



MG Grapevine

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NOTICE

**MG Association Meeting
April 2nd at the
Rose Garden Center**

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April SCMG Meeting

Please join us for our annual Graduation & Awards Luncheon on April 2nd at the Rose Garden Center. Remember that it is potluck and this year we are not having the main dish catered. Spouses are welcome and encouraged to attend, we promise not to talk gardening ALL the time! The members of Class XV will become official and we will get to visit with the new interns of Class XVI. It is also the time for special awards and the White Elephant Garden Sale, so don't miss out! If you have not signed up please e-mail Anne Pattullo at gpattullo@nctv.com or 903-566-0729 and we will have a place at the table for you!

After Luncheon & Sale Tour

For those who have not had a chance to call on your sale items, feel free to bring them priced, to the lunch Thursday. The sale will be after the luncheon.

Japanese Maple Specialist Sharon Nelson has invited us to visit her garden. She has approximately 130 maples, each showing a different spring color. What a special treat!!

The directions to the Nelson's: South on S. Broadway, left on Heritage Dr., right on Harvard, right on Purdue. Their house is the 5th on the right: 609 Purdue Dr.

Address Books

The new Address Book for 2009 is ready and will be available at the April 2nd Awards & Graduation Lunch. If you discover any errors please notify Martin Davis.

Each Master Gardener and intern should pick up a copy, but please only **one copy per MG**. The cost of the booklet did increase, thus fewer copies were printed in an effort to stay within the budget.

Interesting Home Gardens

The May 2nd Home Garden tour includes five homes, ranging from a large formal traditional garden in the historic Azalea District to a modest home in a rustic country setting, spotlight a variety of landscaping styles. Homeowners include Donald & Chelli Warren, Bennett & Carrie White, Melinda Cook, David & Linda Gary and Barbara Null.

In the Azalea District, the large two-story **White home** is graced with an expansive garden that includes a swimming pool area, a formal knot garden in the front, and an abundance of seasonal color. The homeowner does all of the work, including pruning of the intricate shrubs in the knot garden. The **Warren home** features an attached curtained cabana, a koi pond, garden art, and many container plants. The landscape was designed by Casey Brownlow. The **Cook home**—named Best Yard in the 2008 Azalea Trail—features a creek with bridges, interesting perennials, roses, shrubs, and hostas, and a cottage in back with a draped patio.

The **Gary home**, in the Woods subdivision, features a small garden with paths throughout made of decomposed granite, making the garden more accessible to gardeners with physical challenges. David Gary lends the skills of a Master Gardener to his environment. The **Null home** demonstrates that gardening miracles can be realized on a limited budget. Master Gardener trainee Barbara Null showcases several hundred iris and daylilies and other perennials at her mobile home in a country setting.

Brochure available on the SCMG website with full details, addresses and maps.

To order tickets before April 21st, make checks payable to SCMG and mail to 14608 Foxwood Circle, Tyler, TX 75703.



Spring is once again here, and I bet the gardening bug has bitten you as it has me (allergies also – too much pollen)! My family enjoyed driving and walking the Tyler Azalea Trail – what a wonderful asset we have here in East

Texas. Such vibrant and masses of color are a delight to see. MG Class 16 got the grand tour of the SFA Mast Arboretum and Ruby Mize Azalea Garden last week. They really have a nice and extensive collection of azaleas – I believe over 500 different varieties, including many of the orange, yellow, pink and white deciduous azaleas. Their huge trusses of fragrant flowers, born on upright bare branches create quite an impact. Be sure to check out the Ina Brundrett Azalea Garden at Tyler Jr. College – they have a complete collection of Encore azalea varieties planted in a very nice design. Of course, they are most impressive when they are blooming in mid-summer and again in the fall.

Consider growing a plant or variety that is new to you this year, and then letting the rest of us know about your success or failure. Yes, failures do happen in the gardening world. One of the best plantsmen had a saying that goes something like this, “Never say a plant will not grow here until you have killed it 3 times.” That’s good advice. Lots of things can go wrong, and even well-adapted plants sometimes do not grow the first time we plant them. Of course, do your research first, and make sure your potential new plant is adapted to our soils and climate, ascertain its light and water preferences, before purchasing and planting.

