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October Association Meeting

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MG Association Meeting
October 4th 11:30 AM
Rose Garden Center



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David Pierson advised that the program for the meeting will be presented by Fnc Ponds, builder of Koi ponds and water features.

Other business at the October meeting includes changes to the Smith County MG Association bylaws. Those changes were presented at the September association meeting and will be voted on at the October meeting.

Nominating Committee Report

The Nominating Committee has been meeting to put together the nominees for association officers for 2013. The bylaws require that the list of nominees be announced at the October association meeting. Names of prospective officers have been submitted to the committee, but others (who agree to serve) could be nominated at the meeting and added to the list.

Since there is more than one nominee for most positions this year, the election will be by ballot where each member can make his or her selection. The officers elected at the November association meeting will be installed at the January 2013 meeting.

The Nominating Committee members are Wayne Blonn, Chairman, Monette Colman, Martin Davis, Kay Dobbs and Pat Turner.

Texture & Variation in the Garden

The Smith County Master Gardeners are hosting "First Tuesday in the Garden" on Tuesday, October 2nd, at noon in the IDEA Garden at the Tyler Rose Garden. This program is free, open to the public, and about an hour long. The I.D.E.A. Garden is located in the southeast corner of the Rose Garden with ample parking available outside of the southeast gate. In case of inclement weather, the lecture will be moved inside the Rose Center.

This month's topic is "Texture and Variation in the Garden." Master Gardener Barbara Null will discuss how to use different leaf color, shape and size to design a garden of interest even without blooms. Barbara will use the IDEA Garden as a visual aid to provide attendees with inspiration on plants that perform well in the East Texas area.

MG Picnic



The Master Gardeners have once again been invited to Cindy Harrington's home for an evening picnic on October 26th from 5 - 7 PM. It is a potluck so bring a dish and serving utensils. Water will be furnished. If you want any other liquid, feel free to bring it. Bring your chair to sit in.

Please send your RSVP to Ann Smith at smithvae@aol.com. We need to know how many in your party and what dish you plan to bring.

Cindy's address is 16738 CR 192, Tyler, TX 75703.

New e-mail addresses:

Carl & Wincie Caskey -
caskeycw@aol.com

SCMGA Website

It seems that the recent change to Texas A & M AgriLife Extension has been showing up just about everywhere. This newsletter has the new Texas AgriLife logo on it, as well as the new Texas MG Association logo. When you go to the SCMGA's website, you will see similar changes, but the really BIG change is the overall appearance of the website.

All MG websites using the AgriLife software now have a uniform appearance. It is different in appearance, but all of the information is still there, just not always where it used to be. We still have control of the content and we will continue to keep it updated so that all the events are correct and current.

There are other interesting things that can be done with the site and as we have the opportunity (and learn how to make the changes) we will make use of the innovations.



Monday – Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. is free admission. Hazel Bateman and Jean Smith and their awesome volunteers yet again stepped up the quality and innovation of the Secret Garden, and have done a fabulous job organizing every aspect of this really big job. They have put a tremendous amount of time work into this project, it really shows, and they are to be commended and recognized for their efforts. As you may recall, the 2011 exhibit won 1st Place at the State MG Conference. Just this month we have been encouraged to enter this project in the Youth Education category for the Texas Environmental Excellence Awards, sponsored by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality!

The Charlotte's Web theme is very clever, and each teaching section is fabulous in both content and layout. I have spent time watching folks pass through the exhibit, and adults and kids alike are lingering, reading, exploring and commenting on the various exhibits. Bring your

Everybody needs a smartphone (make sure it has a QR reader app) and look for QR codes scattered throughout the exhibit. Organized school tours are 9:00 – 1:00 Tuesday – Friday. The AgriWorld group has made improvements on the method of collecting all-important evaluations so we can accurately measure the impacts of this major educational program.

Please keep in mind that we should take steps to evaluate all of our programs and projects to measure our impact. Where appropriate, surveys/evaluation instruments can be given to participants to fill out and return. Please contact me about evaluation instruments for your project.

We are coming up towards the end of the year, and opportunities for certified Master Gardeners to gain your required volunteer hours and CE's start becoming more limited. I'm looking forward to the fall conference and bulb sale. That's one opportunity for CE's and volunteer hours. Of course, you are always welcome and encouraged to help out on Tuesdays in the demo gardens, and in the office on the help desk (call first). And for CE's, don't forget to look on page 24 of the Address Book for other ways to earn hours.

