



MG Grapevine

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MG Association Meeting
October 6th 11:30 AM
Rose Garden Center

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MG Grapevine Staff
Martin Davis, Editor

MG Grapevine Contributors:
Sue Adee, Dee Bishop, Herb Coursey, Ronny Duncan, Keith Hansen, Joanie Matthews & Jean Smith.

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Extension Office
Phone - 903-590-2980
Fax - 903-590-2984

Joanie Matthews says,

The bus tour was a great success. There were 60 of us happy campers who enjoyed the private tour and visit with Greg Grant. We bought all of his books



Joanie Matthews
SCMGA President

and a lot of his bulbs. We had a nice surprise of pastries baked by Greg's mother. Breakfast, lunch, and the tour of the Native Plant Garden rounded everything out to a great day.

The change of season is upon us and it is time to renew yourself in your gardens and with Smith County Master Gardeners. Save the dates!! We have some great events planned and would love for you to be part of the fun.

If you have bulbs to donate to the sale please bring them to the Oct.6th meeting clean and labeled. After the meeting we will have a work session preparing the bulbs for sale. Oct. 7th will be the sacking at Harvey Hall begins at 10:00 am. Oct. 8th will be the sale. October 15th is the sale of the remaining bulbs at the Rose Festival Arts Crafts and Plant sale at Bergfeld Park.

Now more than anytime during the year we need help from each and every one of you. If you have not signed up to participate in these events please do; we really need you. I know some of you are thinking "most of those things sound more like fun than work" I guarantee you if you will come we will have FUN!!!

October Association Meeting

Since the weather has been so dry and hot, most plants in the landscape are either dead or very stressed. The ones that are doing the best are our native plants, so this month our program will be on using native plants in the landscape.

Our own James (Jim) Showen who is also the president of the Tyler Native Plant Society has a power point presentation on Native plants in the landscape to present to us. I hope that he will show us some good looking plants that will beat the heat. Ronny Duncan

Fall Conference & Bulb Sale

This annual event will be on Saturday, October 8, 2011. The free conference includes an educational program along with an opportunity to purchase heirloom and unusual bulbs not normally found at local nurseries and retail stores. The featured conference speaker is Dallas County Master Gardener Diana Harris. Ms. Harris, a Certified Landscape Professional, well known in North Texas.

SCMG Merlin Eck will present a slideshow providing information on the many varieties of bulbs offered at the Bulb Sale. The complete list of bulbs which will be available (subject to change) is viewable at <http://scmg.tamu.edu/files/2010/04/Fall-Conference-Bulb-List.pdf>

A *Dallas Morning News* writer recently wrote an article about the Bulb Sale. To view a copy of that article, go to <http://scmg.tamu.edu/whats-new/>. On that same page there are pictures from the bus trip to Nacogdoches.



So very welcome is the cooler weather, but we still desperately need the rains to return. This is what we call a teachable moment, and we should be considering how we

can help our clientele manage their lawns, gardens and landscapes in light of serious water shortages. This might be a series of Earth-Kind seminars, or something similar. The long term outlook is not encouraging, according to long range meteorological forecasts. (<http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/>)

Many thanks to Donna Cole for organizing the bus trip to Greg Grant's place and Nacogdoches. All I heard was rave reviews, and I'm really bummed I was not able to attend.

Everybody needs to check out the Secret Garden exhibit at AgriWorld at the East Texas State Fair. If you don't want to pay to get in the gate, Monday – Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. is free admission. Hazel Bateman and Jean Smith yet again stepped up the quality and innovation of the Secret Garden, and have

done a fabulous job organizing every aspect of this really big job. They have put a tremendous amount of time work into this project, it really shows, and they are to be commended and recognized for their efforts. I have spent time watching folks pass through the exhibit, and adults and kids alike are lingering, reading, exploring and commenting on the various exhibits. Bring your smartphone (make sure it has a QR reader app) and look for QR codes scattered throughout the exhibit. Organized school tours are 9:00 – 1:00 Tuesday – Friday.

We are coming up towards the end of the year, and opportunities for certified Master Gardeners to gain your required volunteer hours and CE's start becoming more limited. I'm looking forward to the fall conference and bulb sale. That's one opportunity. Another is helping out the following Saturday with the education and plant (bulb) sale at Bergfeld Park in conjunction with the Texas Rose Festival. Of course, you are always welcome to help out on Tuesdays in the demo gardens, and in the office on the help desk (call first).

