



# MG Grapevine

<http://scmg.tamu.edu>

<http://easttexasgardening.tamu.edu>

July 2011

Volume 18

Number 7

## Notice

There is no  
MG Association  
July Meeting

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Published for the Master Gardeners of Smith County, Texas under the auspices of the Smith County Office of Texas AgriLife Extension Service, 1517 W. Front St. Tyler, TX 75702.

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## Joanie Matthews says..

I hope everyone has checked out the "What's New" section of our website. Jim Powell's article on "Pass-Along Plants" in *Texas Co-op Power* magazine is terrific. I wish I could write like that! Jim's plant knowledge is wonderful.



Joanie Matthews  
SCMGA President

Also on "What's New" is our "Dynamic Duo" of Lynn Merrifield, Donna Cole and crew at the Tyler Public Library summer program. Teaching 100 little kids about gardening is a great thing. Next month they have another session with older kids. I wonder how many will grow up to be Master Gardeners?

Speaking of our Dynamic Duo, Donna Cole is hard at work putting together a fabulous fall trip for us. Just a hint...Would you like a private tour with Greg Grant? Be sure to save the date of Wednesday, September 14th. We will have all the details by our next meeting on August 4th. The time will be short, so be ready to sign up!!!

Project leaders beware....Anne Pattullo has had knee replacement and Sherri Matthews has had knee surgery, surely it's not catching. Both the Bulb Sale and the Calendar is coming along nicely (maybe because they have to stay home and what else is there to do but work on their projects?)

I have gotten to know the Henderson Co. Master Gardener Officers and as you See **JOANIE** page 5

## Dig up a Good Book



Approximately 100 kids from grades K, 1 and 2 attended the Tyler Public Library's June 16<sup>th</sup> summer program, *Dig up a Good*

*Book*. With a title like that, you know that the programs just have to be about gardening.

On this day their program was "Wake Up Sleepy Seed". With the help of five MGs Lynne Merryfield, Donna Cole, Jean Smith, Monette Colman and Pat Welch, they read stories, became botanists, learned the parts of a plant and planted sunflower seeds.

The next program is July 14<sup>th</sup> for grades 3-5, entitled "How Old is My Water" at the Tyler Public Library.

## SCMGA Scholarships

The Smith County Master Gardener Association 2011 scholarships have been awarded to two students.

The recipient at Texas A&M University is Laura White who is majoring in horticulture. This summer she is interning in Guatemala, teaching Junior Master Gardener curriculum in schools and orphanages.

SFA State University horticulture student Casey Thomas, who also is majoring in horticulture, currently is working at as a student assistant at the SFA Mast Arboretum.

Both sent notes expressing their thanks for our support.

It was good to see many of you at the Horticulture Field Day at Overton. The weather cooperated wonderfully, and the handiwork of your volunteer service was on display for all to admire. During the afternoon session indoors, Dr. Pemberton acknowledged the Master Gardeners contribution to this important project for the industry, and I was proud to see you so recognized. Thanks to Don Davis his continuing coordination of this project! For those of you who missed the Field Day, I'll be blogging some photos and comments over the next couple weeks, so check it out at <http://agrilife.org/etg>.



encouraged NOT to seek re-certification credit for training modules they have completed in previous years.

The year is half over, so be thinking about volunteer opportunities ahead of you so you won't come up short at the end of the year. We can always use help in the office answering calls and walk-ins. It is a tremendous help to me to have you there to handle the routine questions that we get at this time of year (blossom end rot and spider mites on tomatoes, squash stem borer on squash, what grass to grow, why don't I have any cucumbers, why are they bitter, etc. etc.). Call the office (903-590-2980) to schedule a time slot. Of course, your help is always welcome in our demonstration gardens at the Tyler.