Have a great month! Keith

Fall begins with SASANQUAS, the "Sun Camellias"

By Herb Coursey

[This essay is based on "Fall begins with Sasanquas" an article which appeared in "The Camellia Journal" of September-November 2006, the quarterly publication of the American Camellia Society, in Fort Valley, GA. *Upon application, back issues are often available.*]

Come fall, their blooms swell larger and keep opening over several months. Very few other plants can match the color displays of autumn provided every year by Sasanquas and their hybrids. Cooler temperatures seem to coax them to start enlarging their bloom- and growth-buds, which were already set in early June.

Sasanquas (and of course near-kin *Hiemalis*) do best in a mixture of 75% [*acidic-pH, compost-rich*] soil and 25% [*sharp sand*] for improved drainage. Mulch with smaller-size pine bark. As with all Camellias, roots grow close to the surface, which should be watered, with careful tending. Fragrance is common among these species. Few of the Sasanquas exceed medium-sized flowers, and then only when grown in the most perfect conditions.



1. "KANJIRO" is thought to be actually a natural cross between *C. sasanqua* (much more sun-tolerant) and *C. hiemalis* species (meaning the "cold camellia"). Of tall, bushy shape; with foliage dark and glossy, great as specimen tree or hedge; its blossoms are large for the species and may range from single to semi-double. One of the most tolerant in sunny locations; its brilliant deep cerise petals shade lighter at their center and base. A stunner!



and larger than average, with petals distinctly rippled and fluted. Growth is upright and vigorous. Its location should be protected from sun which might otherwise show burn on the white petals.

2. "SETSUGEKKA" is a great favorite *C. s.*, as its many synonyms would imply: "Elegant Friends, Fluted White, Wavy White." The bloom is pure white, semi-double

3. "SHISHI GASHIRA" a.k.a. "Lion Head" is classified as a *C. hiemalis* and not a true *C. sasanqua*, but they are much prized for their dwarf height. The bloom is semi-double to almost full-double, and a glowing rosy-red. Their naturally low, spreading habit should be encouraged by carefully selective clipping. They look splendid at any time of year, even when not in bloom.

4. "YULETIDE" is a stately, tall-

growing *C. sasanqua* whose characteristic orangey-under toned red streaks in much later autumn sun will gleam to make the redness of petals seem to blaze around each bloom's center of golden stamens. Its exciting display often coincides with the Christmas season; small single-shaped red blossoms appearing in great profusion over a long time, blooming even into spring.

5. "BONANZA" is another deep red *C. s.*, with large semi-double peony-form blooms, growing with typical vigor, upright and medium-high. Its firm petals are both waved and fluted, and its blooming season begins early and continues for several months.

6. "STAR ABOVE STAR," of closely-kin species *C. vernalis*, has crinkled petals arranged in star-

shaped layers, one above the other. It is remarkably late-blooming; all the way through late springtime! It grows tall and bushy, and produces medium-sized semi-double blooms that are lavender-white and flushed with pink at tips of petals whose edges are layered up-and-up-and-up. This is the only variety on this page that I haven't seen for sale by any Tyler grower.

While true that individual Sasanqua-type blooms do not last more than a few days, the plants in their blooming season seem always loaded with buds and blossoms that continue to open over long periods of time. Such vast ranges of color make Sasanquas and their near kin some of the most outstanding landscape plants available to gardeners.

erb



Information Good or Bad

By Dee Bishop

We gardeners are inundated

with all sorts of gardening information. We 'lap' up every shred we can find and attempt to use it in our own gardens only to find out, too late, that it doesn't work. Why?

Magazine stands are full of the most attractive gardening magazines, designed to lure us to buy them, which we do. I can hardly pass one by! I have learned now though, to pay attention, to really pay attention to what they say and translate it to Texan. After all, we garden differently than anyone else anywhere. We have a totally different climate than anyone else and most of the magazine articles are written by gardeners who live in the middle to northern part of

the U.S. Even the other southern states have much milder weather and more rain than we do. Texas has a very tough climate, relentless heat in summer, too much rain, or not enough, and hot nights. Insects love it here and we have a monopoly on many diseases that seldom show up in kinder climates. Sooooo when a magazine tells us we can grow a certain plant in zone 8, we need to find out whose zone 8, ours or California's! That is where finding out about the new heat zone map comes into play. We seldom have to worry about cold. Heat is our nemesis. Once I found out we are in Zone 9 on the heat map and zone 8 on the cold map, I could better figure out whether we really can grow a plant here that 'they' say we can.

