



MG Grapevine

http://scmg.tamu.edu

http://easttexasgardening.tamu.edu

January 2012

Volume 19

Number 1

MG Association

Meeting

January 5th 11:30 AM
Rose Garden Center

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Keith's Column – pg. 2
- Mayor Bass letter – pg. 2
- Class 19 schedule – pg. 2
- New Address – pg. 2
- Address Book – pg. 2
- Association Dues – pg. 2
- Plants Round World – pg. 3
- Birds in Garden – pg. 3
- Hours Reports – pg. 3
- Ex. Comm. notes – pg. 4
- Coming Events – pg. 4
- Workday in Gardens– pg. 4

MG Grapevine Staff

Martin Davis, Editor

MG Grapevine Contributors:

Sue Adee, Dee Bishop, Ronny Duncan, Keith Hansen, Joanie Matthews, Jim Powell and Jean Smith

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

Educational programs of Texas AgriLife Extension Service 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.



Improving Lives. Improving Texas

"Improving the lives of people, businesses, and communities across Texas and beyond through high-quality, relevant education."

Extension Office

Phone - 903-590-2980

Fax - 903-590-2984

Ronnie's Comments



Well it is winter time. I have put my vegetable garden to bed. I weeded it, tilled in some compost, and covered it up with carpet. I have weeded, taken out all the dead stuff and spread a little mulch in the flower beds around the house. I have taken some cuttings from some plants that I want to keep and I am in the process of rooting them under some lights in the house and moved all the tender plants into my greenhouse. I have cleaned out all my bird houses and filled up my bird feeders.

This brings me to our **January 5th** program. Bill Farrar, whose wife Connie was an MG, is the owner of *Rubicon Wild Birds and More*. He will show us a PowerPoint presentation on feeding birds. Maybe I will find out what I am doing wrong. I have three kinds of feeders out; two with regular bird seed, two with black oil sunflower, and four with Niger seed. So far I have not seen very many birds at them. You need to come to the meeting and learn with me how to feed the birds.

Your New President* – Ronny

*To be installed at the January meeting.

Joanie Matthews says,

Well here it is.... the final article as President. Before you start cheering - let's look back at our fun times this year. I hope you enjoyed the trips to the Arboretum and to Greg Grant's Dog Trot Houses.



Joanie Matthews
SCMGA President

The picnic was really fun and a great time for us to sit down and really

catch up and visit with each other. Everyone seemed to really enjoy the additional classes about Tree ID and Organic Gardening. I would have planned more if it had not been so miserably hot this summer.

Because of your volunteering, all of our regular projects were extremely successful. This is just a few of our accomplishments. To me the greatest accomplishment of SCMG is friendship; your kindness and friendship to me have been awesome. Did you realize we participate in 25 different projects? So many people have really given of their time and expertise; credit belongs to all those who worked so hard to make their project happen. Please look at the list of projects in the back of the Address Book and see if there isn't something new you would like to add to your volunteer time and find new friends.

As for me, for years I've wanted to compile Dee Bishop's Grapevine articles forming a book "*Dee's Diary, all you need to know about East Texas Gardening*." I feel it would be a great money maker for SCMG and it would help us and the public with our gardens. Anyone interested in helping with this project????? As all of you know the IDEA garden is my true love but I want to add Overton to see what seeds are all about. So I have many things to look forward to.

After several years of women controlling the Executive Committee I think it's going to be very interesting and fun to see the direction that Ronny and his posse of men will take. We always need change and I'm looking forward to working with our new regime. With Ronny it will definitely be a fun year!

Thanks to each and every one of you for the help and support you have shown to me this year. I cannot thank you enough. Yes I'm glad I did it. Yes it was a fun and educational year. Yes I'm glad it's over!!!!



Happy New Year to everybody! Thanks again for being such a great bunch of volunteers! This month starts another round of training classes (Class 19), and it looks like we'll have 19 in the class.

Remember that you can earn CE's by attending a training class – can be a good refresher. This year there will be two changes with new speakers: Dr. Mike Merchant, Extension Entomologist from Dallas will be doing a 6 hour training at Overton (9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.) on January 17; and Dr. Kevin Ong, Extension Plant Pathologist and head of the Plant Diagnostic Lab at A&M will give a 6 hour training at Overton (9:00 – 4:00) on February 14. Both should be excellent, and expand your current knowledge base in both subjects. Handouts will be limited to class trainees (but if I get pdf versions, I can pass them on to you post-training).

