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MG Association Meeting
March 7, 2013
Rose Garden Center

MG Grapevine Staff
Martin Davis, Editor

MG Grapevine Contributors:

Dee Bishop, Jana Bowman, Keith Hansen, David Gary, Susan Linnard, David Pierson, Jim Powell, and Pat Turner.

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Extension Office
Phone - 903-590-2980
Fax - 903-590-2984

Our President says...



My fellow Master Gardeners, it is time to order special shirts identifying you as part of a select group - "Smith County Master Gardener." Orders will be taken beginning at the March meeting for those who wish to have a shirt.

We still need leaders for some projects. Project Leaders are needed for (1) the Fall Gardening Conference and Bulb Sale, (2) Sunshine Coordinator and (3) Speaker's Bureau. If you can help please, see Joanie Matthews. You may pick up a Job Description from the office. Thanks in advance for any willing to take on one of these projects.

Home Garden Tour

Save the date of June 1, 2013 for the annual SCMG Garden Tour. Five home owners in the Woods subdivision and on Dulse Ave have graciously allowed us to feature their gardens on our tour. The hours for the tour will be 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM. Ticket prices are: Pre-sale \$10 – at tour \$12.

The garden tour committee needs help in selling ads for the guidebook. Ads are not limited to garden or home related businesses. An ad form is available on the SCMG website with pertinent information. The deadline for ads is April 15.

Please consider supporting this annual event and making our guidebook exceptional. Jean Smith, Inez Denson, or Linda Sargent can answer any questions.

We are looking forward to a fun event and need help from the entire SCMG organization to make it successful.

Workday in the Gardens

As we move forward into warmer weather, the regular work schedule of each Tuesday changes to a 10:00 AM start time. Members of Class 19 now have only March to complete their work requirements in the gardens, thus they are well advised to take advantage of every good weather opportunity.

All of the regular volunteers are appreciated and any others who choose to come to help will be received with open arms!

Tyler Day Nursery

Each Monday a group of MGs gather at the Tyler Day Nursery to work with the kids in the garden. Work hours are 9AM to 10:30AM every week from March 4th to mid-November.

You can join them for a fulfilling experience.

March SCMG Meeting Program

Behind the Scenes at the Dallas Arboretum

Al Olson, who is a volunteer at the Dallas Arboretum, will present a talk in which he introduces current projects that are in progress within the Arboretum's greenhouses and trial gardens, especially Earth-Kind Roses. Actual plant specimens are brought in for viewing. The program is very interactive and features a lively question and answer session.

Al has always had a love of roses, and he has propagated and cultivated hundreds of new rose cuttings for the Arboretum. One of the things Al enjoys most about his work in the Arboretum greenhouse is the time he spends answering questions about gardening.



Dallas Arboretum

Dallas Blooms

March 2 - April 7



The cool weather has slowed down what was looking like a very early spring due to balmy temperatures earlier in February. Still, mild and sunny days will continue to encourage leaf and bloom buds to expand and open despite cool night temps. Keep your fingers crossed that an Arctic Express doesn't cause a major setback to spring growth.

At the fruit pruning workshop at the Harrington's, we saw a young pear tree with serious fire blight symptoms. Whether or not fire blight will be a major problem on apples, pears, pyracantha, mayhaws and crabapples depends on what kind of weather occurs preceding budbreak and during blooming season. Very warm temperatures in February can cause the fire blight bacteria to become active and start multiplying. If that is followed by a rainy period during bloom, then fire blight can be easily spread by splashing rain and by honeybees visiting blooms. If it is cold prior to and during bloom, and/or it is dry during bloom, then fire blight infections might be negligible. Of course, a tree with a previous history of fire blight will have a reservoir of

bacteria in cankers on the stems, which increases the likelihood of continuing problems.

