



MG Grapevine

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NOTICE

**December 3rd
MG Association
Meeting at the Rose
Garden Center
11:30 AM**

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MG Grapevine Staff
Martin Davis, Editor

MG Grapevine Contributors:
Dee Bishop, Herb Coursey, Keith Hansen,
and Anne Pattullo.

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Extension Office

Phone - 903-590-2980
Fax - 903-590-2984

Monthly Meeting Notes

We will have our annual Christmas luncheon on Thursday, December 3rd, 11:30 at the Rose Garden Center. Baked ham will be provided and you are asked to bring side dishes, salads or desserts.

Sign-up sheets were available at last month's meeting, but if you have not already made your reservations it is not too late. Please email Anne Pattullo at gpattullo@nctv.com to make a reservation and let her know how many will be in your party. Spouses are welcome and encouraged to come. This is always a fun occasion and we hope to have a big group.

Bylaws Revisions

The proposed changes to the SCMG bylaws has been distributed to all members and presented at the November association meeting.

As required, the changes will be voted upon at the December meeting. A business meeting will be convened just long enough to vote on the revisions. Since only a voice vote will be used, this will only take a few minutes and then those present can return to the important job of eating.

SCMG Association Dues

At its October 29th meeting the Executive Committee voted to increase the annual dues for membership in the Smith County Master Gardener Association to \$20, effective with the 2010 year. Those dues are payable by January 31st, but the collection of them will begin at the December 3rd meeting. Treasurer Pat Welch will happily take your check, made out to **SCMG**, at the meeting.

Members of MG Class 16 (current interns) should also plan to begin paying dues, effective with the 2010 year.



1st Tuesday in the Garden

The 2009 series has been completed. The lineup for the 2010 series has been put together.

Spring Lineup

March: Salvias - Color Spring to Frost
April: Ornamental Grasses - Movement & Texture in the Landscape
May: Sowing Seeds for Economical Color
June: Wack it & Watch it Bloom (Prune to Promote More Flowers)

Fall Lineup

September: Scale, Lace Bugs, Spider Mites (Identify & Take Action on these E TX Pests)
October: It's Time to Plant Cool Season Annuals
November: Shrubs That Add Winter Interest

2010 MG Training Classes

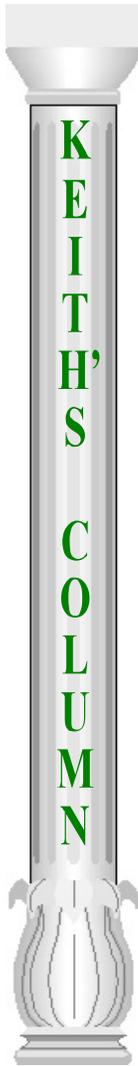
It is not too late to get your friends involved in the Master Gardener training classes. Applications may be submitted for receipt by December 14th.

On the home page of the SCMG website there is a link to information for those who may be considering joining the 2010 Master Gardener training classes, including the application form.

For those who are interested, go to the Coming Events page for the schedule of 2010 classes. As usual, certified MGs may audit classes of their choice and claim 3 CEs for each class audited.

Officers Elected

The slate of officers presented by the Nominating Committee at the November meeting was elected. President-Elect/Vice President-Joanie Matthews, Treasurer-Pat Welch, Secretary-Jan Moch, Historian-Bill Keldorf, Executive Committee at large-Bibi Blonn & Clayton Turner, State Directors-Victor Long & Rhoda Rholes and Alternate Directors- Linda Sargent & Donna Cole. Anne Pattullo moves up to President and Cindy Harrington becomes Parliamentarian. View their pictures on the SCMG website.



Along with diminishing daylight hours, the 2009 is quickly slipping away. Hopefully each of you has had a fulfilling year, and the drought, heat, flooding, plus other gardening nemeses have not gotten you or your garden plants down. This is actually a good time of year to be planting trees and shrubs in the landscape if you're needing to add or replace some of these more permanent residents to your surroundings. Proper planting technique is critically important to the long-term survival of any plant. Couple that with quality-grown plants to start with, and your plant should grow and thrive. The problem comes in with improper planting (planting too deep, too shallow, not watering after planting, watering too much after planting, poor drainage, etc. etc.), and buying/planting things that should have been passed by in the garden center. It may have been a bargain now, but in the long run, inferior plant stock will result in future disappointment. All too often plant failures can be traced back to these two items.

Planting technique and nursery stock are two of the many items regularly discussed on a university gardening blog I recently found. Last year I mentioned a web site from a professor at the University of Washington that focuses on horticultural myths, either debunking or confirming various things we regularly see and read in gardening literature. (http://www.puyallup.wsu.edu/~Linda%20Chalker-Scott/Horticultural%20Myths_files/index.html) That professor has joined up with several other horticulture professors from across the country to engage in a public gardening discussion on a wide range of horticultural topics of interest on a blog site called "The Garden Professors". <https://sharepoint.cahnrs.wsu.edu/blogs/urbanhort/default.aspx>

Each day one of the group brings up a topic, which evokes a spirited discussion among the others via "Comments" posted on the blog. Readers are encouraged to join in the discussion. Both the original posts and comments are thought provoking and often humorous. Check it out – I think you will learn a lot.

