



MG Grapevine

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NOTICE

May 6th
MG Association
Meeting at the Rose
Garden Center
11:30 AM

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Keith's Column - pg. 2
- To-Do List for Spring - pg. 2
- Changes & Corrections - pg. 2
- Coffee Walking - pg. 3
- Good Bug - Bad Bug - pg. 3
- Speaker's Bureau - pg. 3
- Executive Comm. - pg. 4
- Coming Events - pg. 4
- A Chance to Grow - pg. 4

MG Grapevine Staff

Martin Davis, Editor

MG Grapevine Contributors:

Dee Bishop, Anne Brown, Keith Hansen, Joanie Matthews, Jan Moch and Anne Pattullo.

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Monthly Meeting Notes

by Joanie Matthews

Our May program will be presented by Phyllis & Ivan Vaselenluck who own one of Texas largest blueberry farms, Echo Springs Blueberry Farm in Murchison. The Vaselenlucks are originally from the Rose Capital of Canada, Windsor, Ontario, but now live 23 miles from the Rose Capital of Texas.

They say they knew nothing about growing blueberries, nor did they have any such aspirations. But when the couple happened upon the blueberry farm five years ago, when it was a mere 27 acres, they fell in love. Now the couple are local experts at berry growing. It is a year-round occupation, Mrs. Vaselenluck said. If they are not picking they are pruning, weeding or replanting. (sound familiar???) They will lead us thru the 12 months so we can have the finest blueberries too, YUM!!

After our meeting we will have a plant and seed swap, so bring your plants and some plastic bags to carry your goodies home in.



Plan to stay around for a few minutes and we will walk up the hill to the Heritage Garden for a shed warming of the fanciest shed in town.

A special thanks to.....

... everyone who helped build the new storage building in the Heritage Rose Garden including Ronny Duncan, Victor Long, Gary Dobbs, Chris Steavenson and Wayne Blonn who spent many hours obtaining materials, cutting, constructing and painting. It is already in use and it is so convenient to have our equipment there.

Coordinators Anne Brown & Bibi Blonn

Annual Awards

At the April 1st luncheon and meeting, the annual awards for outstanding service, were presented by Keith Hansen, Cindy Harrington and Anne Pattullo.

The following were honored:

- Friend of MGs - Mike Norris
- MG of the year - Joanie Matthews
- MG Intern of the year - Chris Steavenson
- MG Project of the year - Rose Garden Docents - Janice Suggs
- Lifetime Award - Bill Kelldorf
- Sage Award - Anne Brown
- President's Award - Pat Welch
- MG most hours - Cindy Harrington
- MG Intern most hours - Victor Long
- Special Award of Excellence - Ronny Duncan
- Helping Hand - Gary & Kay Dobbs
- No Problem - Ann Kelley
- Agent Support - Linda Sargent
- Youth - Hazel Bateman
- Public Awareness - Jana Bowman
- Media Award - Mary Claire Rowe
- R & D Award - Rhonda Rholes
- New Initiative - The Engravers incl. Jim Showen, Laquita Showen, Chris Steavenson, Victor Long, Ann Kelley and Craig Reiland.

Awards presented to Smith County at the recent Texas State Conference included:

- Media Award - 2nd Place - SCMG website.
- Publication Award - 3rd Place - "Do You Want to be a Master Gardener."
- Education Award - 3rd Place - "Our Secret Garden."

In Memoriam

Master Gardener Don Gustafson, member of Class 7, passed away on April 4th following a long battle with cancer. A memorial service for him was held on April 20th in Austin.

The SCMG received a note and a monetary contribution from Judy Mahan of Dilley TX. She said in her note, "Don was my friend and I will miss him." So will we.



Last week was National Volunteer Week, and I want to tell you that I have some of the best volunteers one could hope for. I told you that at the Annual Graduation and Awards Luncheon in early April, and we recognized many of

you for your outstanding accomplishments in volunteering for Texas AgriLife Extension Service. I'm really proud of your accomplishments and THANK YOU for your dedication to Texas AgriLife Extension Service educational programs.

State Awards – Smith County Master Gardeners received well-deserved recognition at the State Meeting in Dallas, and even though we didn't earn any 1st placings, I think you are winners in all the categories we entered. The Smith County MG Web Site (<http://scmg.tamu.edu>), skillfully maintained by Martin Davis, received 2nd Place. We received 3rd Place in the Publication Award category for "Do You Want to Be A Master Gardener?" Also taking 3rd Place in the Education Award category was "Our Secret Garden". It is tough to convey in the award applications the full impact and extent of project or program being submitted.

We got to show off our projects at the Tyler Rose Garden to members of the Texas Nursery & Landscape Association Region III during their monthly meeting this week. They toured the Heritage Rose Garden, Shade Garden, and IDEA Garden. Sue Adee, Anne Pattullo, and Anne Brown were there to

answer questions and point out some of the outstanding plants and features of the gardens. The group enjoyed the tour and asked good questions. We also pointed out our docent program for leading volunteers through the Rose Garden. The gardens are looking GREAT, and you should make a special trip to see them this spring if you haven't been by - - any Tuesday morning is an ideal time to come and help out while you admire these beautiful educational projects.

