

December 2012

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MG Association Meeting

December 6 - 11:30 AM
Rose Garden Center



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Our President Says...



The December meeting is my favorite meeting of the year. It is time for the MG Christmas luncheon. You and your spouse are invited. For those of you that are new to this event or forgot, the organization will furnish the meat (sliced Turkey), dressing, rolls, paper plates, plastic forks and drink (coffee, and tea). If you would rather have something else to drink, you can bring any NONALCOHOLIC

drink you like. All of the MGs are to bring some sort of dish that will serve several people to add to this feast. Be sure and bring a serving utensil with your dish. If both you and your spouse happen to be a Smith County MG, well, that means that you both have to bring a dish.

Since this meeting is my last Presidential assignment, I would like to thank all the members that make this organization as well-respected as it is in this community. We have a good mix of very talented people. The many members that I called on to help with some project or other were always very courteous; and, if they could not help made good suggestions of who might be able to. I also would like to thank those members who pointed out to me some things that I was doing wrong. We need good watchdogs to make sure we follow the bylaws accurately.

All in all, we have made it through another good year for the MGs. I am very proud to be a member of this organization.

Thanks for making my tenure as President successful. Ronny Duncan



Volunteer Hours Reports

As we come to the end of the year there are a number of important things that we must do, as diverse as celebrating Christmas and paying our property taxes. It would be easy in the midst of the holiday season to forget to report our Master Gardener volunteer hours. For those who have kept their reports current, sending that final report at the end of December should be easy. For those who have procrastinated, gathering the information and filing the reports will take a little longer.

In order to remain certified you must have at least reported the minimum required 12 Volunteer Hours and 8 Continuing Education Credits. For those who were certified last April, your minimums are 9 Volunteer Hours and 6 Continuing Education Credits. If you cannot meet the minimums for whatever reason, but wish to remain certified, please contact Keith Hansen to discuss your options.

Interns, your year does not end until March 31, 2013. Please continue to file your reports each month, just as you have been doing.

The 2012 hours spreadsheet will be closed out on January 15, 2013 which means all reports of activity during 2012 must be to me by then in order to count. Thank you, Martin Davis

Officers for year 2013

This slate of officers was elected at the November MG meeting and will be installed at the January 3rd MG meeting.

President – David Pierson
Vice President – David Gary
Treasurer – Pat Welch
Assistant Treasurer – Wayne Blonn
Secretary – Pat Turner
Parliamentarian – Ronnie Duncan
Ex. Committee at Large – Sue Ade, Charlie Colman
State Director, two year – James Showen
State Director, one year – John Brasher
Alternate Director – two year – Susan Minatrea
Alternate Director – one year – Gary Dobbs

New e-mail address

Harvey Collen - harveycollen927@gmail.com



Events Schedule

The 2013 events schedule is now available at <http://sfagardens.sfasu.edu/> then click on Garden Events. Their website has a host of other information related to the SFA Gardens.



I hope everyone had a blessed Thanksgiving holiday last week. The year is winding down, and gardening activity is mostly slowing down, though winter is always a great time to be planting trees and shrubs, and also moving trees and shrubs. That's a frequent question we get, and when gathering information about a request regarding moving a hedge of shrubs, etc., it often is the case that the person is wanting to move a shrub (or shrubs) that have been planted for many years. While that can be done, the amount of work involved for the do-it-yourselfer might be more than what they bargained for. Roots near the base of the plant are going to be almost as large as the base itself. If moving an evergreen, success dramatically decreases if you cannot maintain an intact ball of soil around the root system. And the older the plant, the larger (and thus heavier) the root ball should be for increased success. In the longer run, it may be a lot simpler to start over with new, fresh plants.

As 2012 slips away, please take a moment to send in your volunteer and CE hours to Martin Davis. Your volunteer activity is needed for my year-end reports, and to be accurate and on time, I need the most up-to-date information. I want to count all of your valuable time that you have contributed to the success to this organization and

our educational outreach for Texas A&M AgriLife Extension. One of my most important reports is due on December 1, and included in that report are volunteer hours and of course, our educational efforts for 2012. So, please, while you're thinking about it, send in your report.

If you are short in CE's, here are a couple of easy ways to get some hours:

1. Write a Tip-Of-The-Week article (up to 4 per year). These should be short, little inspiring tips for passing along to readers. You also get volunteer hours for writing tips.
2. Master Gardener Earth-Kind Online Training – (<http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/earthkind/training/>) - select from any of the 11 on-line modules to obtain 1 CE (up to 3 hours CE's per year). You have to take the little quiz (see link) to get credit. Do not seek re-certification credit for training modules you have completed in previous years. Progress through the training program is tracked "on-line" and the results for each completed module are automatically forwarded to me.

Of course, Class 19 has until the end of March to complete your hours, and the above CE requirement does not apply to you.

If you have any concerns about your recertification, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Looking forward to seeing all of you at our December luncheon.

