



MG Grapevine

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NOTICE

MG Association Meeting
September 4th
Rose Garden Center
11:30 AM

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MG Grapevine Staff

Martin Davis, Editor

MG Grapevine Contributors:

John Brasher, Anne Brown, Mary Hamlin, Cindy Harrington, Keith Hansen, Ann Smith and Pat Welch.

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Extension Office

Phone - 903-590-2980

Fax - 903-590-2984

September Meeting

Speaker for September is Keith Gunsauls. He and his wife are owners of Watergardens of Tyler. The topics planned for discussion include: (1) Types of water features with an emphasis on advantages and versatility of the "Pondless" system; (2) Common site challenges in East Texas; (3) Question and answer on water features and hardscaping which can include concrete flatwork, concrete staining and other enhancements, masonry flatwork and walls, patio covers or "pergolas" and arbors, low voltage lighting, and more.

JUNIOR MASTER GARDENER WILDLIFE

by Pat Welch

I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce members of our Junior Master Gardener Wildlife group. Their official name is The Leap'n Lizards. It has been a two year commitment on the part of the two young men, Sam Polser and Paul Van Hoy, who have received their "graduation" certificates.



Other members of this year's group are Caitlyn Christie, Will Hunter and Mary Helen Van Hoy. (see picture page 2)

Requirements for completion are 12 activities from any chapter, one Life Skill/Career Exploration activity, and participate in one Community Service project. Our group had great fun making Blue Bird houses, learning about snakes, in addition to listening to and asking questions of a local Parks and Wildlife ranger. They also learned about the "ABP's", omnivores vs. herbivores vs. carnivores vs. nectarivores, natural habitats and watering opportunities for our native wildlife.

See JMG-Wildlife, Page 2

2009 Calendar/Gardening Guide

This year's calendar, available at the Fall Bulb Conference, features the winning photograph of last year's bulb conference by Larry Underwood on the cover and features month-by-month lists of things to do in the garden, monthly articles on timely gardening topics, as well as useful web sites and gardening events throughout the year.. Additionally this year's edition features full-page articles on growing vegetables, beneficial insects, and plants included in the Northeast Texas Winner's Circle.

Thanks to Susan Nelson, Kathy Nelte, Cindy Harrington, Anne Brown, Barbara Krizan, Sylvia Hofmann, Gary Graham and Joan Thorpe for all their help in writing the things to do, the mini-monthly articles and the full-page articles this year. Also thanks to Keith Hansen for checking our work for horticultural accuracy, Martin Davis for formatting the front and back covers, and as always, to Scherel Carver for formatting, typing and correcting the copy multiple times. Besides being sold at the Fall Conference, the calendars will be available at the following locations for \$5.00 each: Al H. Horaney's, Inc.; Aunt Lillian's Antiques, Troup; Blue Moon Gardens; Breedlove Nursery; Center Chemical; and Harris Nursery.

It will also be available at Ingram Nursery; The Market, Whitehouse; Noonday Hardware; In the Wind; Noonday Feed & Seed; Southland Feed, Tyler; Pyp-It, Whitehouse; as well as the Extension office.

The guide can also be ordered by mail for \$7.00 from: Andie Rathbone, 13270 Oak Hill Lane, Flint, TX 75762. Make Checks payable to the Smith County Master Gardeners.



We are all so thankful for the recent timely and sufficient rainfall that has begun replenishing depleted soil moisture. I hope you have a rain gauge to keep track of rainfall amounts.

Remember most lawns and gardens need about 1 inch of water per week during the hottest times of the year to remain vigorous and healthy.

Last month I mentioned taking the Earth Kind Challenge – <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/earthkind/EKChallenge.html> This short questionnaire will help you look at your yard and garden to see if your landscape contributes to a healthy and sustainable environment. It doesn't take too long, and should give you some insights to how you can better manage your landscape. Also, *please fill out the evaluation* at the end of the Challenge to help us in Extension better serve you in this critical area of taking care of our environment. I forgot to mention that you can get 1 CE for taking the EK Challenge. So far, no one from Smith County has taken the Challenge.