When Martin Davis was preparing the calendar for the Grapevine, he noticed and informed me that the entire month of March had no one helping at the Help Desk. The MG Help Desk is a great service to gardeners and non-gardeners alike seeking advice and help. There may be someone who knows what to do, but needs some reassurance from a fellow gardener that they are on the right track. Often the requests for help come from folks with little or no gardening experience and are seeking basic advice, or how to get started on a project. The Help Desk is also a place to continue your gardening education, where you can access a wealth of knowledge from the material and people resources at the A&M AgriLife Extension office. A question might spur you to learn more on a subject, and launch you down a path of inquiry that might lead to something that can be put to use in your own environs.

Please help fill up the March calendar – your presence will be greatly appreciated! Call 903-590-2980 to get your name added to the calendar.

Plants From Around the World

By Jim Powell



This month I have chosen two of my favorite bulbs that I force to bloom indoors during the wintertime.



Amaryllis---*Amaryllis belladonna* is a native of South Africa, particularly the rocky southwest region near the cape. The 5-10 cm in diameter amaryllis bulbs from the genus *Hippeastrum* are widely sold in the winter months for their ability to bloom indoors. They are sometimes advertised as, "Ready to bloom for the holidays." The amaryllis bulb produces green strap-shaped leaves that are followed by 2 to 12 huge colorful funnel-shaped flowers with six tepals. After blooming indoors, the bulb can be planted outdoors to bloom each year.

Narcissus---This **daffodil, narcissus** or **jonquil** is a bulbous perennial in the Amaryllis family. They are native to meadows and woods in Europe, North Africa, West Asia and the Western Mediterranean. During the winter, the narcissus grows well indoors when placed in water. Its pale brown-skinned spherical bulbs with pronounced necks produce sweet-smelling flowers. When planted outdoors, its bulbs provide color from the end of winter to the beginning of summer in our region.





by Dee Bishop

A NEW OLD REMEDY FOR SOIL-BORN FUNGI

I have met some marvelous gardeners in my life and have learned fascinating things from them. I seldom write about the little things I have learned that help my plants unless I read it in a legitimate publication. I don't want to pass-along something that has no scientific basis. I use lots of hints, advice, and information gleaned from gardening friends as well as publications. One of the best I have ever tried has now become 'studied and recommended' by McGill University and the Southern Crop Protection and Food Research Centre in Canada as well as Cornell University, and that is the use of Fish Emulsion for fungus control.

These schools have found fish emulsion to be toxic to both Verticillium that causes wilt and Pythium which causes damp-off in seedlings. I am going to quote most of this article so all of you can share in this information too.

"When fish emulsion was sprayed in soil infested with Verticillium up to three fourths of the fungal spores were killed after one **day** and nearly all spores were killed after six days. For Damp-Off or Pythium, researchers found that fish emulsion immediately suppressed the disease in cucum-

ber seedlings growing in a humus-rich muck soil and continued to do so for seedlings planted up to four weeks after the initial application. However for cucumber seedlings growing in a peat-based mix, fish emulsion was effective only when seedlings were planted one to three weeks after the application."

I used to grow nearly everything from seeds and used the fish emulsion to prevent damp-off, a constant aggravation to home seed growers. Now, I will try the emulsion in the soil in which I plant tomatoes. I did not know it helped against Verticillium. I am wondering why one wouldn't want to use fish emulsion as a soil drench for everything. Fish oil is completely safe for all living things. I plan to spray all my beds with gallons of fish oil this spring. Who knows, it may help protect against viral infections also. It should help lawns for all the fungus type diseases that are a constant source of grief for those who love their lawns. Besides helping control fungi, fish emulsion is a great foliar feed and will not burn in hot weather.

Isn't it fun to learn something that you already know, but which has not been tested and confirmed by science? Someday I will tell you about using willow tea for the same thing, but I haven't seen that it has been tested **and approved** by scientists. I know it works, but it's just an old wife's tale. Come to think of it--I am an 'Old Wife'!

Getting to Know Us

By Pat Turner

This month we get to know two Master Gardeners since the draw chose Jim and Laquita Showen from Class 12. One may find this interesting pair clambering around in some rather precarious places since Laquita says she has never been on a car trip with Jim without stopping to look at rocks or search for fossils. He is a rock hound with a degree in Geology from the University of Oklahoma.