Planning and Planting a Winter Vegetable Garden

By Herb Coursey

Here is information that produced a glorious beet crop for us, from a winter garden we had one year kind of early in our marriage. Get your planting location ready first, by plowing or hoeing one or more furrows about 4-5 inches deep, heaping the displaced loamy dirt on one side of them. I chose three fertilizers and mixed them: modest commercial bags of blood meal, bone meal, and cotton seed meal. Truth told our loam was just sugar-sand: that was just luck!

Into the furrow(s) distribute the fertilizer mixture you have chosen to use, then cover it over with that fresh-turned loam lying close beside the furrows. With a stick, scratch a line about an inch deep (depth depends on instructions from your seed



packet) right down the middle from one end to the other. Distribute your seeds about two inches apart along, and fairly even, in that scratched-out line. Cover the seeds with an appropriate amount of adjacent loose dirt. When finished, water your garden. Once the seeds sprout in a couple to 3 weeks, you don't want them to wilt, so use water carefully but as needed, and faithfully.

I remember that my grandma Goggy liked to plant her winter garden every year during the days between Christmas and New Year's Day. About a month or two before that holiday period, she always spread well-rotted cow and chicken manures down in the rows of her 2-acre vegetable garden where she was going to plant the seeds. She was an incomparable grower.

But we thought our crop was sensational: we harvested many more beets than we could eat! None of them were at all stringy, but all were of uniformly smooth texture,

delicious and tender. And many were really huge! The chunks of our largest one absolutely filled a quart Mason jar all the way to the brim! No joke!



But maybe you're not too keen on beets? OK! From Google, the redoubtable Bunny Guinness suggests 10 winter garden plantings you might enjoy trying: 1. BROAD BEANS, 2. ASPARAGUS, 3. PEAS AND PEA SHOOTS, 4. GARLIC, 5. ONIONS, 6. SPRING ONIONS AND SHALLOTS, 7. WINTER LETTUCE, 8. SPINACH, 9. SUGARSNAP PEAS, and 10. SPRING CABBAGE.

P.S. - *WINTER GARDENING* doesn't imply that you get to eat it during winter; you get to **grow** it then, and eat it probably sometime in March, early April, and so on, if you do it right! ... It's a better deal than it sounds.

- 'erb



Interesting Gardening Tidbits

By Dee Bishop

I found an old paper on what plants NOT to fertilize and thought you may be interested to know this too:

Were your Vitex flowers paler than usual? Too much fertilizer is the reason. Vitex needs to be grown with lean soil.

If you grow Society Garlic, a very pretty herb, use the leaves as you would garlic. Get garlic taste without garlic breath.

Does your Thyme die every summer? Try growing it without fertilizer. Thyme thrives on lean soil. Too much fertilizer invites fungus and winter kill. Use bone meal at planting time and nothing else. Your Thyme should thrive.

For very floriferous nasturtiums, do not fertilize nor water. They like lean dry soil to bloom well.

Stoke's Aster tolerates heat and drought much better if you do not fertilize it.

Tansy thrives without any fertilizer.

Sedums love poor soil.

Sanvitalia (creeping zinnia) thrives in hot humid weather and tolerates drought well, if it grows in lean soil.

Santollina loves poor soil that has perfect drainage in winter and no fertilizer.

Moss Rose hates fertile soil and will perform much better in poor dry soils.

Miscanthus Grass will flop if over-fertilized.

Liatris (Gay Feather) will flop and be short-lived if fertilized. It thrives in poor dry soil.

Lavender needs poor, dry soil that is perfectly drained with no mulch other than rocks.

Never fertilize yarrow. It will get a good case of the flops if you do. Ditto for St. John's wort and hyssop.

I think the best advice I ever heard is to watch the plant. If it looks happy and is doing well, don't fertilize. If it looks stunted, the blooms are sparse or small, and the foliage is yellow and stunted, it needs more fertility. In other words, fertilize only if the plant needs it. Many many plants are happy 'eating' very little, sure wish I was!

Getting to Know Us

By Pat Turner



Pleased to say the 'draw' chose Kathy Ballow as this month's column focus. In case you are curious about the 'draw' I first draw a page number from a box and from a second box a number from one to seven. I then match that to a person in the directory. Since Kathy is a long time Master Gardener from Class 2 and I did not know her, the purpose of this column is fulfilled.

Kathy was born in Freeport and grew up in Jones Creek, a small Dow Chemical company town in Brazoria County. She recalls fondly eating freshly picked raw vegetables straight from the family garden; thus her gardening philosophy – Enjoy! - developed. After attending several colleges, Kathy has an Associate's degree along with a multitude of college courses of particular interest to her such as horticulture, interior design, and nutrition. Having done public library work for thirty years, Kathy is now Assistant Director of Rusk County Library. When not gardening she enjoys cooking, sewing and needlework, reading, walking and genealogy research. For her own enlightenment, Kathy collects how-to books on gardening, needlework, and genealogy. After many years in Houston, Kathy especially loves her life in the rural area of a small town, spending time with family, and spoiling grandchildren.

Many thanks, Kathy, for allowing a glimpse of your life. May I also to take this opportunity to extend holiday blessings to all and an abundance of gardening joys in the New Year.

Consider the Spread Invasive of Invasive Pests

Anne Brown passed along this information.
Excerpts from National Plant Diagnostic Network newsletter – September - October 2012 issue.

