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MG Association Meeting

November 1st 11:30 AM

Rose Garden Center



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November Association Meeting

The speaker for the meeting this month is our own Dee Bishop, who will be presenting a program called, "Fall Bloomers." Dee's presentations are always fun and we have been reliably informed that the subject has nothing to do with women's apparel.

Exercising Your Vote

All Smith County MGs should have received a ballot for use in voting for officers for 2013. Look it over, mark your ballot and bring it to the association meeting on November 1st. The association bylaws do not provide for absentee or early voting. That means that you must bring your ballot to the meeting in order to vote.



At the October association meeting Wayne Blonn explained that the Nominating Committee had worked hard to provide a list of people who wanted to serve in the various offices. Since several positions have more than one person nominated, a written ballot is required for use in voting. Ballots will be counted during the meeting so that the new slate of officers for 2013 can be announced at the meeting.

Have You Seen It?

The 2013 *Northeast Texas Gardening Guide and Calendar*, produced by the Smith County Master Gardeners, is now available for purchase. This publication is anxiously awaited each year by prudent gardeners in our area. Novice gardeners or those just moving into this locale find it an invaluable tool as they become more familiar with East Texas soils, unique climate, pests and diseases.

The theme of the 2013 Calendar and Gardening Guide is East Texas Gardening, focusing on ways to make gardening more enjoyable in our region – working with conditions unique to East Texas and proven plant winners. The calendar this year is printed with color photos

throughout and features a "Garden of the Month" with pictures and comments about each garden. A "Things To Do" section identifies plant care and bed preparation, when and what to fertilize, along with pests and diseases to be on the watch for. It also provides ideas of what you could be planting within that particular month.

Other articles of interest provide information on such topics as Earth-Kind Roses, Heat and Drought Tolerant Plants, Azaleas and Camellias, Rainwater Harvesting, and Treatment of Fire Ants. There is also a list of the best web sites for all your questions on gardening, landscaping, and pest management.



Gardening Guide and Calendars make great gifts and are available for \$8.00 each. The list of locations where they can be purchased will be available soon.

Calendars will always be on hand at the Smith County Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service office. Calendars can also be ordered by mail at \$10 each via check sent to: Calendars, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, 1517 W. Front St, Suite 116, Tyler, TX 75702.

The 2013 Northeast Texas



Roses to all the Master Gardeners for a great Fall Garden Conference and Plant Sale event!! I was in Tucson at a Garden Writers Association meeting, when Cindy Harrington texted me that all the bulbs and trees were sold in just a few minutes. I interpreted “all” to mean “there was hardly anything left – just a few here and there”. She then informed me that “all” meant “all”!! **Thanks** to Cindy and Joanie Matthews for their leadership in planning and pulling everything together, to all the committee leaders who made each task run smoothly and successfully, and to every one of you who helped in any way!! I hated not being there, but knew everything was in good and capable hands.

Tucson was very interesting – certainly a “little” different vegetatively than Northeast Texas. I was really impressed how Tucsonans garden with nature rather than trying to create artificial environments to maintain plants that just don’t belong in the desert. I think the only grass I saw was at the hotel where I stayed. No one had grass in their yards! They get about 10 to 12 inches a year, in winter and again in summer during their monsoon season (where about 4 inches falls!!).

Vegetable gardens are sunken rather than raised beds. These beds catch the rain or irrigation water and keep it from running off. Of course, succulents were the main, but not only, landscape plants. Yucca, agave and cacti dominate the plant pallet, and often it was hard to tell where the created landscape ended and the native vegetation began. Of course, it was not the main blooming season for the desert, but the landscape had its own beauty. Yard art and colorfully painted walls are as much a part of the landscape as are plants.

The city of Tucson is surrounded by the Saguaro

National Park, where these amazing cacti are everywhere. I heard it takes 75 years for the saguaro to even begin branching, so many of these giant, majestic cacti are very old indeed. Saguaros (*Carnegiea gigantea*) are the largest cacti in North America - growing to a height of approximately 50 feet, and often weighing seven tons or more. Saguaros can be found only in the Sonoran Desert -- southern Arizona, southeastern California, and Sonora, Mexico.