Have a great month! Keith

Canna

By Sue Adee



For those who went on the bus tour and wanted to know the name of the canna at Greg Grants home, it is Ehemanii canna. The description of this canna is it grows 5 to 7 feet and has arching sprays of dangling, bell-shaped deep rose flowers. As Greg told us it can only be ordered from Old House Gardens catalog and is the only canna they are selling this year that is known to be virus free.

AgriWorld is Here!

The East Texas State Fair opened September 22nd and runs through October 2nd. An OZ fantasyland awaits visitors in "Our Secret Garden". Enter the front gates and encounter the water section with an emphasis on the water cycle. Continue to the butterfly area which concentrates on monarchs and their migration habits. A vegetable garden section highlights a "Seed to Table" theme.

On to composting and learn about good gardening and recycling practices. "Good Bug, Bad Bug" focuses on pollinators in the garden and finally the Junior Master Gardener game where you can test your garden knowledge. Many volunteers have worked hard to put together a spectacular presentation by the SCMG. There are an amazing number of artistic and creative MG's and we hope that everyone will come to the fair to check out all of their hard work.

We would like to thank all of the volunteers: Monette Colman, Charlie Colman, Janet Cacho, Sandy Pannett, Tricia Wiggs, Sharon Reiland, George Weisser, Melva Hermes, Susan Linnard, Betty Conejo, Mary Hamlin, Anne Pattullo, Ken Stegall, Pat High, Pat Welch, Lynn Merryfield, Sherri Matthews, Chris Stevenson, Victor Long, Shirley Long, Ronny Duncan, Judy Racs, Gary Dobbs, Kay Dobbs, Judith Hill, Jim Powell, Bibi Blonn, Mary Green, Barbara Krizan, Julia Randolph and Clayton Turner. Hopefully we have included everyone but if not, we appreciate everyone's help on this project and it could not have been completed without an enormous amount of MG help. Many thanks from Hazel Bateman and Jean Smith.

IDEA Garden News

By Sue Adee

What a summer! Despite the high temperatures, the IDEA Garden fared fairly well. The garden was mulched heavily in the spring and we were able to provide adequate water, which made a big difference in the plants ability to survive. Some tropicals quit blooming during the heat, but have begun to set buds since the nights have cooled down. In all, the IDEA Garden should continue to look beautiful throughout the year.

The vinca, melampodium, torenia, gomphrena, and sweet potato vines were outstanding this year. The crape myrtles and althea's loved the hot dry weather. Brent provided us with the several new Napier grasses that did not bleach out and looked good all summer. Snow Princes lobularia continues to surprise all of us with not only blooming, but living all summer. Some other plants that did well all summer are thryallis, zinnia, pentas, salvia (both annual and perennial), lantana, blue daze, esperanza, ageratum. Any surprises?

A big THANKS to the Master Gardeners who worked in the IDEA Garden during all the heat.

What's Bloomin'?

By Dee Bishop

IS IT FALL YET? I certainly hope so. I want to put summer behind me and totally forget it. The last couple of weeks are bliss for we poor gardeners who have been shut-ins because of the oppressive summer heat. There are a few things we need to attend to soon.



Fertilize, but lightly, your summer things if any are still alive. You don't want perennials, shrubs, and trees to make too much new growth before freeze time. I am afraid our poor plants are already mixed up enough as it is. Look for things to bloom as if it is spring, new leaves to put out, and birds to start singing. It has already begun in my yard. Plants have been dormant all summer and think cooler weather is just spring after winter dormancy. Fertilize with liquid foliar food or organic fertilizers. Just don't push new fresh growth.

Wait awhile to see if trees and shrubs are really dead or just dormant, before doing any major whacking. For instance my Japanese maples lost all their leaves and have already replaced them with nice new ones and look so relieved to be rid of the 100 degree days. Let's hope all our shade trees are merely dormant too.

Get your early spring seeds planted now, including Poppies, larkspur, bluebonnets, alyssum, calendula, sweet peas etc. Also veggies like greens, lettuce, cabbage, kale, etc. You will have to wait until late January to early February otherwise. All of the above need cool temps to sprout and grow and will put down deep roots by spring. Fall planting will give much larger and stronger plants; however you will get good results by waiting for late winter. Plant transplants of pansies, dianthus, viola, snaps, dusty miller (if you have dusty miller, cut it back and stick the cuttings down, they will root pronto) or any fall-spring flowers and veggies you find available. We may have to enjoy these plantings and let summer alone unless we get lots of rain this winter and spring.