Jim was born in Monahans and raised in West Texas oil-fields which may explain his geological interests. Since Laquita was born in Omen and raised in small East Texas towns as the daughter of a Methodist minister, you may wonder how they got together. While Laquita was in nursing school and Jim was pursuing a law degree from University of Houston they met at the St. Paul UMC in Houston. Laquita received her R.N. from Texas Women's University and Jim graduated from University of Houston Law School. Laquita worked as a nurse and later taught Associate Degree Nursing at TJC while Jim practiced both environmental and

municipal law. They raised two sons and a daughter and now have eight grandchildren and one great granddaughter.

Now retired Laquita enjoys grandchildren, reading, and crafting. Besides rocks Jim loves Bible Study, chess, plant and animal fossils. Both are avid gardeners with a particular interest in native plants. Applying the gardening philosophy "If we like, we try it." They have created a naturalized city garden. Jim is currently restoring the native prairie environment on his farm in Omen and also at his church. Both are active Master Gardeners and particularly enjoy the bedding trials at Overton as well as their fellow gardeners. Couples like Jim and Laquita are certainly an asset to the SCMGAs. Although they will celebrate their forty ninth anniversary this year, Laquita says most people are still surprised and amazed at her calmness around "eccentric and unique Jim". We will let that be her secret.



New Publicity Coordinator

After serving (for 5 or is it 6 years?) as publicity contact person for the SCMGs, I have turned over the reins to Anne Brown who has graciously stepped up to the plate. Anne will be your contact from this point on. Anyone who is seeking help to publicize their events in magazines, newspapers, through radio and/or TV can contact her.

I have enjoyed serving but seek less commitments and will move forward in the mentoring program and working in the gardens which I have sorely missed. See you soon, Jana Bowman

IDEA Garden News

By Sue Adece

Spring is perhaps the most anticipated time in the garden. The narcissus and daffodils start blooming. Flower buds start to swell - then open. It is the beginning of a new season in the garden. This is what is happening in the IDEA Garden.

The early blooming narcissus and daffodils are in full bloom. Rose-pink hellebores are blooming in the shade area. The flowering almond, located under the weeping yaupon holly, is covered with its fragrant light pink blooms. A variety of pansies and dianthus are adding color to the garden. The pink and violet nemesia and rose colored English daisies at the corner of the grass walkway are in full bloom. Azalea buds are beginning to show color and should open soon. The 'Tiny Monster' geranium is starting to bloom as well.

Just added to the garden is the colorful nandina 'Blush Pink'. This is the nandina that Dee Bishop wrote about in her weekly newspaper article and is one of the Southern Living plant collections. We also retired the Caldwell Pink Roses from the garden and replaced them with a rose recommended by Mark Chamblee called 'Brilliant Veranda'. This is a small rose, growing only two to three feet high and wide, with orange red blooms. We think it will compliment the red section of the Rainbow Border.

As you can tell, there is a lot to see and enjoy while walking through the IDEA Garden. Why not take a stroll through it before or after the Master Gardener meeting on March 7th? You might just run into someone you have not seen in a while.

The committee met on February 15th. The primary business of the day was a review of the Project leaders for 2013.



Jean Smith has agreed to head up the Home Garden tour with Inez Denson working with her. David Gary had five home lined up and Jean has sent them a letter to confirm their agreement to make their garden a part of the tour on June 1st.

A calendar committee has been formed with Joanie Matthews facilitating the organization of the group. No chair person has been named. There will be another meeting of the group just before the March membership meeting and hopefully someone will step up to take the leader's role.

Projects still needing a leader (in addition to the Calendar project) are the Fall Conference/Bulb Sale, Speaker's Bureau and the Sunshine committee.

The committee agreed to accept credit cards at all MG events, as had been done last year at the Fall Conference/Bulb Sale.

Jean Smith addressed the time to create and the difficulty transporting an exhibit to the Texas MG conference. Pat Welch will make a short presentation to the March general meeting to explain the opportunity and to access the interest in making an exhibit for the 2013 conference in McAllen, TX.

New E-mail Address

Ed McGee emcgee1238@gmail.com

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