



MG Grapevine

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April 2008

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NOTICE

MG Association Meeting
Rose Garden Center
April 3 - 11:30 AM
Annual Meeting

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April Meeting

Once each year, the Smith County Master Gardener Association gathers to hold its annual meeting. This year's annual meeting will be on April 3rd at 11:30AM.

Items on the agenda include; the graduation of Class 15, the certification of Class 14 (who have just completed their intern year) and awards and recognition for various deserving members of the association.

The association will provide Chicken Spaghetti and the members can bring salads, vegetables or desserts. Members may bring their spouse or a friend. So that she knows how much food to purchase, reservations should already have been made with Cindy Harrington. Late reservations may be made by e-mail to Cindy at ckh300@sbcglobal.net no later than March 31st.

Address Books

The new SCMG address book for 2008 - 2009 will be available at the April meeting. The book contains address and phone information for all the MGs and interns, as well as the picture of all who chose to have a picture included. Each person listed should check his or her information for accuracy and notify Martin Davis of any errors found.

During the Azalea Trails, Tyler will be holding the second annual "Main Street Flower Market" on the grounds of the Goodman Museum on Friday & Saturday March 28 & 29th.



The Smith County Master Gardeners will again be participating, passing out educational materials and selling Earth-Kind roses.

Doug Welsh Accepts New Position



On March 17, Dr. Doug Welsh, who serves as the Texas Master Gardener Extension Assistant sent the following letter:

"Master Gardener Coordinators and Master Gardeners,

As of June 1, 2008, I will step into the administrative role of Associate Department Head and Project Leader for Extension Horticulture.

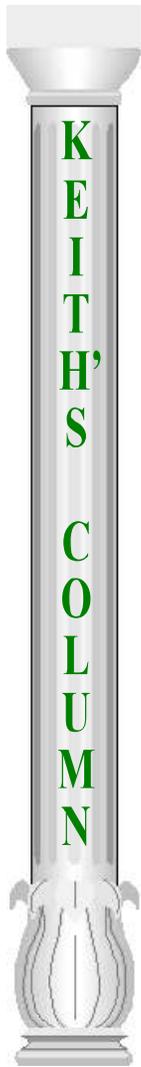
A new Extension Assistant will be hired to provide statewide coordination for the network of County Master Gardener programs.

In addition to coordination, a priority of the Extension Assistant position will be training new Master Gardeners. I will continue to provide presentations at Master Gardener training, although at a reduced number. I will also participate in the Master Gardener program through supervision and guidance to the Extension Assistant.

The Texas Master Gardener program has always been a County-administered program operating under a few state guidelines. This fundamental strength of the program will not change, nor will the commitment and support from the Extension Horticulture unit."

Sincerely, Doug Welsh.

The Smith County Extension staff and the Smith County Master Gardeners wish Doug all the best in his new position.



Spring has sprung, and everything is coming up roses (I couldn't resist)!! I hope your yard and gardens are growing bountifully and with beauty, and without major problems. I'm just enjoying this renewing

time of year. I look forward to visiting with and seeing all of you at our annual graduation and recognition luncheon and social. It is always great to see everybody at this relaxing time, and also for you to get to know and mingle with the new MG interns who are starting their volunteer service this month.

I want to be sure you know that if you're unable to fulfill the annually required hours due to family or health-related issues, to please contact me with your concerns. The following is an excerpt from the State By-laws:

Master Gardener Leave of Absence

On occasion, a Master Gardener Intern or Texas Master Gardener is unable to fulfill the requirements to obtain or maintain certification due to illness, illness in the family, or other personal situation. In cases such as these, a "Leave of Absence" can be granted by the County Master Gardener Coordinator. This decision is generally

made with input from the individual and local Master Gardener leadership. The Leave of Absence would be for a specified time period and may have specific training and/or service requirements for the individual to regain full status as a Master Gardener Intern or Texas Master Gardener.

As with so many other things, communication is the key to success. Let us know if there is anything we can do for you.

Be sure to stay involved, and don't wait 'till the last minute to get your hours for volunteering or recertification. There are so many great projects going on, and I hope you find one or more that you enjoy. Expand your Master Gardener experience and consider getting involved in a project that is new to you. Spread good gardening information, and most of all – HAVE FUN!

