



# MG Grapevine

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**NOTICE**  
**MG Association**  
**Meeting**  
**February 5<sup>th</sup>**  
**Rose Garden Center**

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## February SCMG Meeting

Some of you will remember a field trip the Master Gardeners took several years ago to Keith Kridler's daffodil fields in Titus County. It was a beautiful early spring day and we enjoyed picking unique and unusual daffodils by the armloads. A bonus to the trip was learning all about bluebirds and Paulownia trees, two other interests Keith has. He will come back February 5th to present a new program on daffodils for our February meeting. He has promised to go into a bit more depth concerning soils, planting, harvesting bulbs etc., in addition to showing slides. Keith has over 7 acres planted in daffodils with more than 900 named varieties. He has many antique daffodils and is constantly working to create new hybrids.

Come hear what is new in the world of daffodils from this knowledgeable and interesting gentleman.

## After Meeting Garden Tour

Following the February 5<sup>th</sup> MG meeting we are invited to see the Camellias in the Herb & Josephine Coursey's garden. They were kind enough to invite all those who went through their garden in May to drop by to see the camellias in February so this is our opportunity to do so.

They live at 3405 Colgate. Going south on Broadway, turn left onto Amherst, turn right onto Colgate. The Coursey's house is the second on the right in the small cul-de-sac.

Joanie Matthews

## Work Day in the Gardens

Work days are scheduled for only February 17<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>. Start time is 1 PM.

## Spring Gardening Conference

A sure sign of spring, even in February, is the annual Spring Gardening Conference. Scheduled for Saturday February 14 it once again will be at the Rose Garden Center in Tyler. Registration is open at 7:30 AM, with the program beginning at 8:30 AM.

As Keith Hansen says in his comments in this newsletter, "Treat yourself to a garden Valentine." Dr. Neil Odenwald, a keynote speaker at the 2008 Texas Master Gardener Conference, will offer two presentations. Others who will be speaking include Dotty Woodson, Tyson Woods, Daniel Duncum and Keith Hansen.



The conference continues all day. The cost is \$15, which includes lunch. Certified Master Gardeners who attend may claim 6 CE credits.

## Other Learning Events

### East Texas Turf Grass Conference

Overton Research Center

Feb. 5 - 8:00 AM Reg. - Cost \$20

### East Texas Fruit & Vegetable Conference

Feb. 17 - Tyler Rose Garden Center

8:00 AM - Cost \$20

### SFA Lecture series

Feb 19 - Severn Doughty, LA Nursery

Landscape Association

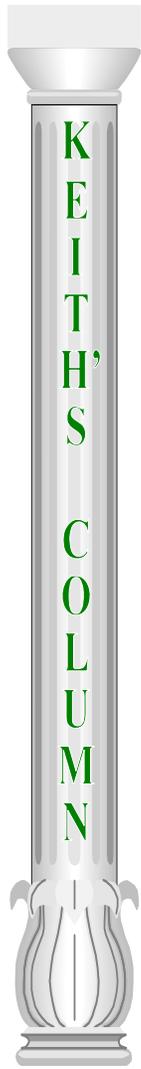
"Cold Hardy Palms" 7:00 PM

### SFA 2009 Garden Seminars

Feb 21 - Garden Tool Maintenance for the

Mechanically Challenged

9AM-12 Noon - Cost \$30



Spring is right around the corner, but spring programming is already underway. The 20 members of Class 16 are well into their horticulture training, and we have another great group of people this year. If you are in the area during class (when it is at the Extension office), drop by and meet them.

Your association's Executive Board is off to a great start this year, and with many goals to improve the organization and to keep things fun as we educate our clientele, the citizens of Smith County. As always, contact a Board member if you have ideas, questions or concerns.

February is a full month for educational conferences, starting with the East Texas Turfgrass Conference at Texas AgriLife & Extension Center in Overton on February 5. Next up we have a great lineup planned for the East Texas Spring Landscape & Garden Conference at the Tyler Rose Garden Center on February 14. Treat yourself to a "garden Valentine" as this conference is geared for the home gardener. A special speaker this year is Dr. Neil Odenwald, former Director of the School of Landscape Architecture at LSU who is now retired after 38 years of teaching. He'll give 2 talks on designing the landscape; one on practical ideas for general home landscape design, and the other on landscaping small spaces. Other subjects include planting and caring for trees, how-to-design and install a rain water harvesting system, and an update on the revised recommended plant list.

The following week is the East Texas Commercial Fruit & Vegetable Conference at the Tyler Rose Garden Center. The morning has several general topics, and the afternoon is split into vegetable, fruit and grape sessions.