We have discovered that many tropical plants grow fine here that need zones 9 and up. We

have found that we simply cannot grow all the perennials that are supposedly grown in zone 8 (even though we are in zone 8). They need more hours of winter chill. As we grow warmer and warmer, we will find that many of our favorite perennials will fail here since they are borderline now.

I gardened in Georgia, Alabama, Louisiana, the Gulf Coast of Texas, and Dallas before moving here. Gardening was pretty much the same everywhere until I moved to Dallas and I thought moving to Tyler would be a quick fix and I'd be back growing my favorite little perennials I had come to love so well. Well, did I ever get a rude awakening! Tyler is in Texas, and it's Texas that's HOT! I just thought Shreveport was hot. It is pretty close, but they get much more rain than we do. The soil in Tyler is so much easier to work than

Dallas gumbo, but we do not get any more rain than they do and this sand dries out twice as fast. See what I mean? There are so many variables to consider that there is nothing more important than just going ahead and trying things regardless of what anyone anywhere says. I have been amazed at what will grow and equally surprised at what will not grow here. I have found that if I buy three of anything I truly like and try it in three different places, that most of the time it will be happy in one (or not). Most plants need good soil full of organic matter that gets a reasonable amount of moisture and sunlight--except those that love poor soil and drought!

Gardening is like a puzzle, putting pieces together, figuring what will fit and what won't, getting frazzled enough to walk out, and enjoying to the fullest every success. Happy Gardening!

GETTING TO KNOW US



Lately I have become aware of how very little I know about my fellow MG's. Since I am curious and like writing stories and Martin has graciously allowed me space in the Grapevine, I am beginning a column that will attempt to tell the story of a MG in order to expand our connections within the association. It is my belief that EVERYONE has a story. For example, I

learned today that Martin Davis is a twin - who knew?

Because this idea is just beginning to bud, I will allow it to develop, but I will likely begin with a series of questions I will ask random MG's.

Where or from whom did you get your passion for gardening?

Do you love flower, vegetable, herb, or some other type of gardening?

What is/was your life work?

Where were you born and raised?

What hobbies interest you other than gardening?

We are a diverse and remarkable group all of whom love gardening but I'm certain we have other interests we could share that would broaden our connections. No one need feel compelled to participate and please just say so should my questionnaire appear in your inbox.

Pat Turner

Calendar/Gardening Guide

The 2013 calendar is nearly here. We are really excited this year to have some different things in it. Our theme is East Texas Gardening focusing on plants and problems we have here in East Texas.

They will be available for sale at the Bulbs and More Sale this year for \$8.00 each. Be sure and get yours early to be sure we don't sell out.

Fabulous Fall Festival Plant Sale

The SFA Gardens will host its annual Fabulous Fall Festival Plant Sale from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 6, at the SFA Pineywoods Native Plant Center, 2900 Raguet St., on the campus of Stephen F. Austin State University.



A wide variety of hard-to-find, "Texas tough" plants will be available, including Texas natives, heirlooms, tropicals, perennials, shrubs, trees and exclusive SFA introductions. Most of the plants are extensively trialed in the gardens before being offered to the public, and most are produced by the SFA Gardens staff and volunteers.

The public is encouraged to arrive early and bring a wagon. For more information, visit sfagardens.sfasu.edu for a list of available plants.

Bulbs and More



At Harvey Convention Center October 13
Registration at 8:00AM
Program at 9:00 AM
Featured speaker Dave Whiting, owner and operator of *All Things Plants*. Dave is a member and former president of

the Cherokee Co. Master Gardeners, and is the creator of many popular websites, most notably <http://davesgarden.com/> and <http://allthingsplants.com/>. He lives outside Jacksonville, TX on a 90 acre farm with his wife and 6 children.

Sale begins 11:30 AM The sale has been expanded to include bulbs, grasses, perennials, trees and hand crafted yard art. The lists of bulbs and plants which will be available are posted on the SCMG website.

Thank You—Master Gardeners

Thanks for the flowers. The arrangement was so nice that it gave me a boost to continue in my healing process.

I appreciate you thinking of me during this time.

Debbi Hansen

Have you visited AgriWorld? Don't miss Our Secret Garden

As this is written, the East Texas State Fair in Tyler is in full swing. Many hours of work by a large group of Master Gardeners has produced a new version of "Our Secret Garden" for the education and pleasure of children of all ages.

The theme is "Charlotte's Web" and indeed she is there in her web.



Kids visit Our Secret Garden



Pat Turner addresses a group of kids.



George Weiser makes a point.