Also available online are several Earth Kind Master Gardener training modules. <http://earthkind.tamu.edu/MGtraining.html>

By watching the short videos on a variety of gardening topics, and then taking the quiz at the end, you can earn 1 CE per module, up to 3 CE's per year. This is another good way to stay abreast concerning our Earth Kind educational programs which have the goal of helping preserve the environment while providing real-world effective solutions for gardening. Thus far, only a couple of Smith County Master Gardeners have availed themselves to this educational tool and means for earning CE's.

Be sure to visit the East Texas State Fair this year, and check out the AgriWorld exhibit which prominently features the Smith County Master Gardeners display of Our Secret Garden. It was a big attraction last year, and we'll be fine tuning the display this year to make it even better. One aspect that will be a little different this year is we will have people staffing the exhibits, informally interpreting the main teaching point of each display and answering questions. This will be on Wednesday through Friday morning, Sept. 24-26. If you would like to help with the project, please contact John Brasher.

Good Bug Bad Bug

by Anne Brown

Sometimes the plants we choose for our landscapes can be as important in insect attraction and control as pesticides.

Milkweed (*Asclepias curvassavica* and *Asclepias tuberosa*) now blooming in many gardens is a favorite for gardeners who want to attract Monarch butterflies. Monarch butterflies lay their eggs on this plant and it becomes a food source for the Monarch larvae which feed on the leaves and absorb the toxic fluids that help to keep them safe from predators.

When milkweed is planted among roses, Aphids are also attracted to the plant. Because aphids cluster on the milkweed they tend not to attack the roses. This clustering also attracts Ladybug Beetles who lay their eggs on the milkweed and feed on the Aphids. When the Ladybug eggs hatch, the larvae also feed on the Aphids. Syrphid Fly, Green Lacewing and parasitic wasps include aphids in their diets. When the aphid population declines, these beneficial insects move on to other harmful insects in the landscape. The benefit to the gardener is saving the cost of insecticides, time by not having to spray the harmful insects and keeping beneficial insects in the landscape.

About now many gardeners may see red and black bugs on their milkweed plants. These colonies will include just hatched red-orange nymphs who go through several instars until they emerge as adults who live about one month. Milkweed bugs feed on the seeds of the milkweed absorbing the toxic fluids from the plant the same as Monarchs. These bugs are not considered pests but can be harmful if consumed by pets.

JMG-Wildlife Continued from page 1

Not only did they learn about but they planted trees, harvested vegetables and helped groom a pathway in a nature area on the property of where classes were held. Their major Service Project was cleaning up overgrown shrubbery on the classroom grounds. The pruned branches were placed in the native area for the beginnings of natural habitats.



I believe that not only did this group learn a lot but they also had great fun. They truly were not the only ones who had fun. The adults did too. We will continue

working on the projects that were started this year with the remaining members and any others that join the group.

FROM the CORNER **Nothing to Write About**

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I apologize. I couldn't find anything to write about this month. Usually something comes to mind at the last moment to write about for the Grapevine. A fleeting thought will cross my mind and I can build on that to generate a few paragraphs for the Grapevine. Other times nothing crosses my mind, fleeting or otherwise. This is one of those times, nothing is crossing my

mind. My mind seems to be a blank slate and the more I try to think the more blank it gets. Is that possible, can a blank slate get even blanker? It sure seems that way today. I can't think of a thing to write about.

I've wandered through the yard and nothing comes to mind to write about. Yes the weather is much nicer than last month at this time and the rains are a welcome respite from the stifling heat and lack of moisture we had the last few months. The rains sure woke up my grass. My yard looks the best it has since spring. And it needs mowing more often too. I have two gas cans for my mowers. Not long ago I could fill both for about \$17.00. Recently it cost me nearly \$30.00 to fill them. Maybe it's time to start getting rid of some of that turf. But that's nothing to write about there.

My Roses look good. They teach me patience, which is not one of my better traits. I basically don't need to do much of anything to my Roses. They are all disease resistant so no spraying is needed. They are all either Earthkind or equivalent so they need little if any water. About the only thing they do need is a little fertilizer occasionally and deadheading. Deadheading is where the patience comes in. Do you know how many blooms a Rose bush puts on? I do not know the total number a bush puts on, but I can tell you I cut a total of 386 deadheads off three Rose bushes recently. That teaches you patience. It also teaches you to be careful where you put your hands. Those thorns bite hard. Nothing to write about there either.