For more details on all of these programs see "Programs" under "Events and News" at [EastTexasGardening.tamu.edu](http://EastTexasGardening.tamu.edu).

#### MG Training Class schedule for February:

- Feb. 3 - Plant Diseases at Overton - Dr. Karl Steddom
- Feb. 10 - Landscape Water Conservation- Dr. Dotty Woodson
- Feb. 12 - Advanced EarthKind Landscaping - Keith Hansen
- Feb. 19 - Turfgrass at Overton - Dr. James McAfee
- Feb. 24 - Perennials & Roses - Dr. William Welch
- Feb. 26 - Home Veg. Prod. at Overton - Dr. Joe Masabni

## Plant of the Month - Daffodils

by Herb Coursey

Surely one of the happiest moments of any year is when daffodils thrust upward to unfurl their glorious, golden blooms like some blast of trumpets: Now Hear This! The onset of springtime! Dipping, nodding in the wind, they sound in our hearts the joys of renewal. Like the mighty brass section of a great orchestra, they seize our spirits away from winter's gray chill. Their newly-minted gold trumpets sound about all the good things that will surely happen this time, in this life cycle, this year starting now! Spring, it is, Spring, it is!

Overton. Four miles to its east lies an oilfield remnant named Sexton City. More than seventy years ago, see a little boy: that's me! My Mom took me then to Sexton City, to a beautiful new public pool there, to learn to like the water and to learn to swim. I remember she wore a navy-blue wool bathing suit with white, huge polka dots. I hated the water, and choking in it made me terrified all the more. She never again wore that suit.

I grew into a young man who liked to explore forgotten places. One February, I went back to Sexton City, now hardly a crossroads. For a quarter-hour I tromped around thickets, crashed through the weeds, and finally stood still in amazement. Only one beautiful thing had survived: Daffodils. Someone unknown must have outlined the pool area by planting individual bulbs, so many years ago, now multiplied into great clumps of gold blooms. They stood there alone, lost, abandoned. Survivors. Testaments of a longing for beauty and the happiness of hope.

"I have to have a start of you," I thought, but there was literally no one to ask. I returned with a shovel, and dug. Those bulbs were saved in the ground at Rollingwood, my family's old home. We always just called them Rollingwood Daffodils. Now, I know their name is *Narcissus pseudonarcissus*, and they were known by the name **Lent Lily** in English gardens by 1200. They were also the dancing wildflower of Wordsworth's poem and of colonial gardens. A bit reluctantly, it might reseed. We have brought some of them to our garden in Tyler. They mean to us: Great things are on the way! Hold on! Keep your hand on the plow!



Well, I did, and I am still holding! They are, too. Gradually there have been added other varieties, some bought, others ... hmmm ... adopted, shall we say!

**Baby Moon** (1612, *N. jonquilla*, aka **Early Louisiana**) is thin-stemmed with small, quite early-blooming butter-yellow clusters of florets but, Oh my! What a fragrance! It reseeds itself generously, and it recognizes no boundaries!

In Overton, starting about a century ago from the original Minor family homesite, it has escaped to many

See **DAFFODILS, Page 3**

## Cindy's Comments



Another new MG class has started, Class 16. Seeing their eager faces brought memories of when I was one of them just a few years ago. Nervous about how hard the class would be, could I pass the exam, what would it really be like to fulfill my hour's commitment and would I find new friends among all these strangers? Most of all, I was excited by what I would learn in

the coming weeks! Each new class now makes me think of a beautiful garden! By finding just the perfect site for the garden, preparing and amending the soil, you're then ready to sow the seeds. As time passes you begin to enjoy the beauty of your new garden as it emerges. Just as each plant has its own place in the garden, so does each new person in the class. Everyone comes with something special to add to our association. Just like the plants, they grow weekly working their way through the MG Handbook guided by Keith. When the class ends and they become interns, they find the projects they enjoy, put in their hours and a Certified Master Gardener emerges. Such a beautiful garden!

What enthusiasm each new class brings! Our association needs that yearly infusion of excitement. This a great time to reflect on what role we are playing in the garden called the SCMG Association. Have you participated in a new or different project lately? Would you be willing to serve as a mentor? What about working on some of the new committees being formed? Have you worked in the IDEA or Heritage garden lately? Did you sign up to help with the Garden Tour, Northeast Texas Gardening Guide or the Speakers Bureau? The Main Street Flower Market will need help, so will AgriWorld. There are many projects out there needing you and what you bring that is special. Just as in a garden, something new may be added, but it is the "perennials" that make the dramatic impact.