I look forward to seeing everybody on April 2 at our annual meeting. You are making such an important impact in our area. We have a unique and dynamic program, with so many dedicated and talented people, and I appreciate your time to volunteer to do the work of educating youth and adults about gardening and related endeavors.

There are so many great Master Gardener projects and activities 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. Meet the new interns and invite one to a project or committee meeting. Spread good, research-based gardening information, and most of all – HAVE FUN!

Garden Dirt

By Dee Bishop

Spring seems to have actually sprung; however I am a little leery yet. I have learned the hard way not to trust Texas weather. If you decide to put out summer annuals, be sure to have something handy to protect them with in case of a late frost. Grandma used to haul her canning jars out to the vegetable garden to protect tiny tomato plants both from frost and wind. Just make sure the leaves do not touch the sides of the jar or they may cook or freeze depending on what the weather brings.

I like to keep a few piles of pine straw handy so I can pitch a handful or two over tender plants if frost threatens. Brown paper bags are good if weighted down at the edges. Just be sure to take them off the next day. Newspaper can be folded into 'hats' to place over seedlings too. My daughters learned to make hats for this at an early age.

A product called Wiltproof, Cloud Cover, or other names that mean the same thing, sprayed onto the plants really helps keep young transplants from scorching in the too hot spring sun until they become established. I read where you can make your own spray by mixing a cup of powdered milk to a gallon of water. Add a little soap to make it stick. Don't know if it works, I've never tried it. The Wiltproof does work and is a great product.

I would not buy or transplant heat-lovers like marigolds, zinnias, or vinca until ALL threat of frost is over, mid-April. Same for okra, peas, sweet potatoes (maybe not before May). If you do, nothing will be gained as they just sit there shaking in their little beds. If we get a lot of rain, they may even rot. JUST BE PATIENT!!!

Go out and enjoy our beautiful little corner of this world and get your fingers dirty. Have fun.

Long Distance Call

Recently Keith Hansen sent an e-mail seeking volunteers for the phone desk. One of the replies came from Joan Thorpe, who said, "Sorry, but in South Pacific--rounding Cape Horn to South Atlantic."

If she can reply from that distance via e-mail, one wonders if we could patch in a phone line so that she could answer calls in her spare time aboard ship. Maybe not!

Rose Garden Brochure

The cover says, "Welcome to the Tyler Rose Garden" and the rest of the brochure presents the history, a graphic tour and recognition to the Smith County Master Gardeners and AgriLife Extension. This new brochure was designed by city employee Susan Guthrie, with input from Craig Reiland. With pictures referenced to a map of the garden, a virtual tour is possible without setting a foot in the garden. Check it out, it is very well done.



Cindy's Comments

President, Smith Co. MG Association

Welcome Class 16! The SCMGA looks forward to getting to know you, and you to know us. What a diverse lot we are, but love of gardening is our common bond. After the intensity of the MG classes these next months will be at a slower pace, but the learning will continue. A stated objective of the SCMGA is: to increase

Association members' knowledge of gardening and to aid the general public to better understand recommended gardening practices. I personally want to urge the interns to participate in all the SCMGA activities. Try them out, meet new people and experience the full range of how SCMGA works to achieve one of the objectives of this organization. What great fun you'll have and you'll be amazed at how much more you will learn. Your required hours will fly by.

Another way to earn hours for both interns and MG's is by serving on special committees. One committee will be working on a Policy & Procedure Manual for the SCMGA. Another will be researching grant opportunities for the association and submitting the required applications. A Ways and Means group will be working on the ways to get the means for our association to continue and/or expand its educational efforts financially. Would you be willing to serve on one of these? If so, please let me know, email me at ckh300@sbcglobal.net.

During the March SCMGA meeting a list of community merchants who support SCMGA activities by offering members a savings off retail prices was offered and the foot work for this was done by a committee. All members benefit when just a small group of SCMG's get together. Committees get things done when they have coordinators like the SCMGA does.

