



# MG Grapevine

<http://scmg.tamu.edu>

<http://easttexasgardening.tamu.edu>

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**MG Association Meeting**  
**September 1<sup>st</sup> 11:30 AM**  
**Rose Garden Center**

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## Joanie Matthews says,

"I'm looking forward to seeing all of you on the bus tour and I have ordered cooler weather. On Wednesday, September 14th be at Harvey Hall at 7:30 a.m. with bells on!



Joanie Matthews  
SCMGA President

We will leave at 8 o'clock sharp. If for some reason you cannot make the trip please let me know as there is a waiting list."

Keep Cool, Joanie

## Association Meeting

Because of the dry hot weather we are having, the chances of us coming in contact with wild animals in our yards and gardens have increased dramatically.

Our September program will be presented by Dr. James Wright a regional zoonosis veterinarian for the Texas Department of State Health Services in Tyler. He will tell us all the ins and outs of rabies and other transmittal diseases you could get through contact with animals in your yard or garden. He will tell us what to do and what not to do if we are confronted with a rabid animal. He has a PowerPoint presentation that should be very interesting.

Hope to see you all there. Ronny Duncan

## AgriWorld

*Our Secret Garden* will once again be part of AgriWorld at the East Texas State Fair. The fair opens on September 22<sup>nd</sup> and runs through October 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Hazel Bateman and Jean Smith who are co-coordinators advise that the display will be much like last year, with tweaks here and there. The exhibit has been moved back to the other side of the building and *Our Secret Garden* will be the introduction to AgriWorld.

Even though many MGs have already signed up to work, more help can always be used. The initial setup can begin on September 6<sup>th</sup>.

The 2010 Secret Garden was said to be the best yet and this year's presentation promises to be better still. To see pictures of the 2010 display click here to go to <http://www.pbase.com/mrd/secret10>.

## Fall Conference & Bulb Sale

This annual event will be on Saturday, October 8, 2011. The free conference includes an educational program along with an opportunity to purchase heirloom and unusual bulbs not normally found at local nurseries and retail stores. The featured conference speaker is Dallas County Master Gardener Diana Harris. Ms. Harris, a Certified Landscape Professional, well known in North Texas.

SCMG Merlin Eck will present a slideshow providing information on the many varieties of bulbs offered at the Bulb Sale. The complete list of bulbs which will be available (subject to change) is viewable at <http://scmg.tamu.edu/files/2010/04/Fall-Conference-Bulb-List.pdf>



You don't need me to tell you it's hot and dry. Our plants are telling us, though – it's hard to keep some from wilting. And with more communities in the area going on water conservation restrictions, it may be decision time at your house. Do you let the lawn go and try keep the shrubs and trees alive? Do I really need to keep all these potted plants? Maybe a newly planted prized plant will need to get the most attention to keep it from stressing. Or, focus on that strategic shade tree on the west side of the house.

Plants that are already stressed prior to this historic drought and heat wave will be the first to go. I've lost two 25-year old camellias at home – digging them up revealed they had armillaria or mushroom root rot, a common root disease that affects a very wide range of woody plants. The camellias were stressed during previous droughts, and it also looks like original owner planted them too deep. It was their time. So, I'm looking at this as an opportunity to try something new (once the weather turns nicer).

One interesting call came from a resident in the Gresham area struggling with the lawn. With a typical small back yard, they felt like they needed to take out one of the 4 large trees that took up most of the yard. The decision making process centered on what was the least desirable tree whose removal would most help the remaining trees, while at the same time maintaining critical shade for dog runs and the house. Another interesting call was on how to keep 30 blueberry bushes alive when they can only water twice a week (with no irrigation system already installed). No easy answers there.

Of course, drip and low-flow irrigation, along with mulch, is the best way to conserve water. You just need to make sure you are wetting enough of the soil profile (deep and wide enough) often enough to maintain healthy roots. Drip however will be insufficient to take care of large, mature trees. A drive around town and the country side is certainly depressing. And, prompts the other type of call coming to the office: are these trees dead? And, should I go ahead and cut them down? Unless you can reach the branches and test whether they are brittle or still supple, it is best to wait until spring and see how they leaf back out. One thing is for sure, the effects of this heat and drought will continue long after the weather changes for the better. The stress endured by trees will make them

more susceptible to problems down the road, such as hypoxylon canker and root rots. Slow and deep watering around the drip line of large trees every few weeks will help reduce the stress.

There are good resources being pulled together to help answer drought and watering/water conservation questions. I have a collection of links both on the <http://EastTexasGardening.tamu.edu> home page, and in the Links section of that site. Also I have written several articles that are on my East Texas Gardening blog at <http://agrilife.org/etg>. If you get watering and drought questions from friends, relatives or acquaintances, you can point them to some of these resources.

#### Executive Committee

The Executive Committee met on July 28<sup>th</sup> and considered the following:

Since Jim Powell has sold his lake property, Linda Sargent has volunteered her home for the picnic this fall.

SCMG will have free space in the vendor area at the Rose Festival, but no tents, tables or chairs will be provided.

Diane Harris has agreed to be the speaker at the Fall Conference (story on page one).

MG associations and members are encouraged to sign up for the state MG newsletter and to take advantage of the specialist training.

The issue of speaker honorariums was discussed. The Policies & Procedures committee will again consider the issue and return with a reworded policy.

AgriWorld opening day for setup is September 6. The exhibit has been moved back to the other side of the building and "Our Secret Garden" will be the introduction to AgriWorld.

The Rose Garden Signage committee had met and reported they had may an evaluation of the existing signage. They discussed materials used for the signs, if wording could be added to existing signs, and ideas for updates. Photos and notes were sent to the committee with recommendations for the Idea, Heritage, Shade, and Sunshine gardens. The next meeting will formulate phases for the project. Funding is still to be decided.