We are seeking someone(s) to serve as a leader of the Tyler Day Nursery project. Joann Adair has filled this role for many years, and is stepping aside from a coordinator/leadership role, but not abandoning the project either. This is a very fulfilling project, working weekly with the youngsters at this facility, reading to them, helping to plant seeds (both metaphorically and actually) that will bear fruit in many ways. If you have questions regarding what is involved, Joann is happy to visit with you, and she will also be there during this transition time. The Tyler Day Nursery project is also needing a couple of more volunteers to help out (2 have moved away from the area). Perhaps some of you could be co-leaders. Please let both Joanne (joannadair@hotmail.com) and me know soon regarding your interest. We don't want to let this great program end. Their gardening year usually starts in March.

We will have other opportunities this year to work with schools that seek assistance with school garden projects (public or private). In these types of projects, we would mainly be offering advice and serve as resources for information, and perhaps as guest speakers. I would like to compile a list of everybody willing to serve as an advisor or some other capacity for school garden projects/programs. Please send me (Keith) an email indicating your interest. Do it now while it is fresh on your mind.

Interns, remember you only have until the end of March to complete your required hours. Be sure to turn in your hours to Martin, and if you anticipate being unable to fulfill your commitment by that time, please contact me as soon as possible. **Have a great new year!!** - - Keith

Tyler Mayor Lauds SCMG

In a recent letter to Keith Hansen, Mayor Barbara Bass said in part, "The SCMGs are extremely valuable to the City of Tyler through all their volunteer work and beautification efforts for the City.



The SCMGs maintain four of the gardens located in the Tyler Municipal Rose Garden and work each week to maintain their beautiful appearance. They work with the city in the Main Street Flower Market, host an information booth during the Rose Festival and serve as docents for tours through the Rose Garden.

We are so grateful to have them as outstanding members of our community." *Barbara R. Bass, Mayor, City of Tyler*
And the Master Gardeners say, "Thanks!"

MG Class 19 Schedule

The schedule is organized and the potential trainees have met. The first class will begin promptly at 1:00 PM on January 10th at the Extension Office. The classes meet mostly on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons during January, February and March. For the complete schedule go to <http://scmg.tamu.edu/files/2011/02/2012-Class-XIX-Smith-Co-MG-training.pdf> Certified Master Gardeners are welcome to audit any class and for those who do, 3 CEUs may be claimed for each class audited.

New Address

Anne Pattullo has moved to 3506 Rock Creek Drive, Tyler, TX 75707. Her phone number is unchanged. Her new e-mail address is gpatullo@suddenlink.net.

Nelda Stanley has a new e-mail address which is: neldanbill@yahoo.com

Address Book

The new Address Book will be available at the April 5th SCMG Association meeting. In the meantime it is important that the information in it is complete and correct. As changes have been reported, we revise the data on the computer. The supposedly up-to-date version of the Address Book is available as a PDF file at <http://scmg.tamu.edu/> on the "Members" page.

Check it out and let Martin Davis know of any needed change(s).



Treasurer Pat Welch advises that the SCMG association dues are now due and payable. Checks should be made out to "SCMG" in the amount of \$20. Pat will be at the January 5th meeting to accept your check, or you may mail them to her at 19461 Sandhill Lane, Flint, TX 75762.

Plants From Around the World

By Jim Powell

The **Crown of Thorns** plant *Euphorbia milii* is a native of Madagascar an island country located in the Indian Ocean off the southeastern coast of Africa. It's amazing that the Crown of thorns is popular in our country since Madagascar is a hotspot where over 80% of its plants and animal species are found nowhere else in the world.



The plant is also known as the **Siamese Lady** plant or **Christ** plant.

Legend has it that the thorn crown worn by Jesus Christ on the cross was thought to have been made from the Crown of Thorns plant.

This low-growing evergreen succulent shrub has very thorny grooved stems and branches. On the top of each of the long stems is a cluster of small beautiful flowers--pink, yellow, red and white. It is capable of blooming almost year-around. The plant belongs to the same family as the poinsettia. Although this plant is a perennial, it must be brought inside in the winter.

It is suggested you wear gloves when handling this thorny plant especially when securing cuttings for propagation.

When propagating, take three or four cuttings and set them aside for four days. The cut stems will be excreting a milky substance so the cut ends must dry and callous over before potting. Insert each cutting in a pot of sterile, sandy potting soil. Water sparingly for two-weeks. It will take about four weeks for them to propagate.

A caution! The Crown of Thorns is highly toxic to animals.

The **Lion's Ear** plant *Leonotis leonurus* is a native of South Africa and grows abundantly in Suriname, a country in northern



South America. It is also called **Lion's Tail** and **Wild Dagga**. The very unique and interesting Lion's Ear is a semi-woody broadleaf perennial that sometimes grows up to 5 feet tall. Its tubular fuzzy orange flowers, resembling a lion's ear or tail, are

tiered whorls that encircle the square stems. In our area, it blooms during late summer and early fall, offering fiery orange blossoms when our other plants are "closing shop" for the winter. The Lion's Ear is a beacon of nectar for hummingbirds, butterflies and honeybees. In addition, it's one of my favorite plants.