Another interesting fact about the Tucson area is that the oldest records of agricultural production in north America are found right there in the region. Sites dating to 3900 years ago show the cultivation of the “the Three Sisters” (if you visited the Secret Garden this year, you know right away what those are) – corn, beans and squash. Excavations show that the area has been in cultivation from that time to the present. Tucson also is the oldest continuously inhabited U.S. city west of the Mississippi. Native Seeds/SEARCH (Southwest Aridlands Resource Clearing House) is located in Tucson, and has been collecting, storing and making available a wide variety of agricultural seeds, and their wild relatives, to gardeners and farmers in the southwest for over 30 years. Spanish missionaries introduced figs, citrus, pears, pomegranates, grapes, and citrus, among other fruiting trees, and there is a group dedicated to finding and cultivating these heritage plants as they are discovered.

Plants Around the World

By Jim Powell



The Texas Star Hibiscus (*Hibiscus coccineus*), also known as the Scarlet Rose Mallow or Scarlet Hibiscus, is native to North Carolina and not Texas. This slender, multi-branched perennial plant grows 4’ to 8’ tall and is 2’ to 3’ wide and has stunning 4” scarlet or dark red blooms that appear June thru October. Its blooms are

“as large as Texas” even though it’s not a native of our state. It’s attractive to butterflies, bees and hummingbirds. The Texas Star prefers moist well-drained soil and flourishes in full sun or partial shade. It is also suitable for bogs and water gardens. The plant will die down in the winter, but will start producing green shoots in the spring. Allow the pods to dry on the plant, break open and collect the seeds for future plants. Plant the seeds ¼” deep in the soil.

Toad Lily (*Tricyrtis*) is a shade-loving perennial that has small but beautiful and intricately designed orchid-like flowers. This unique lily is a native of East Asia (China, Korea, Japan and north to Nepal, Taiwan and the Philippines in the South). Its stunning flowers are spotted like toads and have warty, sack-like bumps at the base of the flowers that are “toadish” looking to some. The bumps are actually nectaries. The blooms typically have a white or yellow base color that is covered with hundreds of purple spots; however, other variations exist. The Japanese call the toad lily “hototogiso,” which translates “little cuckoo.”



Toad lilies are clump forming that produce several vertically upright, arching stems. All parts of the plant are covered with very fine, transparent hairs. The Toad Lily can be propagated via seed, cuttings or division.

GETTING TO KNOW US

By Pat Turner



First things first - Many thanks to Sandy Pannett, Class 18, for agreeing to be the first

subject for this column.

Sandy was born in Alexandria, LA where she and four brothers helped maintain a large garden. She got a MRS. degree while attending University of Southern Louisiana and graduated from LSU with a degree in Fine Art-Painting. Sandy and her mechanical engineer husband had three sons while moving twenty nine times across the South and to France before he died.

She earned a degree in psychology and family therapy from University of Houston Clear Lake and practiced in the Houston area for thirty years while raising her sons. Two years ago Sandy and her second husband moved to Tyler to be near her son.

She still practices therapy part time while caring for her ill husband and becoming a Master Gardener. Sandy's other passions are painting and pelicans. Her current project is painting six of the seven Wonders of the Ancient World which she has been privileged to see. She loves and collects pelicans, the state bird of Louisiana. Having been to Turkey twice, Sandy says she dreams of returning someday and would travel great distances to see her favorite musical "Les Miserables". By the way, in her 'spare' time, she makes blue bottle trees- eight, so far and also keeps bees.



Gardenias The Whys & Wherefores

By Dee Bishop



Everyone who has 'met' a gardenia in bloom wants one. They are readily available especially once they begin to bloom. Their enticing fragrance is addicting. We get them for our own only to watch as they slowly dwindle and die. Why? Why is it so hard for one person to grow a gardenia and so easy for another? I remember my aunt had a huge bush in her hot sunny front yard and it thrived with only a dish pan of water once in a while, why?

After much research I may have found some answers. Gardenias need acid soil--a ph of 5 - 5.5. Some of you may have that low a ph, but most of us do not. Tyler has areas of clay and areas of deep sugar sand and areas between. Our soils range from very acid to neutral, which is what I have. I have no trouble with azaleas, camellias, and blueberries, but gardenias are another story. I know our water is pretty alkaline and with the extended drought conditions of the past several years, watering has been necessary. So, after watering day after day, year after year, our soil ph has begun to rise. If this continues, we will end up like the Dallas area with alkaline soils.

