



MG Grapevine



<http://scmg.tamu.edu>

April 2014

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MG Luncheon Meeting
April 3rd
Rose Garden Center
11:30 AM

MG Grapevine Staff
Martin Davis, Editor

MG Grapevine Contributors:
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SCMG Association Meeting

The April 3rd meeting is the annual Awards & Recognition luncheon. This lunch is potluck so bring your favorite salad, casserole or dessert. Remember to bring your serving utensil.

Don't forget to bring your recipes for the new SCMG Recipe Book. (see below). There will have a basket at the beginning of the serving table where you can drop your recipes.

SCMG to Publish Cookbook

The Executive Committee has approved the proposal for a cookbook that will be published this fall in time for the Bulbs and More Sale, and we are looking for your favorite recipes to be included in the book. We know you have recipes for dishes your family love or that people are always asking you to bring to potluck dinners and we want to include them in our book.

Recipes should be written legibly (printed or typed are best) in ink, not pencil. Include: The name of the recipe, your name and if you use canned or packaged ingredients, make sure you include the size of the package (i.e. 1 14-ounce can diced tomatoes or 1 8-ounce package of spaghetti).

You can contribute more than one recipe, but each should be on a separate piece of paper.

Bring your recipes to the Awards Lunch on April 3 or take them to Carolyn at the Extension office or email them to Ann Kelley at

SCMG Website

For those who tried recently to access the SCMG website at <http://scmg.tamu.edu> and were misdirected to a different place, the problem has been resolved.

While you are checking that out, MGs can go to the "Members" page where you will find two new things. They are the new Address Book and the SCMG Association Bylaws. You may want to look at them. If you know how, those PDF files can be sent to your cell phone or tablet.

David Gary sez..

My Friends,

The first day of spring was March 20, and it was a beautiful 75° on that day. The nurseries are full of flowers, shrubs and other garden delights. It is tempting to begin planting our spring and summer gardens, however there is still a chance of freezing weather. Ferns and sweet potato vines for example, don't do well when temperatures dip into the 40° range, which is not uncommon at this time of year. I usually wait until at least April 1st to begin planting.

Just a friendly reminder: Our Master Gardener *Policies & Procedures* require that ideas for projects should be presented to the Executive Committee before bringing those ideas up for discussion at the general monthly meetings. The complete manual including policies and procedures is available at the MG office.

On another note, I want to encourage our newer Master Gardeners to become project leaders. This is an area of service that is in great need of those who are willing to give their time and efforts to our program. And don't worry, anyone who decides to lead a project will have plenty of help from veteran Master Gardeners who have worked on these projects before. The Smith County Master Gardeners need you, and your contribution will be greatly appreciated!

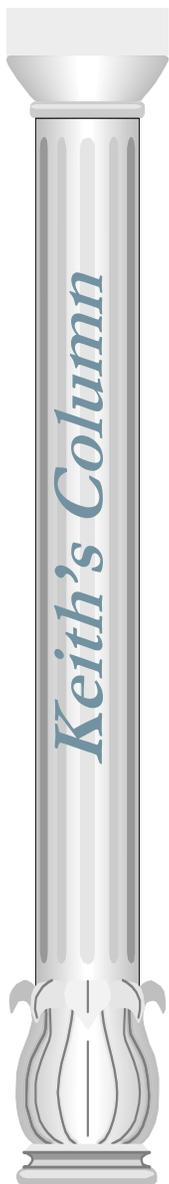
Sincerely – David Gary, President

ET Garden Lecture Series

Landscape Tips for Curb Appeal

Come to the April 12th program at 9 AM at the Rose Garden Center, where Dee Bishop, Smith County Master Gardener and longtime landscape professional, will share ideas on how to easily set out a colorful and inviting welcome mat to your home with plants. Artfully planted and strategically placed containers and small beds can create a dramatic and warm welcome to your front door. Demonstration planters will be offered as door prizes.





Congratulations to Class 20 for a great year in the Master Gardener program. And welcome to Class 21 Interns as you begin your gardening adventure with the best Master Gardener program in Texas (we have awards to prove it!!). I look forward to seeing everyone at the annual graduation and awards luncheon Thursday, April 3.

A reminder that if you would like to help plant rhododendrons and camellia to send me an email ASAP – I haven't set a planting day yet, but it will be soon.

Looking for some evaluators: A new national rose evaluation program has been created for the U.S. to identify superior rose varieties for the home garden. Rose variety evaluation sites are being installed in several parts of the U.S., and the Tyler Rose Garden is one of those sites. The program is called A.R.T.S. – stands for "American Rose Trials for Sustainability". This program is basically taking the place of the old AARS evaluation program, and promises to be more rigorous in identifying roses that are sustainable or Earth-Kind. The following is from the ARTS website: "To identify, through regional evaluation and testing under low input conditions, the most disease and pest resistant, hardiest and best garden-worthy rose cultivars and to provide objective, accurate and reliable information about the cultivars tested for each region to industry and the public."