Thanks to Martin Davis and Bill Kelldorf, two of our resident photographers, for judging hundreds of photos taken by 4-Hers from the 22 county Extension District 5 area. They had a tough job sorting through a lot of great photos to pick out winners in several categories.

Finally, it's going to be interesting, horticulturally-speaking, the next few months. I think we are seeing some probable damage from this winter's rainy and cold weather, especially in lawns. A weak lawn going into winter will be much more likely to be injured by cold than a strong, healthy lawn. One of the strangest-looking plant galls (picture at left) came in to the office this week. It was first called in, and I

could not even begin to picture what the caller was describing, so I asked her to bring a sample in. While I was able to immediately say it was a gall, it was one that I had never seen before. White with pink polka dots!! It's called a Wool Sower Gall (why, I do not know), caused by a tiny wasp after she lays her eggs on white oaks. The larvae feed within the gall, and will hatch out later this summer.

To-Do List for Spring

by Dee Bishop

Spring finally arrived and I am sorely behind. We usually have February to get frozen things cut back, but not this year. March was so cold I was only out a few times. Here it is nearly May and I am just finishing winter chores. Oh well, just another month or two behind isn't so bad!

I think I have enjoyed the 'blossoming' more than ever. My whole yard was and is a riot of color and wonderful smells. I love the perfume of spring equally well. It all starts off with winter honeysuckles which I have in all directions. Daffodils, violets, carolina allspice, banana shrub, native azaleas, and now irises, soon to be followed by daylilies and oakleaf hydrangea. The lovely shades of green in all directions and the song of birds all around make me 'squeely' happy. I love seeing the little flowers that color the lawn. The tiny quacker ladies (bluets) in all shades of blue and white are the tiniest and sweetest flowers of spring and sadly, most people never see them. I love to get down in the lawn with them and look through a hand lens at their beautiful tiny petals and leaves. I love my violets, purple and white, even if they are pests. I like to pick small bouquets and place them at my kitchen sink in tiny containers. Mama and I used to go every spring into the woods and pick the old confederate violets that grew there. I think of her when I see violets.

Then there is the 'stench' of hawthorns and some of my most beautiful viburnums. They really smell awful in order to attract small flies as well as bees for pollination. I wish you could see my summer snowflake viburnum now. It is at least 10 ft. tall and wide and covered with white clusters of bloom. Japanese snowball viburnum is covered with huge white balls. Our yard hums with honeybees all spring and hummingbirds all summer. Baby birds are learning to fly all around, wrens, titmice, chickadees, bluebirds, cardinals, and even the hawks have a nest over the way. The islands of shrubbery I have planted around the edges of the yard draws all kinds of birds who stay to nest and eat at the feeders and all the insects that come to the plants. I never have to spray anything.

I suggest planting all sorts of shrubbery that make berries and thick growth for birds. Make sure that all shrubs make beautiful flowers and give wonderful scents for you and give color and form all year to make your yard the prettiest haven for all who will take the time to notice.

Changes & Correction

Change - Jean Watson - Cell only 903-316-5472

E-mail - tis_jean@yahoo.com

Change - Sue Clark - phone 903-894-3218

Correction - Anne Brown - E-mail - abrn525@att.net

Notify Martin Davis of any errors in the new Address Book.

Copies of the new Address Book are available in the Extension office for those who not yet picked one up.



Coffee Walking

by Anne Pattullo - President SCMG Association

Spring is definitely here! After waiting so long, it seems like everything is blooming at once. Each night I fall into bed bone tired from trudging up and down my hill, going after something I forgot, be it the Osmocote or the trowel or the watering can. Nearly everything that is a tender perennial is showing signs of life, even my Yellow Bells and the Dianella. It is going to take a full season for them to rebound after last winter so I hope we don't have another brutal one this time around. I still haven't seen any signs of the Hidden Ginger, but it is always late so I am still optimistic. My Ellie dog may be a chocolate cocker but here of late she is mustard yellow, with little catkins hanging all over her fur. She is definitely due for her summer haircut. She is so excited to go walking each morning; sure she is going to catch a baby squirrel or one of the many birds that frequent our yard. So far she is batting zero but I guess the fun is in the chase.

Six of our group attended the Texas Master Gardener Association convention in Los Colinas. We heard some great speakers, toured beautiful gardens and attended workshops on a wide variety of topics. Start to plan right now for next year's convention which will be held in Glen Rose. The keynote speaker is going to be Paul James, HGTV's "Gardening by the Yard" guy. In January, Joanie Matthews has arranged for us to have a speaker from the Glen Rose/Granbury group come and give us a sneak peak at all the convention offerings.

