such.

Thought to have originated in Africa, *H. sabdariffa* is grown in many tropical and subtropical places around the world including Mexico and Latin America. Depending upon locale, it may be called roselle, Jamaica tea or sorrel, jelly plant or Florida cranberry to name a few. It can be grown here as an annual. It is very frost tender. Its bloom is triggered by the short days of fall. Depending on which of the hundreds of known cultivars you grow, the foliage varies from green to maroon and the flowers vary from a creamy yellow to pink.

The fleshy calyces are used to make drinks, jellies and syrup. The young leaves can be used in salads or cooked as potherbs. The seeds are high in protein and when roasted can be used as a coffee substitute. It's very common to see hibiscus listed as an ingredient in herbal teas and I have purchased Egyptian hibiscus tea at Whole Foods. I've discovered a few seeds in the karkade I brought home from Egypt and will try to propagate the plant. With any luck, we'll all have seeds to plant!

Sandra Williams



Photo courtesy of :

<http://www.hort.purdue.edu/newcrop/morton/images/Plate36.jpg>

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.

**ON THE CALENDAR –FEBRUARY/MARCH**  
**DUES ARE DUE – BRING/SEND YOUR CHECKS BY**  
**JANUARY MEETING**  
**ABSOLUTE DEADLINE: FEBRUARY MEETING**

Feb 02 – Class 8.30-12.30

Feb 09 – Class 8.30-12.30

1.30 pm Regular GCMG meeting Go-Texan

Feb 15- Class 4 8.30-12.30

Feb 20 GCMG Spring Planting Seminar, Navasota Center

Feb 27 – Seminar for Fair horticulture kids – details TBA

Feb 23- Class 5 8.30-12.30

Mar 2 – Class 8.30-12.30

Mar 9 – Class 8.30-12.30

1.30 pm GCMG Regular meeting – Go Texan

Mar 16 Class 8.30-12.30

Mar 23 Class 8.30-12.30

Mar 30 Class 8.30-12.30

**JANUARY MEETING/CRAFT WORKSHOP**



|                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                             |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| <b>2010 CLASS SCHEDULE</b><br>January 26 | Introduction of officers, duties, etc.<br><b>Chapter 3:</b> TMG Program/Earthkind Landscaping<br>Continuation of first hour. Hand out test for Earthkind, test/reading assignment for next week.                          | Jayla Frye                                  |
| February 2                               | <b>Chapter 1:</b> Plant Growth and Development                                                                                                                                                                            | Lisa Whittlesey                             |
| February 9                               | <b>Chapter 2:</b> Soil, Water and Plant Nutrients                                                                                                                                                                         | Dr. Sam Feagley                             |
| February 16                              | <b>Chapter 6:</b> Herbs                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Ann Wheeler                                 |
| February 23                              | <b>Chapter 4:</b> Plant Health                                                                                                                                                                                            | Dr. Carlos Bogran                           |
| March 2                                  | <b>Chapter 4:</b> Entomology                                                                                                                                                                                              | Dr. Carlos Bogran                           |
| March 9                                  | <b>Chapter 5:</b> Home Fruit & Nut Production                                                                                                                                                                             | Tom Leroy                                   |
| March 16                                 | <b>Chapter 6:</b> Vegetable Gardening                                                                                                                                                                                     | Dr. Joe Novak                               |
| March 23                                 | <b>Chapter 1:</b> Plant Propagation<br>Composting                                                                                                                                                                         | Helen Quinn/Sandra Williams<br>Sharon Murry |
| March 30                                 | <b>Chapter 7:</b> Landscape Horticulture                                                                                                                                                                                  | Elliott Head ??                             |
| April 6                                  | Rainwater Harvesting                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Robert & Sandra Stuckey                     |
| April 13                                 | <b>Chapter 8:</b> Lawn & Turfgrass Care                                                                                                                                                                                   | Dr. David Chalmers                          |
| April 20                                 | Meet at Extension Office, 911 Room.<br>Intro/Q&A<br>Tour Extension Office, meet staff, review volunteer requirements for office.<br>Presentation on volunteer hours, time sheets, etc. , any other housekeeping.<br>Lunch |                                             |