



MG Grapevine



<http://scmg.tamu.edu>

August 2013

<http://easttexasgardening.tamu.edu>

Number 8
Volume 20



Inside This Issue

Keith's Column	2
Getting to Know Us	2
Bulbs & More	2
July in My Garden	3
Spanish Moss	3
Looking for Writer	3
AgriWorld	4
Bus Trip	4
Coming Events	4



MG Association Meeting
August 1st
Harvey Convention
Center

MG Grapevine Staff
Martin Davis, Editor

MG Grapevine Contributors:

Dee Bishop, Herb Coursey, David Gary, Keith Hansen, David Pierson, Andie Rathbone, Jean Smith and Pat Turner.

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

Educational programs of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension are open to all individuals without regard to race, color, sex, disability, religion, age or national origin. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas cooperating.

Extension Office

Phone - 903-590-2980

Fax - 903-590-2984



Our President Sez ...

We have been blessed with much rain and cool weather for the past few days, so I'm sure you are enjoying caring for your gardens.

Hope to see all of you at our August meeting which will be in Harvey Hall. Please be prepared to have a group picture taken after the meeting. We have been asked to send the group picture to the folks who are preparing for the state MG meeting.

Our VP, David Gary and our stalwart gardeners, Donna Cole and Joanie Matthews, are planning bus trip to the Dallas Arboretum on October 16. There will be room for 57 gardeners and the cost will be about \$30 each. There will be a sign-up sheet available in September. This is a real deal, as the cost for gasoline to Dallas and parking would probably considerably exceed the projected cost. Please consider signing up for this event.

Also consider putting aside your "gently used stuff" for the White Elephant Sale for our November meeting. One last thing; Cindy Harrington has once again graciously agreed to sponsor a "Pot Luck" picnic at her house on November 7. So please save that date and join us for a good time of fellowship.

David Pierson

SCMG Association Meeting

An old friend, Keith Mills, will present the program at the August SCMG meeting. The program will cover horticulture as it applies to the "modern" zoo and typical functions handled by a zoo's horticulture/grounds maintenance department. Keith is currently Grounds Maintenance Manager at Caldwell Zoo.

He has been at the zoo for 13 years where he is responsible for landscape maintenance and landscape development in all areas of the zoo, plant propagation/production and waste management.

A Walk Through the Garden

The 2014 edition of the traditional Smith County MG Calendar has a new name and a new format. The new design features a book format where each month's calendar spreads across two pages with gardening information and plenty of room to write notes for the month. The design is Joanie Matthews's idea, turned into an outstanding document by Bibi Blonn. Pat Welch will head up the sales effort this year. The 2014 Calendar/Guide & Journal will be available in September.



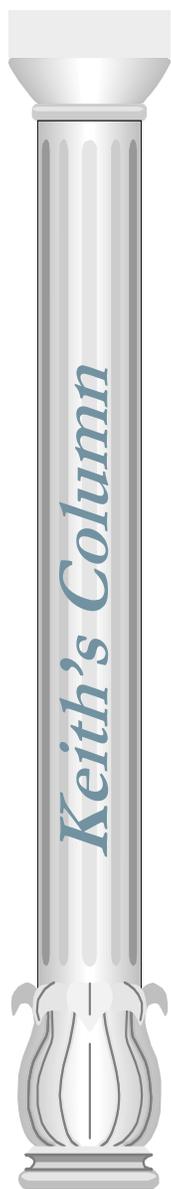
Rose Garden Signs

A special project group has been discussing and planning for about three years, for signs which will be placed in the gardens maintained by the Smith County Master Gardeners in the Tyler Rose Garden. The signs will soon be ready for installation in the IDEA, Heritage, Sunshine and Shade gardens. These signs, which will be 18" x 14", will be attractive with a colored background, MG and AgriLife logos and information identifying the garden by name. The group working on the project includes project leader Cindy Harrington, Jean Watson, Eloise Muxworthy, Ann Kelley and Pat Welch.