Sue Clark is the coordinator for the Main Street Flower Market. With the beautiful grounds of the Goodman Museum as the setting, who will be able to pass up going to the market this weekend? Another reason to attend is being able to view the newly open Earthkind gardens located there at Goodman Museum. Meanwhile Scherel Carver is coordinating the efforts of many for the Home Garden Tour that involves months of hard work and planning to showcase the fabulous gardens on the tour. Try and make an opportunity to thank Sue and Scherel as well as the many volunteers who make these events so successful.

I look forward to seeing everyone at the April Graduation/Awards Luncheon and shopping at the White Elephant sale. If you have items to donate, just drop them off before lunch. Spring is here and my solar battery is getting a much needed charging while I look ahead to the great things that will happen this year. Cindy

Azaleas

by Herb Coursey

THIS IS A TRUE STORY; AS SUCH, IT IS OFFERED FOR YOUR ENTERTAINMENT. IT IS NOT INTENDED FOR YOUR USE AS A SET OF INSTRUCTIONS!

902 South College Avenue. Wow! The garden there, in effect, led the way to establishing a second Azalea Trail in Tyler in the spring of 1985. Josephine and I had bought the place in 1979, and immediately started dreaming of landscaping it. That site is a choice part of the Azalea District. There were already plenty of "good bones" to the plot: it was of good size, the lay of the land was varied, great trees seemed to rule over the beautiful old rock walls that had been laid in the '30's, a creek lazed its way at the bottom corner of the slope, and two brick streets crossed at the upper corner.

We moved into the modest white cottage and enjoyed settling everything into place. The neighborhood was a daily joy. But! During the following spring Azalea Trail, which passed only a block away from our home, we got hit with "Azalea Fever." If you really love gardens, this can be a serious affliction.

The very first thing we did was to have a sprinkler system installed. Then Josephine and I went looking at azalea plants in Tyler in every nursery we could find. Finally, we met our future: we were swept off our feet by the extraordinary plants of an elderly grower, Mr. Fred House! He had rooted them himself. Dark green voluminous foliage. Stem growth that was sturdy, healthy and thick. Roots so abundant and vigorous that many had cracked open their plastic pots! These had to be our choice! Old Mr. House tempted us: if we would purchase from him all the plants we needed, he would tell us his secrets for growing azaleas so well. But he was not cheap. Hmmm.

We already figured to place slow, shorter-growing Kurume varieties down front in the beds, with taller, large-flowered Indicas in the back. Tyler landscaper Dwight Hall stopped by one afternoon and suggested we lay out dramatic sweeping shapes, using a garden hose. So simple.

OK. We bought it all. Mr. House delivered 100 azaleas. They did not begin to be enough - we had to have at least 50 more. Then he gave us his secrets! His advice was that we use old railroad ties to outline those beds, which ought then to be filled with sawdust - *fresh* sawdust, mind you! Then we just set our azaleas right out *into* the sawdust, but *on top of* the dirt! Mr. House warned us to maintain all of this by using enough Osmocote 14-14-14 to feed a balanced fertilizer to our precious new azaleas, and to fuel the fires of the slow, rotting process of the sawdust.

Tyler azalea plantings had always been planned with consummate taste so that colors might compliment each other carefully. Josephine and I - in our very conspicuous and adventurist garden - enjoyed experimenting with unusual color contrasts - like the row of mixed headstrong colors we put across the front of our modest Greek-revival

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Texas Master Naturalists

The Texas Master Naturalists are hosting a series of public programs at the Texas Parks and Wildlife Nature Center in Tyler (11942 FM 848). Seminars are being held the following Saturdays - April 4, and May 9.

