



# MG Grapevine



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**MG Association Meeting**  
February 7, 2013  
**Rose Garden Center**

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## Our President says...



My fellow Master Gardeners,  
Hope you all had a great Christmas Holiday and that 2013 will be the best ever for you and yours. Now, however, it's time we roll up our sleeves and get back to work as we continue our education outreach and service to Smith County. We have Project Leaders for all of our projects (23 in all) except for the following:

- Calendar Sales
- Fall Conference
- Plant Sale
- Home Garden Tour

David Gary is presently diligently looking for homes hoping the owner will volunteer as a candidate for our Tour in May. He thinks he will have four or five homes set up shortly. He, however, has decided he cannot handle the additional duties required to complete the task, due to other volunteer duties he has taken on. Therefore, we need someone to "step up to the plate" and take the handover from David. If you think you have the time and energy, please help us out on one of these projects. These are our primary money raising projects and time is running short.

The folks who have been project leaders in the past have willingly agreed to mentor anyone who will step up. In addition there are job descriptions in the office to help guide you through the process.

Thanks for any consideration you give these

## Workday in the Gardens

After a month off, the regular work schedule of each Tuesday at 1:00 PM resumes in the gardens. Since winter is not over, weather could continue to be a problem. Members of Class 19 have only February and March to complete their work requirements in the gardens, thus they are well advised to take advantage of every good weather opportunity.

## February Association Meeting

The February meeting of the Smith County Master Gardener Association is at 11:30 AM on February 7th at the Rose Garden Center.

The program will be a presentation by Dr. Pemberton with a program on China. He recently visited there and will be talking about his visit to the Guizhou Botanical Garden and Beijing Forestry University. He will be showing pictures of his visit to the Great Wall, the Forbidden City, the Guizhou Botanical Garden, and Huangguoshu Waterfall, the largest in China. He also has pictures of the shopping and food.

**Treasurer Pat Welch is continuing to collect dues for 2013. She will be happy to accept your check for \$20 at the February 7th meeting. Class 19 please be aware, you will begin paying dues with the 2013 year.**

## Tree Pruning Class

On February 20th, at 1:00 p.m. the fruit tree class will be held. This will be a two-part class taught by Keith Hanson. The first part will be pruning young fruit trees, learning to prune and plant bare root trees, and identification of some diseases and pests. This will be held at Cindy Harrington's orchard.



From Cindy's the class will go a short distant to the home of Carl & Wincie Caskey where the second section will be held. Keith will demonstrate pruning of mature fruit trees.

2CE's will be given for this class. Sign-up will be at the February Meeting and directions to the homes will be given at that time.



The new gardening year really gets going in February with seeding, transplanting, pruning and educational programs. Here are some of the upcoming educational opportunities (all of these qualify for CE's):

East Texas Turfgrass Conference – February 7 - Overton Texas A&M AgriLife Extension and Research Center.

East Texas Garden Lecture Series – Feb. 16 (replaces the ET Spring Landscape & Garden Conference) – a Morning with Scott & Lauren Ogden – Tyler Rose Garden Center

Fruit Tree Pruning Workshop for Master Gardeners – Feb 20 – Cindy Harrington's / Carl & Wincie Caskey's homes

East Texas Commercial Fruit & Vegetable Conference – Feb 26 – Tyler Rose Garden Center

1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday in the Garden – Azalea Care – March 5th—IDEA Garden

ET Garden Lecture Series – March 16 – Creating Creative Container Gardens – Tyler Rose Garden Center

Water Law & Rights – March 19 – Extension office

1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday in the Garden – Tomatoes, How, When & Where – April 2nd—IDEA Garden

Make a Note: the April Master Gardener meeting (Graduation and Awards Luncheon) date is changed to April 11 – Tyler Rose Garden Center

ET Garden Lecture Series – April 13 – Growing and Arranging Cut Flowers – Tyler Rose Garden

Center.