### Southern Cape Jessamine

By Dee Bishop

Known today by its 'real' name Gardenia, every southern yard once had at least one. When we would open windows to let the South breeze blow in or sit out on the porch in the evenings to shell peas, that heavenly aroma would make all the heat and sweat worthwhile. The lovely evergreen bushes would be laden down with the creamy white blooms during the month of June and again in the fall. We wore them in our hair, as corsages, and had them in vases in every room. I hear people complain about how challenging they are to grow and know from experience they are truly demanding unless you can give these ladies exactly what they want. After all they are ladies and do have their wants.



Most of the gardenias I remember grew on the East side of a house, but not up against it, out in the Eastern yard. They always had a well drained area and grew in fairly heavy loam, not clay, but acid loam. They all had shade in afternoon. They were all alone with no other plants around. They were all 4-6 ft. tall and that wide. I guess they were pruned enough when we gathered blooms for the house etc. About the only water they got was rain, but it used to rain! I remember my Big Mama throwing coffee grounds on hers all the time.

When I got married and had my first yard, I asked my grandmas how to plant gardenias. They both told me to find a high spot on the East side of the house and dig a great wide hole and fill it with good rotted manure and some coffee grounds. Water the hole and the plant and make sure it is planted just as deep as it grew or a 'tad' higher. Water it good and let it alone. Well, that yard was Birmingham and the climate was wonderful there anyhow. It rained nearly every week and I never had to water it. It grew huge and bloomed every June. It got a lot of morning sun and dappled sun the rest of the day.

Enter Texas----a different story. My grandmas lived in Texas alright, but in the coastal region where it rains all through the summer. The first one died after a year.

See **SOUTHERN** page 4

Speaking of web sites, our county Extension office has a new address and look (though the old link still works, too). It is <http://smith.agrilife.org>. Take a visit and if you have any suggestions, please feel free to pass along your comments. It is still in the development stage, and we haven't tapped its full potential yet.

Also, good news! The Smith County Agriculture & Natural Resources (Ag/NR) agent position has been filled! Chad Gulley, currently Ag/NR agent in Nacogdoches County, will arrive July 1. Please stop by if you are in the area and tell him 'Hi' and make him feel welcome. Chad was the Nacogdoches County Master Gardener program coordinator, and was doing a great job with that program. We are looking forward to his contributions to our educational programs in Smith County.

As we slide into another Texas summer, good gardeners take regular walks through the yard, examining the gardens for any signs of distress or impending trouble. Of course, water is always a critical issue in the summertime, and especially this year with the continuing drought (despite the welcome rain last week), and hopefully as Master Gardeners you are practicing good watering practices – conserving water, applying no more than is needed, and not more often than is required. A good soaking, coupled with a good layer of mulch, should last several days in vegetable and flower patches. Of course, deep and infrequent is what lawns do best with.

Want a refresher on watering the lawn and landscape? Want to get some CEU's at the same time? Go to <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/earthkind/training/> and take the 1st 3 training modules (Landscape Water Conservation, Low Volume Irrigation, and Irrigation System Auditing). They don't take long, and it will be good information for this summer's watering season. To get CE credit, you must take the quiz and evaluation at the end of each module. Master Gardeners can select from any of these on-line modules to obtain up to 3 hours of re-certification education credits in a calendar year. Each module is worth 1 hour of credit. Master Gardeners are



Master Gardeners at the Tyler Public Library's "Dig up a Good Book" program.

Photos by Bill Kelldorf

### Henderson County Summer Workshops

The Henderson County MGs present a Summer Workshop Series at the East Texas Arboretum, located inside Athens, TX Loop 7, just off Hwy 175 North, within the Athens city limits. These FREE events begin at 6:30 PM. There are refreshments and door prizes.

The schedule of events are as follows: July 14<sup>th</sup>, *The Native Plant Advantage*, Kay Jenkins, President, Native Plant Society, Tyler; July 30<sup>th</sup>, *Second Season Vegetable Gardening*, Patty Leander, Austin, Texas Gardener Magazine writer; August 11<sup>th</sup>, *Our Favorite Perennials*, Betty Markee, HCMG Intern.