April's topic is "Geology and Soils of Texas". The presenter is Stephen Lange with Texas Parks & Wildlife. Information discussed will range from describing the physical and chemical properties of soil to describing the various landform regions of Texas. (April 4, 2009, 9 a.m. to noon)

May's topic is "Ornithology". The presenter is Jeff Kopachena with Texas A&M University – Commerce. Information discussed will range from understanding the causes for bird diversity to developing an awareness of how bird populations are monitored and managed. (May 9, 2009, 9 a.m. to noon)

The cost to attend any of the seminars is \$10 for those individuals that are not Texas Master Naturalist. All programs will begin at 9 a.m. and wrap up around noon. For more information or to register for these events call Irene Hamel at (903) 566-9394.

Texas MG conference - April 23-25, 2009

Early registration for the conference in Marshall is no longer available, but you can still register. For information on the cost, the schedule and the speakers, go to <http://2009tmgc.org/index.htm>.

Friends of the Arboretum Plant Sale

On Saturday, April 11, 2009 From 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM the annual Friends of the Arboretum Plant sale will be held at the Gov. Hogg Park in Quitman. Plants, shrubs and trees will be for sale. For more information contact Clint Perkins at Phone: 903-763-2924.

SFA to Host Spring Plant Sale

The SFA Mast Arboretum will host its annual Garden Gala Day on April 18, 2009 from 9 am until 2 pm at the SFA Intramural Fields on Wilson Drive. This event features the annual spring plant sale fundraiser benefitting the SFA Mast Arboretum, Pineywoods Native Plant Center, Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden, and their educational programs. All of the plants are produced at SFA by the staff, students and volunteers.

The public is encouraged to arrive early and bring a wagon. For more information and the plant list go to: <http://arboretum.sfasu.edu>.



1517 Front St., Suite 116
Tyler, TX 75702

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house: alternating plants of lavender Mildreds with dark orange Sherwoods and lipstick-red Hinos. We wanted a wild feast of color. We got it. I have to tell you, we really agree with the vast numbers who told us our garden was glorious! And over the years since, we do seem to notice more and more plantings made by other gardeners who enjoy venturing.

By the way: **We won!** I refer to a second Azalea Trail being established in Tyler. It passes by our garden on West Dobbs Street at College Avenue, just a block north of the older Azalea Trail route, which travels on Lindsey Lane.

GROWING AZALEAS

1. Select plants while they are in bloom.
2. Grow plants in filtered sunlight, in sandy and highly organic soil; too much shade produces leggy growth and inferior blooming.
3. Your plants would regard a mixture of ½ pine bark, ¼ loam, ¼ sand as being a divine home address. Whatever you do, hard pan, red clay, and Michigan peat moss (it's already rotted and will smother your plant's roots) are all anathema. Canadian peat moss is great; pine bark mulch is lots better.
4. Set the crown (where stalk meets roots) about 2-3 inches above ground level.
5. With a good, sharp knife, before planting cut into the root ball on 3 or 4 sides, about 1 to 2 inches deep, depending on size of plant and root ball. This will force the root system to seek and adjust to its new home.
6. Thorough, deep watering is better than more frequent & shallow. The leaves tell you when they are thirsty. Eye them daily.
7. Yellowish leaves with green veins are showing insufficient iron uptake = chlorosis. Watch for it adjacent to buildings, sidewalks, or to a lawn that has been limed. Correct by applying copperas (ferrous sulfate). Old leaves will often turn yellowish before dropping; never mind. It's kind of like old men going gray-headed.
8. If your azalea leaves turn grayish, however, it isn't age, it is undoubtedly the azalea lacebug. They suck the underside of the leaves, and it becomes speckled with their shiny black excrement and their old shed skins. Uggg. I use Ultra-fine Oil spray on mine, anytime of day or of the year.
9. The best consultation is available at Keith's: <http://easttexasgardening.tamu.edu/azalea/azaleatxt.html> - 'erb

Would You Buy This Yard Art?

His name is Yard Bird and he was built by Bill Kelldorf. He will be part of the White Elephant Garden Sale and he can be yours, for a price.

**Who is this Guy?**

He is a member of Class 16 and he only wanted to be made to look better (more handsome) in his directory picture. Adding hair to his otherwise hair deprived head was the only option. The hair is his wife's - who is he?