Have a great spring, and I'll see you both in the garden and on the 3rd! Keith

SCMG Speaker's Bureau

The SCMG Speakers Bureau is comprised of a group of Master Gardeners who speak on a variety of gardening topics to garden clubs and community organizations. Speakers are usually scheduled in the summer when most organizations are on summer hiatus and planning their programs for the following year. (For example in the summer of 2008 programs will be scheduled from September, 2008 to May, 2009). However occasionally there will be requests for speakers at other times of the year. In appreciation for the speaker's time, as well as giving speakers time to prepare, the Speakers Bureau does request that organization give at least 30 days notice when requesting a speaker. Also, due to high gas prices the Speakers Bureau is requesting organizations to reimburse speakers for their mileage at the applicable IRS rate when the distance to a speaking engagement exceeds 25 miles.

The following is the current list of SCMG speakers and the topics they cover: **Sue Adee**, IDEA Garden; **Charla Antal**, Xeriscape/Waterwise Gardening; **Patsy Besch**, Herbs & Butterfly Gardening; **Anne Brown**, Firewise Gardening & The Heritage Rose Garden; **Ina Brundrett**, Native Plants & Pollination in the Garden; **Wincie Caskey**, Growing Irises & The Art of Painting Flowers; **Judy Chance**, Heat Loving Plants; **Sue Clark**, Rainwater Harvesting & Butterfly Gardening **Don Davis**, Composting, Vermiculture & Earthkind Roses; **Don Gustafson**, Plant Propagation; **Susan Holloway**, Herbs, Passalong Plants & Container Gardening; **Georgia Ruth Johnston**, Making More Plants Through Cuttings; **Tamara Listiak**, Composting, Water Gardening & Shade Gardening; **Charlene Mizener**, Umbrella Palms; **Ed McGee**, What I've Learned in 40 Years of Gardening; **Harvey Collen**, Vegetable Gardening; **Andie Rathbone**, Daylilies, Bulbs, Invasive Plants, Passalong Plants & Fall Color in the Garden; **Pat Skarda**, Winter Gardening; **Shirley Stephens**, Roses; **Janice Suggs**, Perennials for East Texas; **Sherri Watts**, Making Garden Troughs & Waterwise Gardening.

The Speakers Bureau is always looking for new speakers and new topics. If you would like to be part of the Speakers Bureau, please contact Andie Rathbone at andier@earthlink.net or 903-894-7950.

First Tuesday in the Garden

The monthly "First Tuesday in the Garden" lecture series, will begin at noon Tuesday, April 1st, in the IDEA Garden at the Tyler Rose Garden. This month's topic is "Growing Azaleas in East Texas." Keith Hansen, Horticulture Agent with Smith County AgriLife Extension Service, will share information on

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the CORNER

**New Year, New Growth,
New Folks and more
Volunteer Hours**



With the beginning of this month the New Year for gardeners really starts to kick in. The grass is greening up which means it will start growing soon and that means we will be out mowing again before you know it. Dormant plants are beginning to poke their heads out of the earth with bright

green new sprouts introducing themselves to the glorious sunshine. Other plants are busy putting out new buds and sprouting bright new foliage all ready to put on a show for us with flowers and foliage. I walk my yard nearly every day just to see what else has sprouted or put out new buds. All this means that we will soon be fertilizing, watering, weeding, seeding, transplanting, repotting, moving, removing, adding, composting, mulching, staking, sweating, aching, hurting, mumbling under our breath, spending money, and cruising the nurseries for that one special new plant that will make our yard perfect and the envy of everyone in the neighborhood. That's what gardening is all about and we all love it and look forward to it every year. Good luck to everyone with your gardens. I hope everything works out just exactly like you planned.

While you are planning your gardening schedule for the year please be sure to remember our ongoing year-round SCMG sponsored projects namely the IDEA Garden, Heritage Garden and Shade Garden. Please be sure to set aside time to work in these gardens. All the things listed above that we do in our own gardens also have to be done in the IDEA, Heritage and Shade gardens. A few dedicated volunteers spend a lot of time working in these gardens. They need your help and encouragement to keep the gardens up to the standards that we have set. I urge you to volunteer a few hours a month at one or more of these gardens. The garden itself will thank you, the garden coordinator will thank you, the club will thank you and more importantly the public who visits the garden will thank you.

