



MG Grapevine

<http://scmg.tamu.edu>

<http://easttexasgardening.tamu.edu>

MG Association Meeting
No meeting in July

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Keith's Column – pg. 2
- Our Secret Garden – pg. 2
- MG Calendar – pg. 2
- July in the Garden – pg. 3
- Plants Around World-pg. 3
- Bulbs & More – pg. 4
- Coming Events - pg.4

MG Grapevine Staff
Martin Davis, Editor

MG Grapevine Contributors:

Hazel Bateman, Dee Bishop, Bibi Blonn, Anne Brown, Keith Hansen, Sherr Matthews, Anne Pattullo, Jim Powell, Andie Rathbone 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

What, No Meeting?

That is right; there is no Smith County Master Gardener Association meeting in July each year. The next meeting will be on August 2, 2012. See you there.

Texas A&M Scholarship

The scholarship recipient at A&M this year is Samantha Honors who is a senior horticulture student.



Samantha said, in her thank-you note, "It is an absolute honor for me to have received this award! I wanted to take this opportunity to send you a note, and to say thank you for

these funds to my education.

I am going to graduate in December 2012 with a degree in horticulture. My emphasis within horticulture is nursery and floral crop management production. I am still not exactly sure what I want to do when I graduate, but I am looking into assistant manager positions for wholesale nurseries around Texas.

Currently at A&M, I have a job working in the rose garden behind the TAMU Horticulture Building, and I am just taking classes and getting ready to graduate in December.

Thank you so much again for this scholarship! I really appreciate this contribution to my education, and I am honored to have been chosen for such an award." Sincerely, Samantha Honors

Heritage Rose Garden

Coordinators Anne Brown & Bibi Blonn

Considering the high temperatures and lack of rain last year, the Heritage Garden is really in good condition. Now that the hot weather has returned this month we can really appreciate the cool, wet spring we had.

One of our favorite plants has been a Hollyhock with multi-petal blooms that has endured for over four years. This biannual has been a consistent surprise, blooming each spring for several weeks. It is now declining and will probably be removed in just a short time. We are hoping for fertile seeds, but so far we have not had any luck.

Another favorite is the Beverly Sills Iris. This iris has soft pink blooms that only last a short time, but is worth waiting for each spring. We have added a lot of plants that we hope will encourage butterflies and hummingbirds to the garden.



Our roses were great last summer and had few problems. However this year we have already had the garden crew spray for Thrips. The rose on the entry arbor, Juan Desprez, defoliated and still has not recovered. The roses on our pillars are also struggling but hopefully will recover. The other roses are looking great. Thanks to the garden crew the roses on the big arbor have been pruned and dead wood removed.

Many thanks to the Master Gardeners who are coming to work almost every week. It is surprising how much work just a few people are able to get done. We miss Ronnie Duncan who is taking the summer off due to a knee replacement.



K
E
I
T
H'
S

C
O
L
U
M
N

As we move in to the hotter and drier months, keeping our plants healthy and our water bills low will once again become an issue. At least this year we are going in to the summer with a better supply in our water reservoirs, and soil moisture has not been depleted like last year. Some water

conserving tips for the landscape include using mulches on everything, not heavily fertilizing to avoid lush growth that requires more water, and mowing the lawn a little higher (but do keep up with regular mowing frequency to avoid stressing the grass between cuttings).

Using drip or trickle irrigation is a proven technology that results in a reduction of water used to maintain gardens. It applies water directly to the soil, so evaporation is greatly reduced. Emitters can be placed right where they are needed, so unplanted areas are not unnecessarily irrigated (which also reduces weed growth during dry spells).

Rainwater harvesting is another water saving technique, and provides high quality water to sensitive potted plants, etc.

I would like to get feedback from all of you Smith County Master Gardeners, if you are using some sort of drip system, soaker hose or other low flow technology. Please send me an email with the following information: what kind of system you are using, product being used, how long you have been using it, benefits and problems you have had using it, and what you would do differently. Also, if you would like a training on drip technology, and what specifically you would like to learn.

Also, if you have a rainwater harvesting system, I would like to hear from you. Please provide me with the same information (type of system, how long you've had it, benefits/problems).

Dr. Mike Merchant, Extension Entomologist in Dallas, who also has a great web site "Insects in the City" (<http://citybugs.tamu.edu>), has frequent news updates that are interesting and timely. His latest is on mosquitos and west Nile virus, which as showing up already in the DFW metroplex (earlier than typical). The article is interesting, as well as the 2 links he provides at the end of the piece. Bottom line is, you need to protect yourself from these suckers, especially to avoid being exposed to WNV. Here is the direct link to the article: <http://citybugs.tamu.edu/2012/06/21/west-nile-virus-sooner-than-later/>

OUR SECRET GARDEN

Jean Smith & Hazel Bateman

Once again it is time for "Our Secret Garden" project in the AgriWorld Exhibit during the East Texas State Fair. This year's theme will be Charlotte's Web and the committee is already working on new ways to showcase the exhibit and make it more exciting than ever. There will be six stations: The water cycle and rainwater harvesting, Insects with a focus on spiders, vegetables that originated in the Americas, composting and recycling, making your backyard a wildlife habitat and what happens to our water when it goes down the drain. There will also be a JMG section where you can test your knowledge.

We are looking for some items and if you have anything to contribute, please let us know. A tent (teepee style), Indian costumes, corn stalks, yarn plastic bird bath and animals: Squirrels, birds, bats, frogs, spiders. Anything you think might work in the above sections. We are open to suggestions.

AgriWorld set up begins September 4 and work days continue throughout the month. The fair opens on September 21 and runs through September 30. We need lots of volunteers to help with set up, decorating, and teaching. Any help is appreciated be it an hour, a day, or several days. We are always looking for new and fresh ideas so if you have a great idea to incorporate or just want to be part of this fun project, join us.