A big thank you goes out to all those who volunteered during April for the Earth Day events. Also, thanks to all the volunteers who have been preparing for the Home Garden Tour and getting the show gardens ready for spring at the Rose Garden. It is hard to believe, but we are maintaining 4 beautiful beds within the Rose Garden grounds! The new Yellow and White garden looks beautiful! I sure would like to have a couple of the great rocks the class put in there! Please come after the meeting May 6th to help "warm" the new tool shed at the Heritage Garden and while you're there check out the other 3 gardens. The shade garden looks especially nice, all lush and green and filled out.

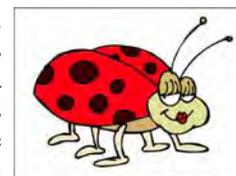
If you ordered a shirt, be sure and pick it up in time to wear it during the Home Tour. Also, if you haven't signed up to be a docent and find you are going to be available May 1st, please please call Shirley Long and offer to help. We need all hands on deck this Saturday! It is going to be a wonderful tour, with 6 very different home gardens. See you at the Tour, remember a hat and sunscreen and most of all, comfortable shoes!



Good Bug – Bad Bug

by Anne Brown

Ladybug, ladybug, fly away home. Your house is on fire; Your children all roam. Except little Nan who sits in her pan weaving her laces as fast as she can. A children's rhyme dated from 1744, this is a verse all children learn. Do you know the history behind this verse? Ladybug, lady beetle, or ladybird beetle all are common names for the same insect. This charming, and considered lucky, insect is very beneficial eating many pests that attack plants. Easily recognized by its bright coloring and spots, these small beetles emerge in spring from under rocks, leaf debris or other protected areas. Most adults look like upside down orange halves with dark spots but some adults may be red, greenish yellow, or black. It is believed that the bright colors are a warning to predators that the beetles are bitter tasting and should be avoided. The female Ladybug lays a cluster of small yellow eggs, usually attached to the underside of plant leaves or on plant stems close to food supplies. The larvae resemble small alligators colored red and black, moving around plants consuming many pests such as aphids, sometimes as many as 200 to 300 per day. Some adults may consume mites or scale, thrips, eggs of other small pests, even pollen and nectar when food supplies are low. Ladybugs will move away from an area after they have eaten the current, easily reached food supply.



The Mexican Bean Beetle and the squash beetle are also in this same family and are considered the only pests, feeding on commercial or home crops. Ladybugs are somewhat tolerant of insecticides but even so spraying should be kept to a minimum if they are to remain in your garden. Right now there are is a large population of ladybugs in the Heritage Rose Garden so the staff has agreed to not spray until these beneficial insects have moved to new areas.

The origin of the rhyme? One thought is that the rhyme will cause the beetle to fly away if it lands on a person because it is considered unlucky to kill a ladybug, or if the ladybug flies away after you recite the verse your wish will come true.

The Nan version may be the result of farmers setting fires to chase away or kill bugs in their crops and Nan is in the pupal stage and must undo the case to break free. So, if you see Ladybugs in your garden smile and feel very lucky indeed. Cornell Univ., C. Weeden, A. Shelton, & M. Hoffman
University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, R. Bessin

Speaker's Bureau

Our speakers were very active during March, speaking to six groups with a total of 115 participants. Those making presentations include: Ina Brundrett, Jana Bowman, Patsy Besch, Barbara Null, Andie Rathbone and Janis Morris.



The committee met on March 25th. Discussion included:

- Nearly all job descriptions are on file and when all are included, they will put into binders with copies placed in the MG office and Keith's office.
- Heard updates on the Home Garden Tour and the bus trip.
- Plant Label Fundraiser - 2000 labels have been purchased. They will be bundled and available to sell at the Flower Market.
- T-Shirts will be ordered after the April 1st meeting.
- Heritage Garden building has been completed.
- Keith Hansen will begin work on the Emeritus program after April 1st.
- Reviewed plans for the April luncheon meeting.
- Approved rework repair of flagstone walkways in the IDEA Garden, with David Pierson overseeing the work.
- Approved a "Garden Open House" on June 5th to showcase the MG gardens in the Tyler Rose Garden.
- Discussed vandalism and security at the gardens.
- Discussed community visibility and publicity for the gardens.

Coming Events

May 1 - Home Garden Tour - 9 AM to 4 PM - Six gardens will be on display. Tour tickets are \$10 in advance. For more details with addresses and pictures, visit the SCMG website.

May 4 - 1st Tuesday in the Garden - 12 noon at the IDEA Garden - Sowing Seeds for Economical Color - Barbara Null.

May 8 - Dallas Arboretum Plant Sale - 8 AM to 5 PM Over 23,000 plants for sale, including perennials, succulents and summer annuals. Details on the Arboretum website.

June 9 thru 11 - MG Specialist Training - Composter Hosted by Bexar County, San Antonio. The class focuses on composting for the home gardener with insight to commercial compost production. Deadline for registration - May 19. For more details, contact Keith Hansen.

A Chance to Grow

David Gary, Smith Co. MG wrote, "Five years into retirement my muscular dystrophy was getting worse and I was getting restless." Read his story in *Guideposts* online at <http://www.guideposts.com/story/retiree-grows-garden>



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