Landscape Irrigation – Saving a Rainy Day – April 25 – Extension office

For more details, see the Educational Programs section of <http://EastTexasGardening.tamu.edu>. We also have a ET Garden Lecture Series Facebook page – if you have a Facebook account, please visit it and “Like” it, so your friends will also see and hopefully learn about this educational opportunity. <http://facebook.com/etgardenconference>

2013 is off to an interesting start. The office has been plenty busy with citizens seeking information on gardening. At this time of year, many of the questions relate to food gardening (vegetables, fruits, etc.), and a great many are getting in to gardening for the first time (i.e. novices with easy, basic questions). I would welcome your help in answering some of these basic requests for information. With the new Master Gardener class training in progress, and preparing for 3 major conferences in February, along with many other daily chores, it is easy to fall behind. Check with Deana or Carolyn, our secretaries, for available time slots (there are 16 out of the 20 work days with no one at the help desk). Your help would be most welcome!!

Several from the new class may be at the February monthly meeting (I'll be at the Turfgrass Conference). If you see someone new, introduce yourself, and make them feel welcome. We have a great new group, 18 enthusiastic folks from differing backgrounds and experience.

Have a great gardening month. / Keith

## Many Thanks

I want to thank all who have agreed to be a mentor. We actually had more of you than we had new class members. How wonderful. Some "connections" were made prior as folks already knew each other. So those of us who find ourselves without a specific mentee this year, we can focus on being mentors to all 19 of the new class members. They are all bright eyed and bushy tailed - let's work to keep them that way.

If you have been assigned to a specific person, I have sent you a separate email and the information will be forthcoming.

Thanks again for being such a great group of folks.

Ann Smith



## It Happened 10 years Ago

Ten years ago we had the TX State MG Conference right here in Tyler. In the February 2001 Grapevine we noted that the State Association had awarded Tyler the conference for April 24 – 27, 2003. We had gone to them hoping to have the conference in 2002, but they gave that date to Wichita County. As it turned out, that gave us the luxury of two years to prepare. Anne Brown, our project chairman, locked in the date at Harvey Hall. With that start, the necessary committees were formed and the fun began!

In the February 2003 Grapevine, Anne Brown commented, “With the conference only three months away, that the committees had been hard at work and that details were being finalized.” Conference booklets were nearly ready for mailing, the cover of which is reproduced here. Registration was done via e-mail for those who chose to do so, but without a website the conference booklets with all the pertinent information and a registration form, were mailed throughout the state. Times have changed!

## SHISHI GASHIRA

By Herb Coursey



A Camellia of the species Hiemalis, Shishi Gashira, is widely grown in Japan by the name Beni Kan Tsubaki (which translates as "red cold camellia"). All its bushes have blossoms of rosy-red. They are loved also by such names as Lion Head, Minagawa, Pink Winter Camellia, and others. It makes a handsomely rugged, thick-growing small evergreen shrub that ignores winter cold snaps, and endures even the merciless oven of Texas' summer sun. At maturity it is a natural **dwarf-size bush only 2 ft. high**, blooming in mid-fall and early winter. Its blossoms are rated as **Small Size** (2" to 2½"), Semi double to Rose-form double. Their brightly-colored stamens form a thick **boss of brilliant gold** in the center. Enough plants of ShiShi will make for you a gorgeous short hedge border. But maybe you'd prefer her as a potted specimen. Or you may eventually induce her to become a mysterious, exquisite bonsai.

In fact, I first acquired 2 ShiShi accidentally. As recounted by their grower, Mrs. Martha Valery, (then owner of Williams Nursery in Forest Hill, Louisiana): Suddenly, she realized she had completely used up that year's batch of rootstocks, several hundreds of Sasanqua Egao. Yet, there on the work table, she had overlooked two very valuable scions: both