Your Volunteer Hours

Keith Hansen has often told us how important it is that we report our volunteer hours each month. And yet, here we are more than half way through the year, with a long list of people who have not filed reports. Those who have made no report at all have already received an e-mail, reminding them that they need to send a report.

What about the rest who have filed some reports, but are not current? If you are in that group, it is time to take a few minutes and send a report to Martin Davis at mred2853@sbcglobal.net. Thanks.



July has certainly been a different kind of summer month than what we usually have. Lots of rain (I accumulated 5 inches in town in one week), and much cooler than typical. Odds are that August will be more “normal” but hopefully our soil moisture will be in pretty good shape to make it through until milder fall weather arrives with only occasional supplemental watering needed.

Have you ever audited your sprinkler system? Even a casual observation can reveal problems and potential reasons for dry spots in your lawn and landscape. Broken and obviously misaligned sprinkler heads can be easily seen and then fixed. Partially plugged up heads or insufficient water pressure are issues that are harder to visualize and that’s where a catch-can test can help reveal a problem. A catch-can test can also show you poor distribution uniformity, which can be caused by malfunctioning heads, poor water pressure, wrong heads for the zone, and other things.

Of course, dry spots in the yard can also be caused by other conditions, such as poor drainage or buried rubble, water-hungry tree roots competing for soil moisture, and non-adapted plants (for that particular location), just to name a few.

To learn more about irrigation auditing, check out this Earth-Kind online fact sheet: <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/earthkind/files/2010/10/audit.pdf> which can be found on the Earth-Kind web site <http://earthkind.tamu.edu>

If any SCMG would like to do an informal audit of their irrigation system, please contact me (Keith) or Chad Gulley (Ag & Natural Resources agent in Smith Co.). We have Aggie Catch Cans and are willing to set up a demonstration at a home for any interested members to come and observe. It would be an informal audit but should provide a starting point on making an irrigation system more efficient and conserve water and dollars, hopefully.

Bulbs & More

Andie Rathbone reports that one of our Facebook fans in Dallas has written an article about our Fall Bulb Sale that will be published in the Fall issue of Greenprints, a quarterly gardening journal (<http://www.greenprints.com/>). It’s a fun look at the sale over the years & does a good job of illustrating the general atmosphere of the sale. Go to <http://txmg.org/smith/whats-new/> to find the link to the article, written by Susan Portman. (The 2013 event will be on October 12th.)

Getting To Know Us

by Pat Turner

You may not know her name but you know her trademark-hats with feathers. She also loves her independence, sports cars, sky diving, white water rafting, and keeps her passport ready to go. Her name is Marilyn Helm, Master Gardener Class 9.



Marilyn grew up in St Louis where she spent a lot of time outdoors in city parks. Living on a farm in Illinois as a teenager she spent a lot of time on a tractor. As a young army wife Marilyn moved every three years to such exotic places as Okinawa and

France where her landlord offered her a small garden plot and she grew big white poppies which she later learned were opium poppies. Her two daughters were born while the family was in Ft. Benning. Upon retirement from the army, the family returned to Illinois where Marilyn had a ceramic shop for ten years. In 1980 the family moved to California where Marilyn worked in a mental health facility helping clients transition back into the community. This inspired her return to school seeking a degree in Sociology and Human Services while also running a work program for juveniles on probation. Upon applying to work for the CA Youth Authority, Marilyn discovered she would have to qualify for police training. Because of her age the bet was she would not last a week. Determination kept her from admitting “it almost killed me”. She never let anyone know how tough it was and says she will “go through tear gas, but don’t ask me to run again”. In 1995 Marilyn suffered a brain injury while stopping a prison break and doctors maintained she would never be able to live alone. She says she still has trouble with short term memory and does a lot of “creative sightseeing, but is not lost”.