The program is looking for at least 2 volunteers who would 1) go through the evaluation training (conducted as an online webinar), and then, as I understand it, a monthly evaluation during the rose growing season. I am told the time commitment is anticipated to be 6-8 hours per month. If you become an evaluator, you will earn MG volunteer hours for your time.

The website for the program which gives a few more details about the program is: <http://www.americanrosetrialsforsustainability.org/> If you are interested in participating in this program, please let me know ASAP (because they will be having the evaluator training soon) and I will get you in touch with the locals heading it up.

Waiting for warmer weather and azalea blooms! / Keith

A New Project with Youth

By Anne Pattullo

Several master gardeners are working with middle and high school boys and girls who have been given community services hours by a judge to work off minor offenses. The project is a joint venture between the Smith County Juvenile Services Center and St Paul Children's Foundation. The original plan, designed by St Paul, involved using the young people to seed vegetables for transplants which would be planted out in a community in the St Paul neighborhood in East Tyler. Master Gardeners were asked to teach the youth gardening basics, assist them in planting etc. Once the seedlings were big enough to put into the ground, they would be taken to St Paul for planting. Thereafter they would be tended and grown to maturity by members of the St Paul community. This area is largely Hispanic and economically depressed. The goal is to encourage gardening for personal consumption and possibly have enough to participate in local markets.

The project got off the ground in January. MG's have taken turns teaching lessons adapted from the Junior Master Gardening curriculum. It was decided that the youth would be more invested in the project if they could have their own garden to plant vegetables as well. With MG help, a site was chosen and the soil prepared. Needless to say, the winter weather made our project difficult. We had no warm sunny place to keep our seedlings, and the outdoor temperatures took out most of our cold weather starts. We didn't let that stop us; instead we taught the youth how to build a cold frame, took home our fledgling tomato plants to put in our own greenhouse (thank you



Linda Sargent, Sherri Matthews & David Spencer view cold frame.

Linda Sargent), and did the best we could with the rest. The officers put out a search for a donation of a greenhouse and were given the PVC and plastic by area nurseries. It is not up yet, but we will definitely have that in place by next fall. Tim Krizan is helping them install an irrigation system. This past week, we bumped up 4 dozen tomatoes from 4 inch to gallon pots and put them into our new cold frame. Several more cool weather vegetables are coming along and we expect a small but encouraging first crop. During this time, the St. Paul Garden was torn down and is being rebuilt. It is expected to be ready for warm season vegetables by April 1st. There have been some bumps in the road with this project but our MG's are enthusiastic and so are the officers and the youth. The Smith MG's participating includes: Tim and Barbara Krizan, Linda Sargent, Sherri Matthews, Melva Hermes, Anne Pattullo and Harvey Collen.

1st Tuesday in the Garden Lecture Series

"First Tuesday in the Garden" presentations will continue on Tuesday, April 1, 2014. Each month, March through June, a certified Smith County Master Gardener will present an educational gardening program. The programs begin at Noon in the I.D.E.A. Garden located in the southeast corner of the Tyler Rose Garden.



The program this month will be presented by Dee Bishop on the subject of container gardening.



FUN STUFF TO KNOW

By Dee Bishop

Has spring arrived? Who knows, but I surely hope so, though the air is a bit chilly and the ground is frigid. We should be well into planting vegetable gardens and some of the tougher spring flowers like begonias, but it has been too cold and the soil is just too cold to get them off to a good start. Those of you who put black plastic down a few weeks ago are ready. Good warm soil is necessary to have healthy rapid growing plants.

The gardens have really suffered this winter, what hasn't? All we could do Tuesday was trim back frozen foliage and tidy up what has made it through. We are still wondering if any of our tropicals such as brugmansia, cuphea, and esperanza made it or not. We have quite a few tropical that in all actuality should not be perennial, but due to such warm winters, have been for years. We will see soon.

I have seen some beautiful plants of stock around town and stock will do well until the heat beats them down. There are some fascinating things to know about stock and other plants that I want to share with you.

When you plant stock from seeds some will be double and some single. The way to tell if your seedlings are double or single: single flowered seedlings will have dark green leaves. Double flowered seedlings have yellow-green leaves. No wonder when I planted stock seeds, I always seemed to get single flowers. I would discard the sickly yellowish plants and plant the pretty dark green ones. By the way stock seeds need to be planted in February. There are two kinds, 10 week stock which bloom 10 weeks after sprouting, and 7 week stock that are usually double and produce sturdier and faster growing plants. Double forms are sterile and produce no seed.

To hasten the sprouting of seed: soak in a thermos of hot water a few hours or over night.

When starting impatiens from seed, place the seed tray in total darkness 48 hours before placing under lights. They will sprout much faster---and all at the same time!

Always save some of the weaker looking seedlings of begonias and other plants too, they are usually deeper colored and the strongest seedlings are often white!

Make poppy blooms last longer in water by searing the stems with a torch or a match. Daffodils, too.

Wave petunias in pots need constant fertilizer to bloom well, so use a timed release fertilizer.