During the January meeting, as each project leader gave their update I thought again of why I wanted to become a MG: to learn more and to become a member of an organization that gives so much to the community in the form of education and beauty. What an impact the SCMG's make. We need each of you for our association to be the best it can be!

Looking ahead to the great things that will happen this year!  
Cindy

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### Texas State Master Gardener Conference



The conference is scheduled for April 23-25 in Marshall. Their website has recently been updated to include the Agenda and Registration forms. Go to:

<http://tcaaa.tamu.edu/09statemeeting.htm>

## Daffodils - Continued from page 2

of the neighborhood yards there, and even crossed a Farm-to-Market road to convert the grounds of the old R. A. Motley mansion into a shimmering yellow blanket of flowers every February. We grow a version of it named **New Baby Moon**, different in that all six petals of the perianth are white, but the tiny cup is still very yellow. And yes, it does reseed itself.

**Thalia** (1916) is an old favorite milky-white, rather short-stemmed and blooming later, with its "shooting star" shape pointing directly back down to the flowerbed. It would seem to be a thoughtful bloom, dependable and undemanding. Don't depend on it for reseeding.

**Geranium** (1930) is a vigorous cluster-flowered variety with up to nine larger-than-usual white florets atop its stem, each centered by a small flashy, orangy-gold cup. This one is a knock-out! And it blooms here when the azaleas are in flower!

**King Alfred** (1899) Gold, bold, and everything a world icon should be! This is the one that became so admired and demanded as an addition to early twentieth-century gardens that the name was often loosely appropriated for daffodils in general: "Lots of folks would plant king alfreds." Consequently, we are left today with a number of over-sized imposters. The real one is worth searching for. It's early.

**Paperwhites** is another generic name covering any number of cluster-flowered white varieties that can be forced to bloom indoors before Christmas, but would instead be happy to serve in the garden as a harbinger of spring. They're tough.

**Butter & Eggs** (1777) They have grown successfully in our garden as far north as central Indiana. My grandma Goggy cherished them in Trees City, Louisiana. Displaying double the normal number of yellow petals interspersed with shorter petaloids of gold to almost orange, they are a botanical ball of fleece! Late bloomers, their heavy substance makes them last a longer time, handsome and abundant.

**Carlton** (1927) "There is nothing better," wrote the immortal daffodil authority Henry Mitchell, "still unsurpassed for planting in quantity." With its fragrance lightly scented of vanilla, it is a brilliant yellow variety to bloom and increase vigorously. Mary Kay Lust took that to heart when she guided its choice for the first "Project Daffodil" Tyler Beautification Drive in 1997. Every year but one since then, Carlton has been reselected as the most desirable bulb variety to purchase for greeting us with spring.



All daffodils are easy to grow in the sandy loam of East Texas. But above everything: DON'T CUT OFF THEIR GREEN LEAVES UNTIL THEY HAVE TURNED YELLOW ALMOST COMPLETELY!

See **DAFFODILS** page 4

**DAFFODILS - from page 3**

My own rule is, never before the middle of June. They are using those green leaves to get ready for next year! You do want more blooms, don't you?

These varieties are but a minuscule few! To paraphrase the great Mae West, "So many varieties, so little time!" I know I should quote a snippet from Wordsworth's poem here: "... and then my heart with pleasure fills and dances with the daffodils." Yes - Oh my, yes!

But! I feel more in alliance with - again - Mae West, when she said, "Too much of a good thing can be WONDERFUL!"

Happy Spring - Herb

**Phone Duty Anyone?**

Look at the calendar attached and ask yourself if it is time that you volunteer to work answering the phone at the MG office. There are many open days and with the growing season fast approaching, there will be enough calls to keep you from being bored.

**Old Word**

This month's word, not in common usage, is "awn" which in botany is either a hair - or bristle-like appendage on a larger structure.

Awns are characteristic of many grasses, where they extend from the lemmas of the florets. They often make up the hairiness or other distinctive appearance of foxtails and the like. Awns may be long or short, straight or curved, single or multiple per floret. Some genera are named after their awns, such as three-awns (*Aristida*).

In some species, the awns can contribute significantly to photosynthesis, for example barley.

**Check the SCMG Website**

An abbreviated schedule of the MG training classes can be found on page 2 of this newsletter. For those who would like to see the full schedule, go to the <http://scmg.tamu.edu> and then to "Coming Events" where you can click the schedule of classes link.

On that same page you will find other upcoming events with details of them.



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