East Texas Gardening

I'm in the process of revamping my East Texas Gardening website. I hope it will be online by the time you read this. It will basically have a new look, and hopefully be a little easier to navigate. If you have any suggestions for contents for articles or items for the site, please let me know.

It's up. Looks great!! <http://easttexasgardening.tamu.edu>

Executive Committee Notes

The Smith County MG Association's Executive Committee, made up of the officers of the association, usually meets monthly on the fourth Thursday. The following notes are from their meeting on October 29th.

- Bulb sale update - Having the conference and the sale in one room was successful and the profits exceeded expectations.
- The proposed bylaws change must be presented at the November meeting and voted upon at the December meeting.
- The 2010 budget was presented and adopted.
- The request to supplement the Heritage Garden 2009 budget to replace some azaleas was approved.
- Members will be urged to take 3 to 5 calendars to sell to family and friends.
- Discussed the possibility of a raffle at the Spring Conference, but no one volunteered to form a committee for that purpose.
- Following discussion, a motion to raise the SCMG Association dues to \$20 per year was approved.
- Michael Dirr's *Manual of Woody Plants* has been added to the MG library.
- Final paperwork for chartering the association has been received. The Smith County organization meets most of the requirements.
- Job descriptions for project leaders are still being gathered.
- Approved acquisition of a debit card for use by the Treasurer.
- Set the date of the November Executive Committee meeting to November 19th.
- MGs are encouraged to support the First Tuesday in the Garden lectures.
- Assistance is needed for awards preparation to submit to the Texas MG association. Two members of the committee volunteered to help.

Volunteer Hours Reports

One of the responsibilities of each Master Gardener is to report his or her volunteer activities each month. This is important to the individual so that a record of the hours can be maintained and validate his or her continued certification. It is also very important to Keith Hansen that he have complete information of the Master Gardeners efforts in the community to fulfill the objectives of the program.

Unfortunately, we do not have complete and accurate information if you do not report your volunteer hours in a timely way. As this is written there are 18 Master Gardeners who have reported no activity at all this year, even though many of them have been very actively involved. There is an even longer list of you that have not kept your reports up-to-date. If there is any question about what has already been reported, call Martin Davis (903-565-5441) or e-mail (mred2853@sbcglobal.net) him.

Garden Dirt

by Dee Bishop

TIME TO PLANT TREES AND SHRUBS

Now through mid to late February is prime time to plant the big guys. It is also a perfect time to dig and move all the things that are in the wrong place.

Choose canned, ball and burlap, or bare root trees and shrubs. Look for trees with a good central leader and a pretty shape. Choose shrubs that are well-shaped and healthy looking. These plants will be in the ground a long time and you want to buy the best that money can buy (or the best you can find).

I thought I knew how to plant trees. After all, I have certainly planted plenty of them, but back last winter at our Spring Conference, I learned I didn't know squat! We were shown how to pull the tree's roots apart and make sure they weren't planted too deep in the can--- which many are. So you can't just go get a tree, dig a hole, and stick it in. You have to dig a hole several times wider than the root system but no deeper than it has been growing. It is better to err on the shallow side than planting too deep. This is the reason we can't make flower beds around old trees. If we do and we add soil, we are smothering that tree's roots!

So dig your hole several times wider but no deeper than the pot or root ball. Break up the soil really well but don't add any 'good stuff'--- just the local dirt that came out of that hole!

Some folks say add fertilizer to the hole, others say don't. I usually do not. I wait until the tree or shrub gets to growing and then fertilize it around the perimeter of the branches.

The weather is usually wonderful this time of year and such a perfect time to do the heavy planting as well as new bed prep. Hard diggin' with no sweat! That's the way I like it.

Plant of the Month

by Herb Coursey

There is too much to write about for Camellias. Forgive me for leaving things out. Camellias are holy. In the orient, they are planted in almost all the gardens that surround Shinto and Buddhist shrines. There, Camellias are regarded as a means of maintaining spiritual contact with the ancestors.

There are over 170 different *species* of Camellia in the world. Most of us are familiar with at best the species *C. japonica* (over 6000 varieties!) and one other species, *C. sasanqua*. (over 300 varieties!). That's 2 of 'em, so here we go!