### Mystery in the Gardens

There is a mystery going on in the Heritage, Shade, Sunshine and IDEA Gardens. Plants are disappearing. Just last week three were taken out of the IDEA Garden. These are not just any plants but plants that are new introductions or hard to find in the market. We are at loss as to how to prevent this theft.

All of the gardens are looking great. Maybe it is time for a visit.



### Looking Ahead

There are a number of interesting events which will be coming up this summer and fall.

They are listed on the SCMG website at

<http://scmg.tamu.edu/coming-events/> where more information is available.

Coming this summer and fall are:

**July 13 -14** – Rainwater Harvesting Specialist Training at Lake Granbury.

**July 14 & 30<sup>th</sup> and August 11<sup>th</sup>**– Henderson Co. Workshops – see article above.

**September 6<sup>th</sup> – 1<sup>st</sup>** Tuesday lectures in the Garden return after the summer recess.

**September 22 – October 2** – AgriWorld with Our Secret Garden at the East Texas State Fair.

**October 1** – Fabulous Fall Festival Plant Sale at SFA.

**October 4** – 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday lecture – Tour Heritage Garden.

**October 8** – Fall Conference and Bulb Sale at Harvey Convention Center – Tyler.



Master Gardeners at the Horticulture Field at Overton

Photos by Keith Hansen

## Good Bug, Bad Bug

By Anne Brown



So, after many days last winter of below freezing temperatures and sizzling hot dry weather now where are all the mosquitoes coming from? I cannot go outside without covering every square inch of skin or I end up with itchy red welts.

Mosquitoes have adapted well over the past 210 million years they have existed and there are over 2,600 different species on all the continents; only one cannot survive in Antarctica, the common household mosquito. Mosquitoes are well equipped to handle below freezing weather, think Alaska. During the winter adult pregnant female mosquitoes can live under piles of dead leaves or loose tree bark and in building cracks or mosquitoes can live as eggs. Their body fluids adapt to cold weather by replacing part of their body fluids with glycerol which reduces ice formation in their cells and allows tissues to freeze and thaw without much damage. The glycerol also lowers temperature at which the body fluids freeze and this permits the insect to survive in water that is below freezing. Some species lay eggs in rafts on the water surface while other species prefer laying on plants or standing water or just above the water level. The eggs can survive for several months in dry conditions, and then when the water level rises after rains or floods, they hatch. The lifecycle has four stages, egg, larva and pupa must be in water to survive and adult. In the larva stage (wigglers) the mosquito has a soft body with a breathing tube. If the water is too polluted they will smother, fast moving water also causes problems for larva. The female can live approximately one month, the male just a few days but new adults can mate after two days which explains the constant swarms. Both male and female adults feed on algae and bacteria, filter feed from polluted water and feed on plant nectar; and yes, only the female sucks blood when she bites. The blood feeds the female, but is also a necessary component for producing eggs. Male and female adults will often rest in grass, shrubbery and plant foliage. The female can beat her wings 250-500 times per second and produces the whining noise we hear by vibrating thin horny membranes on the thorax. This helps males locate the females. Mosquitoes provide food for fish, aquatic insects, bats, birds, dragonflies and spiders.

Mosquitoes can transmit several serious diseases when they bite. Malaria, yellow fever, dengue fever and encephalitis, along with West Nile virus are just a few of the pathogens that they carry. It is important to protect yourself from bites as much as possible.

Mosquitoes are most active during the early morning and late evening hours when the wind is usually still or soft. Mosquitoes are probably attracted by dark colors, human scent and exhaled carbon dioxide. Wearing insect repellent with DEET is an effective way to keep mosquitoes away and there are clothes manufactured and approved by the US Environmental Protection Agency that