The gardens are open 52 weeks a year and we work probably 46 weeks a year in the gardens depending on the weather (mostly rain). With rare exceptions work is always done on Tuesday. Starting time is shown in the Grapevine each month. Please schedule some time for the gardens this year.

The new class will join us at our April meeting and begin their internship. Since they will all be doing their time in the gardens you can put in some hours at the garden and get to know the "new folks" at the same time.

Plant of the Month

by Anne Pattullo

California Poppy

After spending my first 22 years in Iowa, I moved to sunny Sacramento for my first real job and fell in love with California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*). It was easy to see why they are the state flower, as they grow everywhere, from cracks in the sidewalks to wide open fields. Although now you can get cultivars in many colors, I think the golden orange-yellow species is still the prettiest. With its 4 silky petals on a thin wiry stem, each individual flower is a perfect specimen. Now I have them in my Texas garden and do a little California Dreamin' every time I look at them.



I always start my plants from seed which I sow in October. (Remember, if you want to plant seeds in the fall, you have to buy them the spring before and save them through the summer because most stores assume people only plant seeds in the spring.) I add sand in a ratio of about 3:1 to a packet of seed. I scatter my mix in my flower beds where I want my plants, cover the seeds every so lightly (almost not at all) and pat down the soil. I keep the area moist until the seedlings come up and are well on their way. It usually takes about 2-4 weeks. The plants grow through the winter and bloom from April through June.

California poppies are in the Papaveraceae family, but do not belong to the genus *Papaver*. They have bluish green very finely cut foliage. They like full sun and once established will withstand quite dry conditions.. Soil can be light to even sandy but must be well draining. They do best in the cool nights of early spring around here. Once our nights get warm they tend to decline. Winter temperatures haven't been a problem for me but days below 20 degrees are said to be damaging. I consider them a lot like pansies as far as hardiness goes. Plant them where you want them as they don't transplant well. They do reseed freely but the birds are fond of the seed so I never end up with too many volunteers from year to year.

Although I have never used my California poppies as cut flowers due to their very thin stems, I have enjoyed pressing them for note cards and embellishments in my garden scrapbook. The thin flat petals press perfectly and they hold their color very well. We have a large group of California poppies blooming in the IDEA garden right now. These plants were put in as fairly well established pot plants but have done surprisingly well and look just spectacular gently waving in the wind. Go see them and do some California Dreamin' of your own.

Growing Healthy and Happy

by Sue Adee

To keep the plants in the IDEA Garden healthy and happy, we use several products. These products have produced good results for us. If you have a product you are happy with, just let us know. We are always open to suggestion.

The very first thing we do is saturate the plant in a product called Superthrive. Superthrive is a form of root stimulator plus vitamins and hormones. Superthrive can be purchased at local nurseries or through many plant catalogs. Whether you prefer to use the suggested product or not, be sure the plant you are planting is saturated with water before you put it in the ground. After saturating the plant, we put Slo Cote (21-7-11) in the hole before we put the plant in the ground. Slo Cote is a product similar to Osmocote except it does not break down in heat as Osmocote does. Slo Cote can also be used as a top dressing fertilizer.

In the spring, between the middle of March to the first of April, we apply a 3-1-2 ratio fertilizer. This gives the plants a quick green-up. Then in June we apply a 50% slow release fertilizer with as close to a 3-1-2 ratio as we can find. We will fertilize again with 50% slow release

fertilizer sometime between September or October depending on the temperature. You need to wait until the temperature starts to cool down before applying the fertilizer. Be sure to read the back of the fertilizer bag because most bags of extended released fertilizers are only 5 to 20% slow release.

SCMG Website

It is as simple as entering <http://grovesite.com/mg/smg> to arrive at the Smith Co. MG website and many of you have done that. Every since we began the site ten months ago we have had steady interest in viewing the content there. Last October we had a high of 4313 page visits and since have nearly 4000 page visits each month.



The IDEA Garden project has consistently been the most visited page with visits hovering around 500 per month. Since the Photo Galleries were added in October, they too are very popular, getting 800 visits in December and typically getting 400 visits per month. Check it out, there is a lot of information there which we try to keep up-to-date for your benefit.