Remember: Do not plant vinca until the soil is 70 degrees. They tend to languish in cold soil and will become weak and attract every disease known. Plant them in May. Once you plant them, mulch well. Keeping the soil from spattering upon the leaves will help keep them from contracting soil-born fungus. Happy gardening!



Firepower Nandina

By Linda Billings

Firepower Nandina wins my vote as the best small evergreen shrub to plant in any yard or landscape design. In the years that I was not able to plant my pansies, red cabbage, or kale during the Fall, I was always happy with my low maintenance Firepower Nandinas because of the beautiful winter color they provided. New growth of Firepower in the Spring is lime green aging to light or medium green. Foliage may be tinged yellow or red, especially in Summer, turning brilliant red or burgundy as the weather becomes cooler in Fall. The bright foliage lasts all through the Winter. Firepower Nandina is a forgiving plant and one of the easiest shrubs to grow. It tolerates a range of soil and light conditions and does not require any pruning or pampering.



Nandina Domestica, commonly called Heavenly Bamboo, is a broadleaf evergreen shrub that is ornamentally grown for its interesting foliage and its often spectacular fruit display. It is native to Japan, China and India. It typically grows to 4-8' tall and to 2-4' wide. Firepower is a dwarf form that typically grows to only 2' tall and as wide. It does not produce flowers or fruit and is basically grown for its attractive foliage. It was developed in New Zealand. Popular cultivars besides 'Firepower' include 'Filamentosa', 'Gulf Stream', 'Harbor Dwarf', 'Nana' (syn. 'Pygmy'), 'Nana Purpurea', 'Richmond', and 'Woods Dwarf'.

I do prune my Firepower in March usually to keep them more compact, but because of our coldest winter ever I hate to cut off any of these brilliant red leaves this year. It is a versatile plant in almost any landscape. Grouping, or massing, three, five, or seven plants together is perhaps the most striking and effective way to use Firepower. It can be used in containers as well. This low maintenance plant, will perform best when planted in a sunny location with well-drained soil. It is resistant to deer and other predators and has no serious insect or disease problems.

Bulb Sale Request

Please take a photo of the bloom of any bulbs that you would be willing to donate to the October bulb sale. Reasons being that: It helps to have a photo on the table standard listing the bulb and people are not always exactly certain of the correct name of the bulb and having a photo helps identify it.

Thanks, Laquita Showen

New Address Books

The 2014-2015 Address Book will be available at the April 3rd luncheon. Pick up a copy. We have done the best to make it error free, but if you find your information incorrect, please notify Martin Davis. One error has been found. The new e-mail address for Joyce Napolitano joycenapolitano@suddenlink.net did not get into the book.

Executive Committee Notes

The committee met on March 20th and considered and discussed the following:
Treasurer Bob McRae presented a review of the SCMG 501c3 exempt status.

President David Gary continued to emphasize that Project Leaders are needed for the Calendar, AgriWorld and Tyler Day Nursery projects. He also advised that one of the homes scheduled for the Home Garden Tour has dropped out.

Andie Rathbone, along with Monette Colman and Ann Smith made a proposal regarding the production of a SCMG cookbook. They hope to have 300 recipes in the book, with 200 already collected. Funding for the project was requested, with plans to sell the book for \$15. Discussion included the possibility of using the cookbook in place of the SCMG calendar for 2015. Their proposal was approved, with the stipulation that gardening information be included in the book.

Keith Hansen offered many thanks to the awards writers and especially to Mary Hamlin who worked tirelessly to format the submissions to fit with the requirements of the awards committee. He discussed the new A.R.T.s (American Rose Trials for Sustainability) new rose evaluation program. See Keith's Column on page 2 for more information.

Evaluations, including quantitative data specific to the education offered, is a very important element of the AgriLife program and should be gathered at every MG event. It is recommended that the Home Garden Tour committee make a questionnaire available to attendees to evaluate what they had learned. Jean Smith noted that she is maintaining a data base of e-mail addresses collected at SCMG events which will be valuable for evaluation and marketing of events, as well.



SFA Garden Gala Day Spring Plant Sale

Saturday, April 5, 2014—9 a.m. - 2 p.m.

at the Pineywoods Native Plant Center, in Nacogdoches, Texas.

The public is encouraged to arrive early and bring a wagon. Call (936) 468-4404, for more info. or check www.sfagardens.sfasu.edu two weeks before the sale for a list of available plants.

Master Gardener Specialist Training Conclave May 15-16, 2014 on Texas A&M Campus

The MG Specialist Conclave is an opportunity for certified master gardeners to gain specialist training in a conference setting. Four specialist courses will be taught concurrently.

MG Vegetable Specialist; Course Director-Joe Masabni
MG Earth-Kind Landscape Specialist; Course Director-Mengmeng Gu
MG Home Fruit Specialist; Course Director-Monte Nesbitt
MG Junior Master Gardener Specialist: Course Director-Lisa Whittlesey

Certified master gardeners, with approval and support of their county coordinator, may register for one of the training sessions. **Registration \$250**

For more events and more details - go to—<http://txmg.org/smith/coming-events/>

Master Gardeners at the Artisans & Flower Market on March 21—22