My tomato vines have just about run their course. It looks like I have nematodes on a few plants. I'll have to move them next year. Tomatoes are fun to grow and not too bad to eat. I get more fun from growing them than eating them. Set them out in the spring, water them, carefully stake and tie them up, water them, pinch off suckers, water, more tying up, water, check for blooms, water, watch for the first fruit, water, wait for the first hint of pink on the fruit, water, and finally success, ripe tomatoes. Yes growing tomatoes is very enjoyable but it's nothing to write about.

I don't normally stake any plant other than vegetables but we had to stake two this summer. We have a pencil cactus that is now over 7' tall. It fell over recently but fortunately did not break. We have it staked now. We also have another

cactus that is nearly 7' tall that we choose to stake as a precaution. It may be fun getting them into the garage this fall. We put 86 containers in the garage last fall. Looks like we'll have more than that this year. Apparently we don't know when to stop but that's nothing to write about either.

Well I have to apologize again. I still haven't found anything to write about this month so I guess I should close. Maybe I can find something to write about next month.
John Brasher

Expense Reimbursements

It has come to my attention that some of you may not know the proper procedure needed in order to be reimbursed for your out-of-pocket expenses. When you are working on a particular project and accrue expenses covered under the project budget, just send your receipts plus a reimbursement form to me and I will promptly issue you a check. You can pick up the reimbursement forms in the treasurer's slot in the MG office or you can go on line to <http://scmg.tamu.edu> click on Report Forms, then Expense Report Form. With the busy world we live in PLUS the price of gas -- it just makes sense to let our fingers do the walking.

Mail the form plus your receipts and I will cheerfully refund your money. If you have one available, you might want to make a copy of your receipt. You can send me the original or the copy. My address is: Ann Smith, 14680 CR 2337, Tyler 75707. Please be prompt in sending in your requests so you don't lose your receipts.
Thanks, Ann Smith, Treasurer

Old Words

Another of Mary Hamlin's "old words" not in common use today. This month's word: **pi-le-us** Pronunciation: 'p -l -es

1. Botany, **cap of mushroom:** the top cap-shaped part of a mushroom or other fungus.
2. Marine biology, **body of jellyfish:** the part of the body of a jellyfish that resembles an opened umbrella.
3. Dress, **Roman skullcap:** a close-fitting brimless cap worn by ancient Romans.



Scarecrow Project

The initial reaction to the project has been enthusiastic. Groups have been formed, planning and construction has begun. If storage space is needed, arrangements have been made to use the Commercial Exhibits building located on the grounds of the ET State Fair. This building is available beginning September 2nd. Contact Cindy Harrington at 903-570-1183 to schedule its use. Scarecrows will be erected in the IDEA Garden on Tuesday morning, September 30.

The Masters of Gardening

The Dallas Arboretum invites Master Gardeners and their families to enjoy a day in the garden on September 6. Complimentary admission is being provided for the Master Gardener and one guest. You will need to show your badge to receive complimentary admission. Also, the agreement with the city requires charging to park, so there is a \$5 parking fee per car.



AgriWorld

Our Secret Garden

The exhibit will be at the fair during its entire run. A big attraction at the fair last year, it is expected to be even better this year. See *Keith's Column* on page 2 for his comments. If you can help, contact John Brasher.

When you attend the fair, stop by and tell your friends where to find **Our Secret Garden**.

August in the Garden

August is almost over but pictures of the IDEA Garden blooms will continue to be available. See the new August gallery at <http://easttexasgardening.tamu.edu/ideaaug.html>

Fall Conference & Bulb Sale

The conference and sale are scheduled for October 11th, with conference at Marvin United Methodist Church. Speakers at the conference will be Dr. Bill Welch and Chris Wiesinger. The bulb sale will be at Harvey Hall. Full details in the October newsletter.

The *2009 Calendar/Gardening Guide* will be available (see article on page 1). See below for the 2009 cover.



1517 Front St., Suite 116
Tyler, TX 75702