Dry foliage from the Wild Dagga, grown in the South African grasslands, is smoked or made into a medicinal calming tea by the Hottentot tribe of the Cape Colony area of South Africa. It is said that it also offers the tribal members a multitude of spiritual properties.

In addition to seeds, cuttings from the Lion's Ear plant can be used to start new plants. Its blooms become more densely if cut back in early spring.

Birds in Your Garden

By Dee Bishop

I enjoy watching the birds that come to my feeders and the drama that often takes place when a resident cooper's hawk comes like a stealth bomber after a first kill. Like a bolt of lightning he comes. The poor little birds scatter in all directions. Often they fly into our patio door either knocking themselves out or worse. Sometimes there is a little tuft of feathers where a split second before, a tiny sparrow was eating. I hate to see the demise of my little friends, but I know the hawk is only doing what he's been programmed to do. I have lots of shrubbery all around my yard, but I intend to plant more bird friendly plants to draw even more species of birds.



I have composed a list of annuals, perennials, shrubs, and trees loved by birds of all kinds for food, for cover, and for nesting. Our natives also attract insects, both good and bad providing food and for pollination.

- **ANNUALS:** amaranths, salvias, cosmos, impatiens, monarda, marigolds, sunflowers, zinnias.
- **PERENNIALS:** salvias, grasses, goldenrods (there are some lovely, well-behaved ones), Violets, Rudbeckia, Echinacea's, lirioppe, jack-in-the pulpit
- **SHRUBS:** winter honeysuckle, blueberries, viburnums, Oakleaf hydrangeas, hollies, junipers. Any evergreen or berry producing shrub.
- **TREES:** dogwoods, fringe trees, oaks, pecans, hickories, elms, magnolias, redbuds.

Birds need shelter in close proximity to feeders and water.

We have enjoyed ever so many more birds since we got a birdbath with flowing water. My bluebirds love to bathe. I have also learned to put out some hamburger for them. I intend to get them some meal worms, but they love hamburger and it's cheaper. I mix cheap peanut butter with lard and cornmeal and rub it into the bark of trees. Woodpeckers, nuthatches, wrens, and even cardinals love it. In February I put out ground up egg shells so they have access to the calcium they need for their own eggs.

Think about more natives and other hardy plants that take our abusive weather patterns and that provide much needed food and shelter for our little feathered friends. They don't require as much care, they are wildlife friendly, and they are beautiful. What more could one ask for?

Hours Reports

We appreciate all of you who regularly report your volunteer hours. In order to remain certified, each Master Gardener must work at least the minimum required hours and report them. Since we are at year-end, the deadline for submission of volunteer hour reports for 2011 is **January 15, 2012**. If there are valid reasons which prevented volunteering, please contact Keith Hansen to discuss your situation.

For those who are interns, please be reminded that your year does not end until **March 31, 2012**.



The Executive Committee met on December 5th and heard reports and considered the following:

Signage Committee – The committee had met and continues to consider the various aspects for signs which will be placed in all four gardens maintained by the SCMGs at the Rose Garden. They plan to meet again in January.

2012 Budget Committee to meet later on December 5th.

TX State Director's meeting – Linda Sargent reported on the 4th Quarter meeting that she attended. For more information go to <http://txmg.org/administration/minutes/> where the agendas and minutes for the Directors meetings are available.

Bulb Sale – Anne Pattullo reported on the 2011 bulb sale and advised that she will not be the chairperson for the 2012 event which was also discussed.

Statewide Awards – A meeting concerning the formulation of the submissions for the awards is scheduled for Dec. 7th.

MG Information - Discussion centered on producing a pamphlet entitled "*What is a Master Gardener?*" and its distribution to the general public via brochures in nurseries, plant centers, etc. Also discussed, the potential of a video to be used on the Public Access TV Channel to promote SCMGs.

Community Gardens were discussed. There are possibilities of their being developed via Habitat for Humanity or the Smith County Health District.

Those going off the committee, including Victor Long, Anne Pattullo and Linda Sargent expressed their enjoyment of serving on the Executive Committee.

Coming Events on Website

As we begin the New Year, the list of MG events seems to grow every day (well almost). The list is updated regularly and can be found at <http://scmg.tamu.edu/coming-events/>.

Go there regularly to check the upcoming events. Don't miss an event because you just didn't know.

Work Day in the Gardens

By Sue Adee

Work will resume in the gardens on January 17th starting at 1:00 PM, weather permitting and as needed weekly thereafter. Please check your e-mail before coming to the gardens. Check for updates or call one of the coordinators to see if we are working that day.

We will also post where we will be having lunch by Monday evening and encourage MG's to join us. A person does not have to work in the gardens to fellowship with us over lunch.



1517 W. Front St. Suite 116
Tyler, TX 75702