



# MG Grapevine

<http://scmg.tamu.edu>

<http://easttexasgardening.tamu.edu>

**MG Association Meeting**  
**April 5<sup>th</sup> 11:30 AM**  
**Rose Garden Center**

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### Extension Office

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## April Association Meeting

The April meeting is always very special for several reasons. First of all, the MGs and their guests will enjoy a potluck lunch, eating food prepared by the members. This is a pure potluck and each member should bring a casserole, salad or dessert of their choice. Don't forget to bring a serving spoon or other utensil when needed.

The program that follows includes:

The certification of the interns (Class 18), who have labored for an entire year as each accumulated at least 72 volunteer hours. They will become certified Master Gardeners.

The current class of trainees (Class 19) will step forward for graduation, after completing weeks of training and passing Keith Hansen's tough written test. They will immediately begin their intern year, answering phones, working in the gardens and volunteering on other projects.

Recognition for performance as awards are presented for those deserving folks who have stepped up during the past year with service above and beyond the call.

## Garden Work Days

Class 19 Interns, we are looking forward to meeting you in the garden. We work each Tuesday starting at 8:30 AM. If rain is forecast, check your e-mail the day before to see if work is cancelled. If you have any questions, call one of the coordinators: Sue Adee, 903-571-8605; Bibi Blonn, 281-638-2078; Anne Brown, 713-854-0759 or Cindy Harrington, 903-570-1183. See you in the garden. Sue Adee

## Home Garden Tour



The Smith County Master Gardeners Association garden tour committee has selected five gardens to feature in the 2012 Home Garden Tour set

for **Saturday, April 28, 2012**, 9am – 4 pm.

The gardens vary from a stunning backyard garden with a formal setting to an informal garden created around the natural surroundings. Each garden is sure to inspire with their different styles. Homeowners include: Wade & Julia Coody, 1624 Holly Creek Dr.; James Bozman, 3428 Ridge Bluff Circle; Dale Hipke, 4213 Fillbrook Lane; David & Mary Jane Stine, 15974 Big Oak Bay Rd.; and Nick & Carol Ann Sample, 14605 Northwest Rd.



For full details of the gardens go to <http://scmg.tamu.edu/mg-projects/home-garden-tour/> on the SCMG website.

Advance tickets will be on sale April 1-26 in Tyler at: Brookshire's Grocery, 100 Rice Rd.; Potpourri House, 3320 Troup Hwy.; Blue Moon Gardens, 13062 FM 279, Chandler; Horaney's, 5520 Old Jacksonville Hwy.; Smith County Extension Office, 1517 W. Front, Suite 116.

Mail orders before April 18: MG Garden Tour, 13270 Oak Hill Lane, Flint, TX 75762. Tickets cost \$10 in advance and \$12 the day of the tour.

Volunteers are still needed to help. Call Jean Smith at 903-581-2313 or e-mail her at [smithjean17@hotmail.com](mailto:smithjean17@hotmail.com).



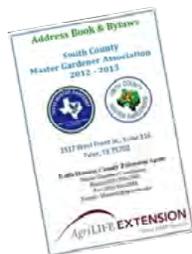
Spring came early this year, and I heard a local weatherman proclaim the drought is over! Our lakes which supply our water are still not full, but things are looking much better than they did last fall. Nevertheless, we should be vigilant and continue to be good stewards of our water resources, as you never know when drought conditions can return. And, while the year of 2011 is still fresh in people's memories, we should continue to use every opportunity to help educate folks on best landscape management practices, especially irrigation practices.

If you have not been to the **Earth-Kind** web site recently (or ever), take a few minutes to familiarize yourself with its contents. There are some very good, short fact sheets on a variety of best management gardening practices, including irrigation auditing, rainwater harvesting, low volume irrigation, and many others.

While you are there, take a little time to take the **Earth-Kind Challenge** to find out how your landscape measures up to contributing to a healthy and sustainable environment. Just answer a short series of series of questions about the cultural principles and practices you use in maintaining your landscape, and then see how high you score.

As I'm writing this, 2 calls came in today describing fire blight in pear trees (one on flowering/Bradford, the other on edible). Shoot tips suddenly turning black and wilting. Classic symptoms! I suspected that this might be a "good" year for fire blight development, which needs a warm winter and rain during bloom. Not much to do at this point on the trees; later on (mid-summer or next winter) pruning out cankered wood might be feasible on smaller trees. Cuts need to be made well below the point where the canker ends on the shoots, and pruning equipment should be sterilized between every cut (alcohol, or 10% bleach solution – be sure to clean well afterwards since bleach is corrosive). Valuable trees can be sprayed with agricultural streptomycin or a copper fungicide during bloom season next year, especially if environmental conditions leading up to bloom indicate a potential for disease development.