were new **5" long cuttings** she had snipped from their parent plant, a then very rare Japonica, **R.L. Wheeler Variegated**. They were indeed too valuable just to leave there, abandoned, destined soon to desiccate in a rootless, drying death! In desperation, she grabbed up two ShiShi plants lying close by, quickly performed the necessary surgery, and - 5 years later, mind you, - sold us the two resultant **15" tall plants** which she had salvaged from that accident. They were in 2 separate five-gallon pots for \$225 each plant! (♪ nice work, ♪ if you can get it!!!) Both of those plants are now twenty years old, but still only 24 inches tall! They've never been pruned and apparently will never need it! I have encountered no others like this, even at Williams Nursery itself, or at the dozens of nurseries in Forest Hill, La. Apparently **ShiShi rootstock dwarfs to its own plant height, but somehow allows enlargement of the size of grafted-on leaves and blooms**. So the **R.L. grafts on ShiShi roots grow as quite short plants, but somehow can produce the R.L. Large bloom and Leaf size, as well as the R.L. blossom shape, color, and later blooming season (Jan-Feb.)**



Of interest is: These 2 **R.L.tops** on **ShiShi roots**, are now 24" tall and 20 yrs. old!

Our big **R.L.** growing on **Sasanqua Egao roots** is 55" tall is also 20 years old.

Other Japonicas we've grown 20 yrs. as dwarfs are **Vulcan** (on Egao roots), also 20 yrs. **Betty Ridley** (also on Egao roots). Any of these should make an excellent subject for bonsai... 'erb

### Executive Committee Notes

The committee met on January 18<sup>th</sup>.

There was considerable discussion concerning the leadership positions for three major projects. Those projects are the Calendar/Gardening Guide, Home Garden Tour and the Fall Conference/Bulb Sale. David Gary agreed to take over the Home Garden Tour project with consideration for input and assistance from former committee members.

Martin Davis was asked to send e-mails to the members with job descriptions of the two unfilled positions in the hope that someone will step forward. Those job descriptions will be posted on the "Members Only" page on the website, along with the job descriptions of all projects for easy reference to those who need the information.

President David Pierson will appoint an Audit Committee who will review the Treasurer's records for 2012.

A change in the Policy and Procedures manual, suggested by Wayne Blonn, concerning payment for goods or services was approved and will go into effect at once.

David Gary advised that Rose Garden Center is not available for the April 4<sup>th</sup> membership meeting. Alternate locations will be contacted and if none is available, the meeting date may have to be changed. (See note in "Keith's Comments" concerning the date change.)

Keith Hansen advised that he had received a request from a gardening magazine for pictures and gardening tips with a deadline of January 31<sup>st</sup>. Considering the short deadline, no submission will be made to them.

The next meeting will be on February 15<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 AM at the Extension office.





by Dee Bishop

## SEEDS --- NOW'S THE TIME

Growing seed for my own garden is one of my favorite gardening activities. I learned how from both grandparents and parents. They grew everything from seeds. Nurseries were non-existent where I lived and my parents and grandparents on both sides all had beautiful yards and vegetable gardens---all grown from seeds.

Remember the basic needs of all plants: soil, water, and light (with an emphasis on light). Provide all of these and you can grow seeds to your hearts content. I might add, you have to dedicate the next 6-8 wks. to those plants; so plan to be there to care for them.

Light is the most difficult prerequisite to provide. My sweet husband built me a light table that looks like a swing set that has florescent lights at the top, middle and bottom. He built shelves near the top, middle, and the floor is the bottom shelf. He used hooks at the top, middle brace, and bottom legs. I attached two shop lights at the top, 4 in the middle, and 6 at the bottom. I can get 2 flats on the top shelf, 4 on the middle, and 8 on the bottom. That is 14 flats of 72 plants! The shop lights are regular, cheap, florescent light bulbs (you don't need expensive plant lights). They hang from chains and can be raised as the plants grow. You lower them to within a couple of inches of the plants and raise them as the plants grow---very easily done.