A bus trip to Greg Grant's property is scheduled for September 14 with cost of \$25 for the day. Donna Cole and Joanie Matthews were commended for their efforts.

A new arbor was installed in the Sunshine Garden. The arbor was donated, thus the only cost was \$75 for powder coating.

All Saints want a repeat JMG program and also to extend it to JMG2 with two groups (3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup>).

## What's Bloomin'?

By Dee Bishop

Very little for sure. Most plants I have are doing really well just to be alive. I went out the other morning and made a quick note of what looks really well and what has done the worst in this drought.

Turk's Cap has bloomed non-stop without a hitch. I have watered some and others have received none and they all are blooming well and look really good. Turk's Cap is not the most beautiful plant in the world but it is out shining hydrangeas for sure. It thrives in drought, and floods. My hummers love it too.

Althea has performed for me too. I have had to water them some, but just maybe once a week or less and they have been blooming since June: all through this horrible summer.

Winter honeysuckle looks great with little or no water. So does mock orange, and three varieties of abelia. Chinese abelia has bloomed constantly all summer and smells heavenly. I have watered it some, less than once a week. My azaleas which are the oldest are doing very well. When they wilt I soak them, about every two weeks. Oakleaf hydrangeas look well with water every 10 days or so.



Crape myrtles are outstanding all over town. I don't know how much water it takes to keep them blooming pretty, but I expect very little.

My treasured perennials that prefer zone 7-8 are gone-----dust.

I am making plans to completely redo my whole yard. St. Augustine grass is ridiculous for Texas heat and drought. I will replace it with something very drought tolerant like Bermuda or a variety of buffalo grass. I will cut out many of my gardens and replace them with a few beds of native plants. Things that can take feast or famine weather conditions. I guarantee after the drought ends, we may have some of the worst floods in history. We need plants that will take droughts with flying colors and floods equally well. All these finicky little pretties will be replaced with tough, Texas Tough, plants.

I hope all of you are okay. This oppressive heat just saps your energy, strength, and attitude. If we can hang in til October, cooler weather if not wetter weather, will come. I am ready.

LORD, PLEASE SEND US SOME RAIN!



## Good Bug, Bad Bug

By Anne Brown

### Good Honey Bees

Honey Bees are one of the most helpful insects humans know. Mankind around the world and from earliest times has known the benefits of Honey Bees. They pollinate crops, make honey, and produce wax. Bees are not a native insect but were first introduced to the Americas from Europe.

A hive consists of one Queen who is the only female allowed to produce eggs. She is fertilized by drones, the males. The rest of the hive contains workers, infertile females. Workers are just that; they hunt for and find the pollens that are used to produce honey and they defend the colony. When a colony gets too large the old queen and about half the workers will leave the hive to establish a new colony. This behavior is called swarming. During swarming bees do not attack, they are too busy locating a new place to settle so are usually not a threat and should be left alone. Bees do not usually sting while they are searching for food either. However, if a human or animal poses a threat to the hive that person or animal can usually expect to be attacked. A new hive will usually become defensive within 2 to 4 weeks.



The ability to mate between species has produced offspring that have inherited the calmer tendencies of European bees and helped to calm the highly defensive behavior of Africanized bees. This does not mean you should be less cautious around any hive since people who have allergies or who may be stung hundreds of times can still be in serious trouble.

Honey Bees are very sensitive to any pesticides so if spraying or dusting is done try to do it after sunset when most bees have returned to the hive. Sometimes other bees will spend the night on plants and, since almost all bees are beneficial, take care not to kill them either.

### Not Good SCALES

Scales can be soft bodied, hard bodied, waxy, cottony or have tails. They can be white, pink, red or brown. Females can give birth to live young or lay eggs. Life spans can last a few weeks to several months. A common characteristic is the hair-like mouth parts that penetrate plant leaves and stems and suck the sap from the plant, almost any plant. Because scales can mimic plant parts and because of their size (most scales are ¼ inch in size or smaller) they are easy to overlook unless there is a large infestation. Soft scales secrete honeydew on which black sooty mold can grow. This substance can be a food source for ants so ants will often care for and protect the scales. Scales are

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most easily controlled during the crawler stage. Trying to control scales at any other time is difficult. One way to detect crawlers is to put two-sided tape around branches where adult scales are located. When the crawlers move to new locations, spraying with an insecticide labeled for Scale can be the most effective. Systemics are another means of control since the insect will absorb the insecticide when it sucks the plant sap. Horticultural oils and insecticidal soaps are other controls; just remember that temperature determines which type of horticultural oil should be used. Natural predators are another way to control scale since they attack and kill scales and can eliminate the need for pesticides.

**Sources:**

Garden Insects of North America; Whitney Cranshaw  
Extension Entomologist, TX A&M University  
Field Guide to Common Texas Insects; Bastiaan M.  
Drees, John A. Jackman

## Opportunities to Learn

### First Tuesday in Garden

**September 6** – Noon – Tyler Rose Garden -  
IDEA Garden - *What to Plant Now- Seeds &  
Transplants*, Dee Bishop



### Specialist Training

**September 15-17** – Cross Roads (near Denton)  
Junior Master Gardener MG Specialist Training - Details at  
<http://dcmga.com/events/2011-JMG-specialist/>

**September 26-28** – Ft. Worth – MG Vegetable Specialist  
Details at <http://scmg.tamu.edu/files/2010/04/2011-Master-Gardener-Vegetable-Specialist-Packet.pdf>

### Landscape Design Study Course III

**September 26-27** – College Station – for details go to  
<http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/southerngarden/LDSep2011/>



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Picture by Martin Davis