are insect repellent. Don't use scented soaps, lotions, or shampoos, wear light colored clothing with a tight weave, and protect arms with long sleeved shirts and legs with long pants, feet with socks and shoes. The Texas Department of State Health Services recommends that everyone empty or removes cans, buckets, bottles, old tires, empty pots, plant saucers and other containers that hold water. Remove debris and standing water from gutters and water from flat roofs, change water in pet dishes once a day, wading pools and bird baths at least every few days. Fill in low areas and holes in trees that collect water. Cover trash containers so they don't collect water. Don't over water lawns and gardens so water does not stand for several days. Repair any leaking plumbing and outside faucets, screen rain barrels and openings to water tanks or cisterns, keep drains and ditches clear of weeds and trash, and if you have an ornamental ponds keep fish that eat mosquitoes. For ponds or other standing water that cannot be drained there are Bt dunks that look like donuts that will float in the water and kill the wigglers. If you have bamboo remember that water can collect in the hollow stumps left after cutting. An organic repellent is citronella.

Most important, if you feel ill after being bitten please consult a doctor. (Refer to paragraph above)

Texas Dept. of State Health Services  
Alaska.org

Univ. of Arizona <http://inseted.arizona.edu>

Univ. of California Mosquito Research Program

A Field Guide to Common Texas Insects, B. Drees, Ph.D./J. Jackman, Ph.D.  
Indiana Public Media, Mosquitoes in Winter Moment of Science, Don Glass

## SOUTHERN from page 2

I planted another and it did well until we started having severe drought and I had to water a lot. I found that gardenias do not like chlorinated, fluoridated water. It turns the leaves brown on the tips and eventually the whole leaf until the plant dies. I suggest catching rain water, if we ever get any, to water plants that are sensitive to those chemicals. Of course you can allow the water to sit 24 hours too.

To plant a gardenia, dig a large wide hole, fill with compost. Water the hole and the plant. Make sure the plant is slightly raised above ground level. Mulch. They love coffee grounds, manure tea, and a shot of Epsom salts every now and then. Good luck growing a beautiful plant that gives back so much pleasure.

## Recycle Plastic Pots

by Sue Adee

**Plastic Pot Return – You plant it. Return it to us. We'll recycle it.**

That caption was printed in big bold blue letters in one of Lowe's circulars. Finally, I thought we have somewhere to take our used plastic pots and trays. **Wrong!** After calling Lowe's in Tyler, I found out the store does not participate in the recycle program. Maybe, if several of the Master Gardeners inquire about the program or talk to the nursery manager, the Tyler Lowe's store will change their mind. We can only hope.

The logo for the Executive Committee features the text "Executive Committee" in white on a dark purple rectangular background. Below this, there is a horizontal bar with a color gradient from orange to yellow.

The Executive Committee met on June 22, 2011.

They discussed the appropriate honorarium for SCMGs who present programs, as part of the Speaker's Bureau, with consideration for the cost of traveling to make presentations. They asked that the Policy & Procedures committee (Sue Adee, Pat Welch and Ann Kelley) consider the issue and bring a report and possible new procedure to the Executive Committee.

The committee received a letter from Pat and Clay Turner, resigning from project leaders for the Home Garden Tour. The Turners had previously advised the garden tour committee of their decision with the hope that someone on the committee might move up to lead it, but thus far no one has done so.

The Fall Conference and Bulb Sale were discussed, particularly as it concerns the speakers for the conference. With various speakers being considered, the conference committee was seeking guidance.

### JOANIE from page 1

know I sent out information on their Butterfly Workshop. Everyone who attended had very nice things to say, the workshop was really enjoyed by all. I have sent Martin info on their other summer workshops and I believe it will be in this Grapevine. They will have some excellent speakers especially if you are interested in vegetables.

I was so sorry to hear about Sam Blackbird losing his life in a car accident. Being a Master Gardener was very important to Sam, he truly loved it. I will miss him in the garden. SCMGGA sent a beautiful flower arrangement in honor of Sam. We received a really sweet card and note from his family.

As I said last month, I really have been having fun working in my own garden. I'm almost at the point where I can invite Miss Ellie (Anne Pattullo's gorgeous cocker) to come have a "coffee walk" thru MY garden with my fabulous four pups. Can't you see it now? Five dogs and my clippers!

See you Soon,  
Joanie



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