In anticipation of this upcoming holiday season, we would like to remind you that invasive pests can arrive on a variety of plants and plant products, many of which you may not have previously considered. For example, in the United States alone, people purchased 27 million Christmas trees in 2010 with a total retail value of \$976 million. Species that are used as Christmas trees include spruces (such as Colorado blue and white) and various species of fir (such as Balsam, Fraser, Douglas, and Noble). The states that have the most Christmas tree harvests include Oregon and North Carolina.

Movement of trees from these states and others to the local garden center near your house can allow for invasive pests and diseases to disperse to different areas of the country quite easily. It is important to be on the lookout for invasive species that might have hitched a ride on your tree.

For example, the brown spruce longhorn beetle (*Tetropium fuscum*) is an invasive beetle

from Europe that attacks spruce (*Picea* sp.), firs (*Abies* sp.), pines (*Pinus* sp.), and larches (*Larix* sp.). The adults are small (less than 2.5cm) with a flat body, black head and thorax, tan to brownish-red elytra (wing coverings), and long antennae. Its larvae are yellowish-white, have a rather flattened body, a dark head capsule, and measure 1.5 to 2.8cm in length.

The beetle larvae kill the tree by tunneling into the cambium and phloem layers and girdling the tree. Although this beetle is currently only found in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, Canada, first detectors need to be aware of its possible presence and report it to their local county agent or state department of forestry. According to NAPIS Pest Tracker, surveys have been or are being conducted in Oregon, California, Louisiana, Arkansas, Vermont, and Maine.

The nun moth (*Lymantria monacha*) is also from Europe and feeds primarily on spruce, pines, firs, and larch. It is not known to be established in the United States; however, egg masses can come in on crates, pallets, and other packing material. The adults have a wingspan of 3.5 to 5.5cm (with females being bigger than males).

(see **PESTS** page 4)

Executive Committee Notes

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

A budget committee will be appointed to finalize the budget for 2013. The budget will be presented to the November Executive Committee meeting for approval.

The totals for the Bulb Sale were not final at the date of the meeting, but will be available later. The use of credit cards proved to be very successful, accounting for nearly half of the total sales.

A concern for mileage compensation for those attending the state director's meeting was discussed. There has been a recent change in the Policies & Procedures and any questions about the dollar amount to paid will be handled by the Treasurer or Assistant Treasurer.

Martin Davis reported that he was able to purchase new soft-

ware for \$38 (originally approved for \$300) from a company that offers software at reduced prices to non-profit organizations. This software has been installed on the MG office computer.

Jean Smith advised that even though the State MG Conference is not until October 2013, the deadline for submitting awards applications is still at the end of February 2013.

Keith Hansen reported that the schedule for the 2013 MG Class has been published and applications can be received. Orientation for this class is scheduled for November 28th.

The need for leaders for projects during 2013 was discussed. A questionnaire will be available at the November meeting with opportunities to volunteer to fill the existing vacancies.

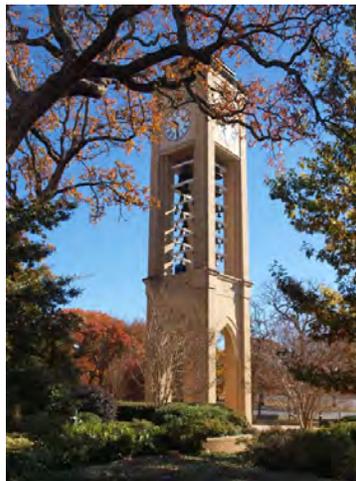
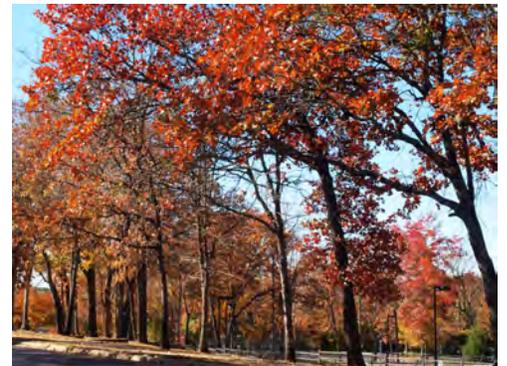


(PESTS from page 3) The forewings vary in color and pattern from chalk-white with dark wavy lines and patches to dark brown with black spots. The hind wings are usually gray brown with small dark and/or light patches along the edges. Mature larvae measure 3 to 4cm in length and are tan, green, or dark gray in color with brown or black mottling, and have a grayish-yellow head. They also have tufts of hair of varying lengths along the sides of their bodies. The larvae cause damage to the tree by defoliation. According to NAPIS Pest Tracker, it has been surveyed for in Washington, Oregon, California, Nevada, Utah, Texas, Alaska, West Virginia, and Michigan.

With this in mind, if you get a holiday tree this year, be sure to give it a good once over when you pick it out. If you see something odd or unusual, be sure to report it. Unfortunately, invasive pests do not take a holiday.



Fall Color in Tyler



Photos by Martin Davis