



MG Grapevine

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MG Association Meeting
December 1st 11:30 AM
Rose Garden Center

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Joanie Matthews says,

Joanie has computer problems, probably a virus and thus she is temporarily without the ability to use e-mail. Sooner or later it seems



Joanie Matthews
SCMGA President

we all to have to go through this and it never is fun. Perhaps by the time you read this, she will be back online.

When I spoke to her, Joanie asked that I tell everyone that she would see them at the December 1st Christmas luncheon. She wished everyone a "Happy Holiday" as we begin the season.

Martin Davis, Editor

Work Day in the Gardens

The schedule for the Heritage and IDEA Gardens for the holiday season is as follows: Work is scheduled on November 29th, December 6 & 13th and then no work until January.

Work will resume January 17th, weather permitting and as needed. Please check your e-mail before coming to the gardens.

2012 Association Dues

Treasurer Pat Welch is prepared to begin the collection of dues for 2012. She will be happy to accept your check for \$20 at the December 1st meeting.

Class 18 please be aware, you will begin paying dues with the 2012 year.

December SCMGA Meeting

We are having one of my favorite programs for this month. The CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON. Makes me want to sing "Got the Pig on the Ground, The Beer on Ice, and all my Rowdy Friends are coming over Tonight."

Of course we can't have any beer on ice, but I have the turkey on order and all my lady friends will have the tables and drinks (ice tea) ready when we get there. I just can hardly wait to try out some of those fabulous dishes that our members bring with them. The problem is all those quick choices that you have to make in order not to hold up the line. You know, you will be 1/4 through the line and your plate is already running over and there is that dish that you would really like to try, but you just can't.

Kinda like that song (Hot Rod Lincoln) where he has his foot to the metal and there just ain't no more.



I want all of you to remember December 1 Rose Garden 11:30 AM. "Be there," (as the Fonz would say).

Your soon to be President,
Ronny Duncan

1st Tuesday in the Garden

The schedule for the 2012 series is out. Check the dates and the topics at <http://scmg.tamu.edu/coming-events/>



Wow, it's the end of the year – how time flies. Thanks to all of you for a great year and many, many accomplishments. I'd like to especially thank Joanie Matthews for her year of leading this great Association and moving us forward in our mission of educating the people of our area. Also, thank you members of the Smith County MG Executive Board for your time and leadership in guiding us through another year. I look forward to seeing everybody next week (December 1) at our annual holiday luncheon where we can relax and enjoy the fruits of our labor.

I hope each of you will take time at this time of year to remember the most important things in life, count and be thankful for all your blessings (not necessarily the material things), and to remember those in need. One of the things I am very thankful for is all of the support and friendship the Master Gardeners have given me over the years. You are a wonderful group of people to have as volunteers for the Texas AgriLife Extension Service.

Volunteer Hours Reports

All during the year we have urged MGs to report their volunteer hours in a timely manner by reporting each month. Most of you have done that and once again we thank each of you.

Some of you continue to procrastinate, or so it seems, by waiting to send your reports. To remain a certified MG it is necessary that you volunteer for at least the minimum required hours and you may have done so, but without your report there is no way to know.

We have suggested that you not wait and avoid the year-end rush. We are asking those of you who still have not made your reports to submit them – now!

Did You Notice?

Dee Bishop wrote a column in the Tyler Morning Telegraph recently. Dee said, "I will be writing this column until Mary Claire Rowe is ready to come back. She is taking a leave of absence at this time."

Look for Dee's column each Thursday, right there on the gardening page near Keith Hansen's comments.

What's Bloomin'?

By Dee Bishop

New Azaleas to Try

When the drought is over, that is. I read about these recently and am very interested myself. I am always interested in deep colored foliage. Richard Odom of Forest Hill, Louisiana has developed these from Red Formosa. I have Red Formosa and it is my very favorite one.



There are three Crimson Azaleas:

Majesty---the largest at 5-6ft. Foliage is slightly darker than Red Formosa.



Crimson Majesty Azalea

Queen--- grows to 4 ft. and has even darker foliage.

Princess---at a mere 2-3 ft. tall has very dark red foliage but seldom blooms. Really good where you need a small dark purple red foliage. Probably better than the small Chinese fringe varieties.

Once we get plenty of rain to end this drought I plan to try some of these.

We will be getting our first freeze in the not too distant future so be getting those tender tropicals and houseplants ready to bring in. If you aren't careful, you will have lizards, frogs, toads, and insects running all over your house. I have had that happen and believe me racing around to catch a lizard or gecko is infinitely harder than checking around in the top 2 inches of soil for the little critters BEFORE the plant comes in.