Class 19 has finished their training, and Class 18 is finishing up their initial volunteer efforts. What a great group of people I am privileged to work with and have supporting our Extension AgriLife educational programs! I look forward to seeing all of you April 5 at our annual celebration, graduation and luncheon.



## Address Books

The new 2012-2013 Address Book will be available at the April 5<sup>th</sup> luncheon and awards meeting. Each Master Gardener may pick one up at the meeting. Please only one per member. For those who do not attend, the books will be available to pick up at the MG desk in the Extension office.

Members should check the information on themselves and report any incorrect information to Martin Davis. One noticeable error is on page 12 where Sue Ann Ley's photograph appears at the bottom of the page. Clearly her photo belongs on page 13 next to her name and address. Sorry about that.

## Do E-Mails Work?

Sure they do! They deliver the message to the intended recipient. This is true, but the message is only effective if the addressee opens the e-mail and reads it.



During a 30 day period from the end of January through February we sent 21 e-mails to the Smith County MGs. Since we use a service called *Vertical Response* to send our group e-mails, we can rather easily send each e-mail to all 134 MG addressee's at one time. That service also provides statistical feedback that gives us information we would otherwise not have.

During the 30 day period mentioned above, on the average only 50% of the recipients actually opened their e-mail from us. One e-mail had only 44 people open it and another had 90 who viewed it. Those were the lowest and highest numbers we found with most others somewhere in the middle.

Is there a better way to communicate? Not that we know about. At least everyone is sent the same message, unlike the old days when we used the telephone. Whether anyone opens and reads the e-mail is a personal choice. We do the best we can, but no system seems to be perfect. We suggest that each of you check your e-mail regularly, if not daily.

## SFA MAST ARBORETUM PLANT SALES

### April 21, 2012 - Spring Garden Gala Day

9AM starting gate at the PNPC! Please note that this is our second time at our location for the spring plant sale! The Pineywoods Native Plant Center (PNPC) is at 2900 Raguet Street, located between College Avenue and Austin! More space, more plants, and more fun than ever!

## Vines – The Good, the Bad, the Lovely

By Dee Bishop

Vines give gardens much interest and make arbors, trellises, posts, or fence a real knock-out in the garden. One great use for vines is to hide ugly eyesores. Most of us have something we would like to make disappear, and vines will do the trick. Working in the IDEA Garden, as well as my own yard, for years has made me really wary of most vines. Take Morning Glory for instance. It is one of the most beautiful vines available, cheap from seeds, and easy to grow, but beware the following year. You will have millions come up in every conceivable space (like four-o'clocks). Ditto for Cypress vine, Moonvine, and so many others. You begin to wonder if there are 'good' vines. There are, but not so many.



We have found the native Coral Honeysuckles to be wonderful. The large flowering Clematis is perfect growing on a smaller obelisk or trellis as it never gets too heavy. It is lovely twining up through a plant that is haggard in summer like flowering quince. We have the evergreen Kadsura vine growing on the fence in the IDEA Garden and though it needs a good 'haircut' every year, remains self-contained. Our all-time favorite annual vine is Cardinal Vine. Like its cousin, the pretty but wild Cypress Vine, it has ferny leaves and larger red trumpets. Hummers love these. We have had scarcely any reseeding. We have learned to save seeds to replant every year.

All of the English Ivies are monsters. If you go on a long vacation you will have to hunt your front door! Wisteria is so lovely and smells so fragrant, but will grow out of control rapidly as it suckers up and down the roots.

There are roses, but beware the gorgeous little Red Cascade. Just a knock-out, but so thorny and grows so fast that it reaches out for a 'hug'. We had to take it off our arbor before it grabbed more of our visitors.

The old time Perennial Sweet pea is a fairly mannerly vine if grown in sandy soil and sun. Hyacinth vine is pretty however; can seed out prodigiously. Just pull seedlings up while still young. Trumpet vines are just beautiful ---out in the back forty, going up a utility pole, or covering a skyscraper, but please think a thousand times before planting them in your yard. They run underground faster than greased lightning, and all the seeds come up! Madam Galen too!