PLEASE remember to feed the birds if you aren't. There will be little for them to eat this winter. I picked up some acorns that are less than ¼ in. in size. It will be a lean winter for all wildlife so be generous.

Master Gardeners: Please notice that the "Work Day in the Gardens" has a new 9:00AM start time, effective October 4th.

Bananas

By Herb Coursey

Early explorers from Spain introduced banana plants into America as a long, hard, potato-like vegetable, the plantain banana. Mr. Jean François Poujot, a Jamaican farmer in 1836, found in his plantain orchard a plant that produced the soft, sweet, tasty yellow fresh fruit we today know as banana. The old plantain fruit was hard to the core, green, and inedible until well-cooked. Surely this soft, tasty, modern, yellow banana breakthrough was one of the greatest food wonders in history!



The banana is sweet to taste, easy to grow, and cheap to produce because the mother plants constantly divide into more young trees. Cultivation is inexpensive because labor and shipping are of negligible cost to American and European markets.

In recent times banana plants have survived in states further and further north. Though the lush green leaves and the underground stalks growing there are frozen by winter, shoots deep down on some spots can arise vigorously in spring to produce new banana trees. During one 6-month season they can produce an amazing, 20-foot tall tree with a 1-foot diameter. In turn, it can produce up to 15 offset banana plants, all capable of growing into mature trees the first season! Most cultivars, however, are more tropical in nature and cannot survive such cold.

Nonetheless, a cold-hardy banana was discovered growing in Wichita Falls, TX that survived the fabled freeze of 1983-84 of minus 16 degrees there, to regrow and make a crop of bananas the next year. (PS: That's the freeze that destroyed about 50 Camellia plants of ours when we lived at 902 S. College in Tyler!!!) But this variety was named "Texas Star" Banana and shoots from it can be purchased from certain Internet mail order sources. It and other cold hardy fruits originating on the banks of the Orinoco River in Venezuela and Brazil are often referred to as "Orinoco Bananas." A banana tree will show the same cold hardy toleration in northern states as the fig tree. In the south, well..I haven't had success with producing fruit, and the so-called adult trees don't look worth lookin' at!

On the other hand, Aunt Lillie, who could root cuttings of any plant in the world, I'm sure, and living in Baton Rouge, never hesitated to brag about her home-grown bananas - - - none of which I ever got to taste, or even to lay eyes on! Hmmh! -
"erb"



The Executive Committee met on August 25th and considered the following:

Any expense exceeding the budget will be brought to the Executive Committee prior to reimbursement. The expense reimbursement form will be changed to provide a space for the project chair's signature.

Cindy Harrington offered her home for the fall picnic.

SCMG will have a table at the one-day event in Bergfeld Park on October 15th.

The Fall Conference/Bulb Sale plans for advertising were discussed. Bulbs had been ordered and the speaker is set.

Discussed the TXMGA director's meeting held on August 6th. The 2012 conference is in San Antonio, May 3 – 5.

A new policy for Speaker's Bureau programs and travel reimbursement was approved.

The budget committee will meet on October 8th.

Approved a gift card for Cyndi Phillips (Keith's secretary), who will retire effective September 30th.

Cindy Harrington will check with Harvey Hall about the date for next year's Fall Conference/Bulb Sale.

Jim Powell reported that students at All Saints School have been signed up for JrMG classes. George Weisser is lining up teachers.

Calendar of Events

October 1 - The annual Fabulous Fall Festival plant sale at Stephen F. Austin State University's Mast Arboretum will be from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the SFA Pineywoods Native Plant Center, 2900 Raguet St. Nacogdoches.

October 4 - First Tuesday in Garden - Guided Tour of the Heritage Garden - Anne Brown & Bibi Blonn

October 8 – Fall Conference & Bulb sale at Harvey Hall - Doors open at 8:00 AM, conference 9:00-11:00 AM, bulb sale 11:30-1:30PM. Free to the public.

October 9 – Garden Conservancy Open Days Tour in Fort Worth. 10am-4pm.

October 15 – SCMG table at Bergfeld Park selling remaining bulbs.

October 21 – SCMG Association picnic 5:00 PM - Cindy Harrington's home.

October 22 – W.I.T.C.H.E.S. Tea at Mineola, which includes a lunch and apron style show, will be held at the First United Methodist Church Ministries Center in Mineola. Cost \$30. RSVP by October 10 – call 903-569-0341 or 903-569-6983 for information.



Our Secret Garden at the East Texas State Fair

Photos by Keith Hansen & Bill Kelldorf