Marilyn lives an active life in Palestine with her two dogs, Rusty and Sissy. She serves on the Board of Directors for Tyler Community Concerts, gardens, reads, and does cross stitch. Marilyn’s gardening philosophy is to plant lots of flowers. They are better than grass and if they don’t grow, you have compost. She loves flowers and gardening because of her experience with hardened young men in prison who respond to flowers in their rooms. She loves Master Gardeners because they remind her of the flowers they plant. They are bright and upbeat and a great bunch to be with on a bus trip.

Smith County Master Gardeners are lucky to have this enthusiastic interesting lady with her fun feathered hats as a reminder to keep it bright and upbeat, have fun, and always be ready for a bus trip.



July in My Garden

by Dee Bishop

July and we have had some cooler weather and rain this past week---very unusual for this month. I am so thankful for every drop of rain I have had. No dragging hoses for a day or two. I have spent time weeding and mulching where needed thanks to the cooler weather. I also noticed one of my big Lollie Jackson salvias wilted this evening. I expect to see other things wilting too. It nearly always happens after summer rains in hot weather. Just hope they aren't dying.

My garden phlox would be beautiful right now, but for the deer. We have a herd in our neighborhood and they have found my yard. Phlox are candy to them and they eat all the buds. Next year I am going to put chicken wire in the beds near them. It has worked well where I have done it already. They do not like to step onto the wire and leave things alone. I even noticed they had eaten some coleus and that's never happened before. It is really frustrating to work so hard and watch plants mature and bud out only to be munched by deer.

Rabbits are also making a big come-back. For the past several years, we hardly saw any. Now we see them quite often. Our coyotes must be on vacation. Alas, something else to crunch and munch my plants.

For those of you, who like me, like succulent plants, watch for rot. They like a good bit of water while growing, but resent too much. I have moved several pots under the eaves of the house so they won't get any more rain if it continues to rain in the evenings. I always work lots of perlite in the soil I have them in, but even so they can get too wet. Also begonias do not like rain on their leaves followed by hot sun; so watch for that and move them, if in pots, or fix a temporary shade over them.

We so seldom have summer rain that we often forget the temporary trouble it can cause. The intense heat and humidity after summer showers can be fatal to many plants if you are not diligent to protect them. We love the rain and need it desperately but humidity also comes with it.

Hummingbirds are back in droves. I think these are all the little ones coming to eat since they are so small. They have learned to fight from their parents and do a good job of it. Mike and I happened to be out one evening last week and saw a group of 6-8 Mississippi kites flying back and forth over our area. I went on line and found that they fly in groups and eat insects. They glide with the wind currents and were fabulous to watch. Just a sweet reward for having looked up one evening ahead of a storm.

Spanish Moss

by Herb Coursey



It strikes me that all living plants, no matter their individual appearances, are absolute miracles. They eat, grow, produce offspring, consume abundant waste products like carbon dioxide, they create and release oxygen gas thereby allowing the rest of us to live, they shade and enrich our planet, they feed us and everything else, including each other, and their bodies adorn our planet with marvelous varieties of beauty and a seemingly endless abundance of useful materials.



Some irritate us as bull-nettle, grass burrs, weeds, poison ivy, and others that seem never to have found a self that is worthwhile for anything, not even just to be looked at. Yet, there are some lesser plants that can be tolerated and enjoyed on their own, often having unusual roles to play. Spanish Moss is worthwhile; it can be

used for building insulation, mulch, packing material, mattress stuffing, and fiber for padding car seats. When I was a kid, My Dad found a completely unique use for Spanish moss. Our little family was on a vacation trip to Baton Rouge to visit Dad's oldest brother "Son" and his family. In those days, Mom reluctantly OK'd his smoking cigarettes, but only outside the house. It was mid-afternoon. All the family members were seated on Son's front porch. Near the porch steps, Dad stood up to take out a smoke. Overhead near him Spanish Moss was hanging down in luxurious skeins. "I wonder, will this stuff burn?" he mused, fishing a lighter from his pants pocket, and struck it. Nobody said or did anything, nor seemed to care. He raised it to the nearest skein of moss, which instantly writhed upward into flame! Son jumped down to a nearby water hose and quenched the fire before it spread to his house or the rest of the tree. Spanish Moss thus taught me as a youngster to think first, and more carefully than you think you need to. Also, never be cavalier, as Dad was. And, incidentally, don't smoke!