Contact Hazel Bateman, thebatemans@hughes.net or Jean Smith, smithjean17@hotmail.com to volunteer or for more information.

For pictures from last year's Secret Garden go to <http://www.pbase.com/mrd/secret2011>

Calendar/Gardening Guide

Sherri Matthews

The 2013 calendar is well under way. Many articles have been written with more coming in. It should be available for sale sometime in September. We are selling ads this year so if you know of someone that would like to put in an ad please let me know.

The theme this year is East Texas. It would be great if our members would submit photos depicting East Texas for the cover. Just send them to Sherri Matthews at matthews1952@sbcglobal.net and each one will be carefully considered. Deadline for submission is July 31st.



July in the Garden

Dee Bishop

Planting time is over, mulching is done, now is the time to walk about the garden in early morning or in late evening and admire the beauty of all the plantings you have done. Since July provides the heat and relentless sunshine, watch plants for water needs. We have been blessed so far with much more rain than the past several years. After last year, I feel so thankful for every drop. It is very humid, but the plants love that. Yes, let's just take time to admire the results of all our hard work. I love to listen to birdsong while enjoying each and every bloom in my garden. I make mental notes of mistakes I have made in planting, such as planting things too close or in too much shade (easy to do in my yard). I am considering removing a couple of large limbs from a shade tree this winter. The tree has grown huge and is encroaching on another smaller one. I am very satisfied with all the shade we have here though. Shade in summer is worth everything.



We planted a most beautiful salvia in the IDEA Garden last year and I purchased one for my deck. Since I have so many hummingbirds, I decided to plant all sorts of blooming plants in large pots out on our deck. The huge red salvia is a definite keeper. It grows very large and blooms incessantly until frost. I have many red and yellow flowers and the hummers do thank me.

July is a time to take it easy since it's too hot to really work, but it is a lovely time to admire the flowers from inside. I love to plant so that I am making a picture out all my windows. There is nothing as pleasing as being able to look outside and see the bright flowers and all the little visitors that enjoy them. Butterflies and hummingbirds, bees, lizards, and my puffy little toads all appreciate the garden and all the little watering holes I have provided them. I so love to look out at night as I walk through the house and see all the lightening bugs flashing all around the garden. I love to listen to the Whip-poor-wills and owls as I sit on my deck at night. I see my fox family nearly every day, as they take a stroll about the yard to see if I have given them some little tidbit beneath the bird feeders. I sip a cold glass of iced tea as I take it all in and remind myself how blessed I am and how happy my garden makes me.

July is a good time to take it easy and enjoy the results of all your hard work.

Plants From Around the World

Jim Powell

The **Bottlebrush Plant** (*callistemon*) is native to Australia. It's called bottlebrush because of its unusual cylindrical, brush-like showy scarlet flower spikes that resemble a traditional brush for cleaning a bottle. Flower heads vary in colors with species; most are red, but some are green, yellow, white or orange.



As an added feature the leaves of the bottlebrush have a pleasing fragrance that gets released on crushing the leaves. Propagation is accomplished from cuttings or from its rounded seeds. It can be grown into a shrub or a small tree.



The **Candlestick Plant** (*cassia alata*) is also called a candle plant, candle tree, candelabra bush or ringworm tree. It is native to Mexico and Panama. The plant has candelabras of upright racemes of golden blooms that stay open for several weeks in the summer and fall. Its massive green frond leaves contribute to a tropical feeling. Being a jungle native, it likes heavy, rich moist soil.

In California where the candlestick plant is a perennial, it can grow into a large bush. In East Texas it's an annual. If grown from seed, they need to be started in January in a warm sunny location. The young plants can be planted outside in the spring. In Mexico and Samoa parts of the candlestick plant are used for snakebites.



Bulbs & More

Anne Pattullo & Andie Rathbone

The Bulb Committee met June 19 to order daffodils and other spring flowering bulbs. We have several things planted in member gardens such as rain lilies, iris, crinums and Eucomis just growing and waiting for fall digging. Remember that we need your bulbs to make our sale successful. We especially need red spider lilies, Johnson Amaryllis, and gingers. Please let Anne Pattullo at gpattullo@suddenlink.net know if you have something to contribute so we can plan on it come October.

The Perennial Committee for *Bulbs & More* is looking for pots to transplant the plants that we're digging up/starting from cuttings. Specifically we need pots that are 4" & 6" in diameter at the top (these are quart & gallon pots). If you have any, if you could drop them off either at the IDEA garden or at the Extension Office & we'll pick them up. Contact me at andier@earthlink.net Thanks so much. Andie Rathbone

Coming Events

During the summer the number of events goes down in direct proportion to the increase of the temperature. Or so it seems! Even though the list may be shorter, there is no reason to wait for the next newsletter to know what is happening, since the Smith County MG website is updated as the information on events becomes available. To see the list, go to <http://scmg.tamu.edu/coming-events/>.

Continuing during the summer are the SFA monthly lectures which are held on Thursday evenings at Agriculture Building, 1924 Wilson Drive, Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, TX 75962. 6:30 refreshments/social, 7:00 PM lecture followed by exciting plant raffle! Certified MGs get one CE credit for each.

July 19th – Linda Gay – Thoughts on having survived a life in the public garden world.

August 16th – Paul Cox – Amazing trees: From Home and Abroad.

Overton Field Trials

The Overton Field Trial project is a major project with almost 900 volunteer hours reported last year. The 2012 Field Day is on June 28th. Last week the work of putting out identification signs was going on when the pictures below were taken.



Pictured above are Clay Turner, Brent Pemberton, Don Davis, Charlie Colman and Monette Colman.

Photos by Martin Davis