Back to gardenias - They prefer fairly

acidic soils, lots of water, and perfectly drained beds. There you have the reason why they haven't done well in the past several years. What can be done? First, have your soil tested. Add sulfur to acidify it if needed. Dig in lots of peat moss and compost making sure the bed is raised above soil level to insure good drainage. Plant the gardenia like you do azaleas, with the root ball one to one and one half inch above ground. Mulch with pine needles or pine bark mulch.. Gardenias need full morning sun and afternoon shade. If you can provide these necessary conditions, your gardenia will thrive. I do believe that as you water over time, you will have to re-apply sulfur. I think adding sulfur to azalea, camellia, and blueberry beds will help them also. One article I read suggested using Ironite once in spring and again in fall. Sounds good to me

Frostproof is a newer variety that should perform better than some of the older ones. Jubilation is another newer one that should perform better in higher ph soils. Let's try these and do all of the above and see if we can't grow beautiful gardenias just like our grandmothers did.

AgriWorld—One More Time

Our Secret Garden in AgriWorld at the East Texas State Fair was visited by 1350 children in organized school groups. Of course many more children of all ages visited during the course of the fair.

A number of Master Gardeners volunteered on this project, from putting together the garden, to working during the time it was open during the fair. Three people, Hazel Bateman, Jean Smith and Pat Welch very nearly lived there for a time, collectively logging over 400 volunteer hours of the more than 650 hours reported at the time this was written. Everyone who participated deserves a large round of applause.

The gallery of pictures on the web, most of which Jean Smith took, has been visited by many of you. Go to <http://scmg.tamu.edu/photo-galleries/agriworldsecret-garden/> where there is a link to this year's event and to previous years, all the way back to 2007.





Bulbs and More

The expanded Fall Conference/Bulb Sale, now **Bulbs & More** enjoyed a large crowd of over 200 for the morning presentation by Dave Whiting and Merlin Eck's review of the plant material which would be for sale later. The new display of yard art was set up just behind the lecture area which made it easy to check out before the sale.

The doors opened at 11:30 AM for those who came just for the sale and the crowd size quickly doubled. The usual

frenzy of buyers developed as they perused the trees, grasses and other plants that had been added to tables full of bulbs. Lines formed to check-out, including the two check-out stations where credit cards were accepted for the first time this year.

For those who want to view a gallery of pictures taken at the event go to <http://www.pbase.com/mrd/fallconf>. Don't miss the pictures of Dave Whiting's family which includes six kids and his wife (with the youngest in arms).



New Addresses

Mary Green – mvgreen530@gmail.com
Susan Nelson – snelson300@gmail.com

Correct this Address

Dee Bishop – dbishop48@suddenlink.net
– the Address Book is wrong.

First Tuesday in the Garden

November 6th 12 noon

Susan Linnard will present

"A Tree for Every Yard"



This lecture will include:

- Site selection and tree placement (area requirements for small, medium, and large trees)
 - Considerations for selecting the right tree (sun/shade, climate zone, soil type, water, height, color, etc.)
 - Planting technique for a good start
- Handouts will be available.

Hummingbird in the Arizona desert

Photo by Keith Hansen



Just Announced

Orientation for the 2013 Class XX Smith County Master Gardener training for applicants and anyone who is interested, will be on November 28 at the Smith County Texas A&M AgriLife Extension office. The cover letter and application forms are available at <http://easttexasgardening.tamu.edu/programs/programs.html>. The training schedule, which begins on January 10, 2013 is available at the same site.

Work Day in the Gardens

The start time for **Work Day in the Gardens** has been changed to 1:00 PM beginning on November 6th and continuing for the next few months.



Jim Powell



Anne Pattullo



Joanie Matthews

November 2012



Smith County Master Gardener Association

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 SCMG Meeting 11:30 AM Rose Garden Center Phone D. Fletcher - AM	2	3
4 	5 Phone D. Fletcher - AM	6 1 st Tuesday in the Garden lecture 12 noon Work Day in the Gardens 1:00 PM Phone J. Ross - AM 	7	8 Phone J. Napolitano - AM	9	10
11	12 	13 Work Day in the Gardens 1:00 PM Phone I. Denson - PM	14	15 Phone N. Mueller - PM SFA lecture - 1CE	16	17
18	19 Phone S. Linnard - PM	20 Work Day in the Gardens 1:00 PM Phone J. Ross - AM	21 Phone T. Menke - AM	22 Office Closed 	23 Office Closed Grapevine Deadline	24
25	26 Phone S. Linnard - PM	27 Work Day in the Gardens 1:00 PM	28 Orientation for 2013 MG Class	29 Executive Committee meeting 10 AM	30	