The last time we went to New Orleans was 10 months after Katrina. How strange it seemed that there was no longer any Spanish Moss in the trees - *NONE!* All the way up to Shreveport, it was all gone. It has since made some comeback: the place I love the most where I see Spanish Moss is Caddo Lake. Oh, Oh! If you haven't taken the (small) replica steamboat tour of Caddo that is available at the lakeside community "**UNCERTAIN,**" Texas, Go! The boat was owned by a wonderful young lady from Tyler, but she has apparently sold it. The trip is a glorious hour!* and the best fried fish are at "Big Pines" Restaurant (fabulous hush-puppies!) That opens Wednesdays through Sundays. Get up some friends and Enjoy, Enjoy! And remember us! 'erb & Josephine

We are Looking for a Column Writer

When Herb Coursey sent his e-mail containing his August "Plant of the Month" column, he added a footnote which said, "This will be my last article. As soon as our house (and our son's house) sells, we will be leaving for Seattle." I am sure you all join me in wishing Herb and Josephine all the best as they make this move. They will be missed! We certainly will miss Herb's bi-monthly column in the Grapevine. We have enjoyed his articles which have been both informative and sometimes whimsical.

Soooo – we are looking for someone who would enjoy trying his or her hand at writing a short informative gardening column articles on plants, human interest gardening stories, clever gardening tips, design ideas, problem solving, etc. every other month for the Grapevine. If you have ever thought you would like to express yourself in writing, this is your chance. Just let Martin Davis know.

AgriWorld



We're looking for a few good gardeners, teachers, and worker bees.

Plan on helping with the set up for the award winning AgriWorld exhibit "Our Secret Garden," at the East Texas State Fair. This exhibit is the largest and most talked about exhibit in the AgriWorld building and gives the Master Gardener Association great exposure to the public as well as providing informative and educational ideas. A planning meeting is scheduled for August 21, 10:00 AM in Room 116 at the Extension office. Any and all who are interested in helping are welcome to attend. We will be going over the sections planned, decorations, scripts, and general information concerning the set up. Set up begins in September. Fair dates are September 20-29 and teaching dates are September 24-27. If you can't make the meeting, please e-mail Jean Smith or Pat Welch to let us know you are interested in helping.

We can also use any gardening decorative items, silk plants, flowers, etc. If you have anything to donate, please bring them to the August meeting. Jean Smith

Bus Trip

A bus trip to the Dallas Arboretum is planned for October 16th. The bus will leave Tyler at 8:00 AM, returning at about 6:00 PM that day. More information will be given at the August 1st SCMG meeting. Sign-up will be done at the September 5th meeting.

This visit will be to the new Rory Meyers Children's Adventure Garden which will have opened on September 21st. The Garden is designed for preschool to middle school children to address the state and national standards for life and earth science. It is really an 8 acre laboratory with 17 outdoor and indoor galleries, each designed around a key science theme. In each of these galleries there are many hands-on exhibits and real plants and animals that are examples of these science concepts.

To view a video about the garden, check this link <http://vimeo.com/48894633>.

Coming Events

- Sept. 3rd** First Tuesday in the Garden—at the IDEA Garden
- Sept. 20-29th** AgriWorld at the East Texas State Fair
- Sept. 23-24th** Landscape Design School at College Station
- Oct. 1st** First Tuesday in the Garden—at the IDEA Garden
- Oct. 8-11th** Louisiana State MG Conference—Shreveport, LA.
- Oct. 12th** Bulbs & More—Harvey Convention Center, Tyler, TX
- Oct. 17-19th** Texas State MG Conference—McAllen, TX

For more information on any of the above,

Visit the SCMG website at <http://txmg.org/smith/coming-events/>

Smith County Master Gardener Association
1517 West Front St., Suite 116
Tyler, TX 75702