Hope you had a wonderful Thanksgiving. Remember to be thankful for the rain. We asked and we received (some).

Sweet Potatoes

By Herb Coursey

During the Revolutionary War, Sweet Potatoes were the main source of nourishment for homesteaders and for soldiers. Within the vegetable kingdom, their tuberous roots are among the most nutritious of all foods. A serving size of ½ cup of baked sweet potato provides 90 calories per serving, but zero calories from fat - unless you like to insert gloppy slices of real butter into the baked flesh of your hot potato, as I do! Real Sweet Potatoes contain an enzyme that converts most of their starches into sugars as the potatoes mature, and this sweetness continues to increase during storage and even after cooking. A perfect Sweet Potato has skin without any wrinkles, bruises, sprouts, or signs of decay. When you buy (or dig!), look very carefully at each potato. A decayed spot can already have caused the entire potato to take on a tainted flavor - *and odor!* It may already have begun the infection of all the others near it. Under that circumstance, even a perfect potato can rapidly start spoilage.

Ideal storage for potatoes is a dry, cool (55-60°) place, such as a cellar, pantry or garage. Or ...under the house! - as when I visited my grandparents, Goggy and Deek, over in Louisiana. After all of us gathered the just-dug potatoes, we brushed the dirt off of their skins and placed them clean and dry on a chicken-wire screen that we carefully suspended well above the dirt under their house. Properly stored, Sweet Potatoes will keep for a month or longer. But beware! If stored at room temperature, they will keep at most a week after purchasing. Do not try to store raw ones in a refrigerator - (the temperature is too low for them!) - because they will develop a hard core and their taste will become somewhat bitter. You don't want that! Wash them only when you're ready to cook them - otherwise, moisture from the washing can quickly induce the onset of spoilage. Do not skin them yet! Check again that each one is perfectly clean, then set them in a pan that you place in a preheated oven at



375° F for about 45 minutes, or until their flesh is very tender. Let them cool moderately.

Since most of the nutrients of a Sweet Potato are right next to its skin, remove the skins only after the potatoes have cooked and somewhat cooled. At that point skins are easier to remove from the flesh, and nutrients will better remain on what you are going to eat. I strongly prefer orange-flesh potatoes, but yellow-meated ones will work as well. I think the orange ones are more moist and sweeter. Yellow varieties do cook more slowly, so you probably would need to use a higher temperature setting. By the way, people who prefer the yellow ones make the same claims for *their* superiorities, as I do for the orange ones!

But! ***Be ye not misdirected by the term "yam"!*** The true yam is the tuber of a tropical vine and is not even distantly related to any variety of any kind of potato. Adopted into English, **YAM** comes from the African word "nyami", a word referring to the starchy, edible root of the dry, scaly family DIOSCOREACEAE (Monocot) since 50,000 B C E , whereas the **SWEET POTATO** comes from the Morning Glory family CONVOLVULACEAE (Dicot) which has grown moist and sweet since Prehistoric times!

The USDA requires that the label "YAM" always be accompanied by a "SWEET POTATO" label. Watch for it! - Have fun and enjoy!

- 'erb

Interested in Writing a Monthly Column?

Anne Brown has advised that she wishes to take a leave from writing her column which appeared every other month in the MG Grapevine. Interested in writing? Let us know.



Registration will open in early December. Go to their website for more information.

<http://www.bexarcountymastergardeners.org/2012-texas-master-gardener-state>



The Executive Committee met on October 27th and discussed and considered the following:

Anne Pattullo advised that the Bulb Sale was successful, especially with the extra sales during the Rose Festival. The few remaining bulbs will be planted out for next year's sale.

The committee working on signage for the Rose Garden had met again recently according to Cindy Harrington. The first signs will be for the four individual gardens within the Rose Garden. Work is moving forward on a template and the information to be included. A business card is being developed to replace the brochures in the garden. Website information, QR codes, and possibly Facebook links are being considered for inclusion on the cards.

The picnic at Cindy Harrington's home was well attended and considered successful. Cindy was thanked for the use of her home.

The Junior MG classes have 9 students enrolled for six classes this semester. Ten classes will be taught in the spring.

Andie Rathbone presented information on having a Facebook page for the SCMG. She will prepare a prototype

for the next Executive Committee meeting.

Keith Hansen recommended buying a copy of *Dirr's Encyclopedia of Trees* by Michael Dirr as a reference book for the MG library. His request was approved.

Honey Princess at JMG Class

At the November 16th JMG Class the Honey Princess Hayden Wolf (pictured below) of the East Texas Beekeeping Association presented a program about the life of bees to the students.



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