I am just trying to get you to do lots of research, (which often is not truthful) before you choose the right vine for your special area. Remember, our growing season is longer and plants grow faster here than in many places where they are touted as 'perfect'.

## Dahlias

By Herb Coursey

My Mom was named Susie Elizabeth and she grew beautiful flowers all of her life. Our family didn't have much money to spend, and certainly not enough for flowering plants. I seem to remember that most home gardens then were rich with perennials that folks enjoyed trading starts of, and a common gift between friends was seeds from annuals like zinnias, nasturtiums, petunias, phlox of different kinds - the list could go on and on! Everybody gardened! People liked riots of color in their yards. Self-seeders like four-o'clocks were likely to appear anywhere, especially if you had your own good, deep water well by your porch, as most folks did! Fertilizers came from the rotting leaves that flooded the woods, or from your barnyard or from your hen house. 'Twas free, too! Susie grew up in that little community of Trees City, LA and started college. Along came a young fellow named Jimmie, and a year and a month later I was born: 1932.



The oil wells were being drilled all over Louisiana and East Texas, and our tiny family moved west to Overton TX. Those days, there was lots of money in Overton and just about everywhere else in the "oil patch." Dad was hired as superintendent of a small oil company, and effects of money enriched our family. Oops! Susie discovered that you could actually buy wonderful and unusual plants to grow in your home garden. (Enter Dahlias!) And you could hire a man to do the gardening for you. There being no MG organization then, she joined the Overton Garden Club (which still exists today). And wow! Those ladies of mid-twentieth century managed to drag into town Camellias, Century Plants (!), flowering shrubs and bulbs, hundreds of plants quite exciting of color and varieties unheard of. They made of their little town an absolute marvel of blooming beauty. Outstanding and a great favorite were Dahlias - new, huge differences in sizes and colors, and many shapes never before seen there. I recall those Dahlias - especially the huge ones of so-called "dinner plate" size - as a special favorite of my school years.

During my US Army time in Germany, I enjoyed seeing lots of Dahlias planted in home gardens of towns where I was stationed. Later, I spent a summer studying in Salzburg. I got used to walking all over the town, and loved visiting all the gardens bursting with Dahlias, as well as the marvelous people out in those gardens working and grooming them. All the great Botanical Gardens of the Germanic people seemed to specialize in huge Dahlias of riotous colors. A few years



back, in world-renowned Butchart Gardens above Seattle, I saw gigantic Dahlia blooms, some as big as 14" diameter! Well, now is a good the time to order, or even just to buy your bulbs locally! Remember that they need good sun but - like us - in Texas, they will probably need some relief, too! Happy growing! *And may the rains continue!* 'erb

## Executive Committee

The Executive Committee met on February 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Clayton Turner and Don Davis attended the State Director's meeting on February 18<sup>th</sup>. Clayton Turner reported on it.

Jean Watson was nominated to take the vacant State Director position for 2 years and Janis Morris to take the Alternate Director for one year. Motion made and seconded to accept the nominations.

David Pierson reported that 13 people attended Daniel Duncum's tree pruning session. Luke Porter, an arborist for the city of Tyler also helped with the presentation.

Jean Smith reported that Home Garden Tour posters will be available for distribution at the March general meeting. Ad sales are progressing.

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### Help Needed

The position of Phone Tree position remains open. The job requires calling the four MGs who do not have e-mail to relay the latest information sent to the MGs.

Call Ronny Duncan if you can do this easy job.

### QR Codes

More and more we are seeing QR codes in our newspapers and magazines for use with our smart phones and now the Smith County MGs are using them.



A special card is being passed out at the Main Street Flower Market on March 30 & 31 and will be used at other events. For those seeking gardening information, the code (above) on the card will take the user to the Home Page of the SCMG website where links to Keith Hansen's plant database and the IDEA Garden plant database are readily available, along with lots of other gardening information.

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### First Tuesday in the Garden

The First Tuesday series is again being offered, but there is a problem - speakers are needed for all of the dates!

Jana Bowman is still seeking speakers and needs your help. If you wish to volunteer, please call (903-882-9889) or e-mail her at [janalucy@suddenlink.net](mailto:janalucy@suddenlink.net). She will be forever grateful.



The Junior Master Gardener kids display what they had planted after studying about fruits and nuts. MGs Jean Smith & Pat Welch stand behind them.