SASANQUA: With a name that actually translates as "the sun camellia", plants of this species would surely be ideal for Texas. They bloom for a few weeks between September and December. It is known that they do well in full

sunshine, but they will also grow well in partial shade. **Stephanie Golden** is a variety I bought locally. Let not the name mislead you: her 1¾"-diameter blooms are a screaming hot-pink, small-sized semi-double. Her evergreen leaves are very dark and tiny. The only golden part of



Stephanie's blooms is their splayed bunch of brilliantly-colored stamens rising out of their centers. Stephanie and I have been together 3 years, now. At first, I planted her too deep; she barely grew, and was in full sun all day. Year 2, I moved her to a perfect, I thought, but mostly shady location. Still no vigor. I considered using her as a door prize for MGs or TMGC, but decided it was evidence of poor character, to give something away to a friend because I didn't like it. So, this year she spent many months in an 18"X18" irrigation pot, sitting in the bald Texas sun all day. I de-potted her to that same location for the summer. As of 3 weeks ago, Stephanie began blooming - perhaps I ought to say, screaming! - her truly awesome bicolor array. Not quite 3' high yet (though eventually she could reach 9' or more), I just now counted over 80 blooms. And the small marble-sized buds still to open are uncountable - I venture there are well over 200! She has no diseases. Bugs don't like her and fungi can't stand her. If one cares for her type, she's quite gorgeous! Yeah!

I suspect that any *sasanqua* varieties would be happy to work with you. They grow moderately fast (for a *Camellia*!) and fairly tall (4-10'). I recommend: Yuletide, covered by small, deep-red blooms with a slight orange sheen. Setsugekka, semi-double with white fluted petals, medium to large size. Yummy! Bonanza, low-growing, with murky-red medium-sized blooms/semi-peony form. ShiShi-Gashira, dark pink 2+" blooms. Dwarf. Scions grafted on it grow dwarf!!! Kanjiro, rose-pink shading to rose-red on petal edges, about 2+", semi-double.

JAPONICA and a category I especially like: **Non-Retic. Japonica Hybrids; this category is correct for all hybrids except** *reticulata* hybrids. Pure "Retic." Camellias are unique, a bit more trouble, and quite worth it! More on them later. Some japonicas will survive in shade, but most will grow best in year-round semi-shaded areas. Planting on the east side of structures is preferred, north is next-best. Full-sun plantings are less dormant during winter warm periods, making sudden temperature drops inflict more severe flower-bud and leaf injury. I discourage anyone from trying to grow *C. japonicas* in full Texas sun. For one thing, it scorches young leaves to black. Just don't. They like growing under tall pines. Oaks are second best. Camellias absolutely cannot tolerate poorly drained sites. Never water after 3 PM: dark damp promotes the deadly fungus *Glomerella cingulata*, aka canker-dieback -- Dracula to Camellias!

Bloom sizes are important: **Miniature:** 2½" or less; **Small:** over 2½-3"; **Medium:** over 3-4"; **Large:** over 4-5"; **Very Large:** over 5". Some variance is the result of locality, type of soil, culture, etc. Most *C. japonicas* will bloom January through March. Applying gibberellic acid, a natural plant hormone, produces earlier and quite larger-size blooms, and sometimes affects coloration. I do it.

Camellias are the most interesting plants I've ever gotten to know - the little bit they've taught me. I want more.

If I get another chance to write about them, I'll include more of their demands and some of their preferences. And I'll give you more information about them, who they really are.
- 'erb

Spring Garden Conference

The 2010 event will be on Saturday February 13th at the Rose Garden Center. While the agenda has not yet been finalized, the following is an early peek at the speakers for the day.

Jim Johnson, Director of the Benz School of Floral Design, will do a floral design session; Keith Hansen will talk about the suggested perennial list (and the plants) being developed; Dr. Joe Masabni, Extension Vegetable Specialist, will speak on growing your own vegetables, highlighting home gardening and also trendy vegetables, and also discussing using low and high tunnels to extend the growing season; Monty Nesbitt, Extension Fruit Specialist, will discuss fruits you can easily grow at home; Dr. Billy Higgenbotham, Extension Wildlife Specialist, will talk about deer and hog damage to our landscapes, and Keith Hansen will cover mole control.

Garden Workdays

Only two more chances to work in the gardens during 2009. Don't miss out and join with others to work at the IDEA or Heritage Gardens on December 1st or 8th, at 1PM.

Landscape Design School

Dr. Bill Welch and Ms. Suzanne Milstead wish to announce the latest in the Landscape Design Study Courses: Number IV, Series XXI - February 22-23, 2010. The courses are held in College Station, TX., and are co-sponsored by Texas Garden Clubs, Inc. and Texas AgriLife Extension Service, Texas A&M University. They have been attended by many Master Gardeners in the past. It is an opportunity for more in-depth training in landscape design than we normally include in the Master Gardener curriculum. The course qualifies for 12 CE credits for certified MGs. This is the last course in a four-part series, although participants can begin with any of the four.

Speaker's Bureau

During October, two Master Gardeners, Cindy Harrington and Anne Brown gave presentations to 60 people concerning the Master Gardener program and knowing and growing daffodils.



1517 West Front St., Suite 116
Tyler, TX 75702