I use the 72 cell plant trays with plastic covers. They last several years and are perfect to keep the plants damp enough to germinate. I use a good potting soil that has some perlite in it for drainage. I fill the flats with the soil and use another filled flat to push the soil down to firm it. I water the flat with warm water and let it sit and drain overnight. You want the soil moist ---not wet. Plant the seeds according to size. Do not cover the tiny ones; just use your fingers to slightly tamp them into the soil. Dig holes with a pencil for larger seeds, or use your finger. Place the cover on and put on the shelf. If the seeds need light to germinate (most do) turn the lights on. Watch the lids and if you see too much condensation, remove for a while and replace. If your mix is too wet, you will have condensation so let it dry some. Check daily to see which plants come up and watch for signs of damp off. If you see the little seedlings flopped over, spray with a 1tsp. baking soda to 1 qt. water. Or use fish emulsion to fertilize as well as kill fungus. It is best to grow the seeds on the dry side instead of getting the soil too wet.

Spray with a mist bottle to water if needed. The plants will not need additional water for a couple of weeks until they get a good root system---then you will see the soil dry faster as the plant uses the water. Once the plant touches the cover (2-3 wks. after sprouting) remove it. Your plants need weak fertilizer each time you water. I use fish emulsion because it provides fertility as well as fungus prevention. Keep the lights on about 16 hours a day and about 2-3 inches above the plants. You will have beautiful plants to set out in about 8 weeks! Have fun!!

Another quick tip---place tiny seeds in a spice shaker with sugar so you won't plant them too close.

## Getting to Know Us

By Pat Turner

Once a year you may discover this month's MG, Neysa Mueller and her husband Mark preparing a Wild Game Dinner, serving at least thirty types of



wild game for over three hundred people. She may even have taken down some of the game animals herself since one of her hobbies is hunting.

Neysa was born and grew up in Midland along with her six brothers and one sister. Neysa is an Aggie, having an undergraduate degree in French and English and a Masters in Adult Education. She worked in education for thirty years as either a teacher or in college admissions. She was also a landman for several years. Besides gardening and hunting Neysa enjoys a variety of activities such as traveling, arranging flowers for her church and for parties, cooking, Tai Chi, water aerobics, yoga, and playing Mahjong and 42. In her "spare" time she loves to read and squeezes in a movie once in a while. She highly recommends "Les Miserables".

Her college roommate, Susie, kindled Neysa's love of gardening by keeping house plants in their apartment. She is excited about being a Master Gardener - Class 19 and looks forward to enjoying her own garden with its water feature and continued MG gardening experiences. Neysa has adopted the excellent gardening philosophy of a daily "weed walk" to stay ahead of that continuous chore.

## Updated Information

We have just received information that Doris Waits has moved to Garden Estates and will no longer be participating in the MG program.

For many years Doris has been our Sunshine person, sending out cards to MGs who were ill, and she now leaves that job open.

Anyone who may be interested in this position should contact David Pierson.

### Pictures Anyone?



Does the picture of you in the SCMG Address Book need to be replaced? If so, come to the MG office on February 19<sup>th</sup> after 1:00 PM. MG Class 20 is having their pictures taken that day and you too may come in for a new and better picture for the directory.

### New E-mail Address

Jana Bowman [janalucysue@gmail.net](mailto:janalucysue@gmail.net)

### Texas State MG Conference News

Even though the conference is not until next October, the planners continue to send out information about the event. Go to their website at <http://2013tmgaconference.org/> for the latest information.

The link to their Facebook page, where the very latest information is regularly presented, can be found on their web page.

### Landscape Design School

February 18-19, 2013 - Landscape Design School Series XXIII, Course II Sponsored by the Texas Garden Clubs, Incorporated & Texas AgriLife Extension, Texas A&M University. For full details on the school are on the SCMG website's Coming Events page.

There will be a real scarcity of available rooms in College Station at the time of the school, due to a conflicting sports event. A block of rooms has been set aside at the Four Points By Sheraton in College Station. The website for reservations is listed below, but these need to be made before **February 3rd** while rooms are still on hold.

A block of rooms is set aside for the participants at: <https://www.starwoodmeeting.com/Book/TAMULDC>



Do you do Facebook? Check out the SCMG site at <http://www.facebook.com/SmithCountyMasterGardeners>.

“Like” it and you will get updates as they occur.

### Meet and Greet Class XX

