



MG Grapevine



<http://scmg.tamu.edu>

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The next SCMG Meeting
August 6, 2015
Rose Garden Center
11:30 AM

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 Martin Davis, Editor

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SCMG Association Meeting August 6, 2015



Our speaker for the August 6th meeting is Sharon Lee Smith, co-owner of Blue Moon Gardens in Edom. The topic of her presentation is "Perennials for Fall Planting".

2015 Survey Recommendations

If you attended the May 7th Smith County MG Association meeting, you were asked to fill out survey concerning what changes you would recommend to improve the SCMG association. The survey review committee met and after going over all of the survey sheets, compiled a list of recommendations.

Some of those recommendations included: Increase the budget to allow for interesting and/or more informative speakers to present apropos topics for the monthly meetings; appoint a committee to explore all aspects of the viability of having a greenhouse for all Master Gardeners' use and to remove some inactive MG projects, but there was no consensus of removing any project. The survey committee recommends that all current projects should be continued.

There were some minor recommendations for new projects including: Raised bed gardening, Habitat for Humanity garden design, more youth related programs and xeriscape gardening.

The survey committee thanks all who completed the survey. Everyone's ideas were greatly appreciated. To read the full report, go to the Smith County website Member's page, click on [2015 Survey Recommendations](#).

Welch's Words

Greetings,

Not too long ago, someone told me wait until the rain quits it will get really hot. Boy were they right. Don't we wish we could have saved some of the rain we had this spring for July and August!



It looks like the "lazy" time for Master Gardeners is over. Planning is well under way for AgriWorld. Set up will start the Tuesday after Labor Day. The fair runs from Friday, September 25th through Sunday, October 4th. Our teaching days are September 29th through October 2nd. This time frame includes a Scout night for both the Girls and Boy Scouts. Tear down will be Monday, October 5th. I always say it takes four weeks to put up and three hours to take down.

No sooner is AgriWorld finished we go to the Bulbs and More Sale and Conference on Saturday, October 10th. We will be setting up Harvey Hall and bagging bulbs on Friday, October 9th. Next is the second part of the Bulb Sale at Bergfeld Park on Saturday, October 17th where we get rid of what is left over from the main event.

Next is the member picnic and farewell to Keith which will again be held at Cindy Harrington's on Friday, October 23rd. Master Gardeners furnish the hotdogs and condiments and everyone brings a dish to share. There will be more information made available soon.

Lastly, is the member Christmas Luncheon on Thursday, December 3rd. The organization will furnish the meat while the members bring a dish to share.

Please look for signup sheets at the MG monthly meetings. We will need all hands on deck for each and every event.

See you on Thursday, August 6th for our regular monthly meeting.

Pat



It is with mixed emotions that I write this column for the Grapevine, since at the end of the month, I will be retiring from my service as a county extension horticulture agent for almost 30 years. I began with Extension (3 name changes ago, called Texas Agricultural Extension Service) in Nueces County (Corpus Christi) in January of 1986. While I didn't realize all that Extension had in general to offer the public, I knew that it would be a good fit for me as I enjoyed helping people find answers to landscaping and gardening questions. It was a new position, and it was expected that I would employ mass media to more effectively reach a larger audience with gardening information. My plan was to start with writing for the local newspaper, work my way up to a radio spot, and then finally maybe do some TV spots. As it turned out, things went exactly the opposite, as I was introduced to the local NBC news director who wanted to do a weekend gardening segment between the evening weather and sports newscast on Saturday and Sunday. For over 6 years we did 2 Weekend Gardener TV spots every week. The radio program was a pre-recorded once a week deal, and I eventually got a column in the paper after the gardening editor retired.

I served on a State committee that helped standardize the Master Gardener program in Texas, and started a training program in Nueces County, before

moving to Tyler in 1992 to be the Smith County Extension Horticulture agent (the first person to fill that position here). I felt like we moved to the garden spot of Texas. "Real trees", 4 seasons, more rain, and a wide range of interesting plant life both native and introduced for our landscapes made Tyler and East Texas a great choice to live and work.

One of the first things I did in Tyler was to create a horticulture advisory committee, who created the annual East Texas Landscape & Garden Conference in 1994. This evolved a few years ago into the East Texas Garden Lecture Series. At the same time, I started a Master Gardener program, and we had 13 people in that first class. Among those was Sue Adee and Ina Brundrett (who both recently passed away), and Linda Whetsell.

I must say, the Master Gardener program has been a great part of my Extension career, filled with wonderful people doing amazing things, and by far "extending" the outreach of our horticulture educational programs. I am so proud of what all of you have accomplished, and how such a large group of people from such diverse backgrounds have effectively worked together for common goals of helping people with sound gardening practices and beautifying our communities. I have formed many friendships over the years, and I thank you for being part of my life and career.

I wish everyone the best, with colorful, greener gardens, fewer weeds and delicious harvests.

Keith

Executive Committee notes

The committee met on July 16th, heard reports and considered new opportunities.

Bob McRae's treasurer's report compared income and expense for the first six months of 2014 and 2015.

Hazel Bateman reminded the committee that the AgriWorld setup will begin on September 2nd. This is the 100th E.T. State Fair with emphasis on history. For example, there will be a windmill, wishing well, an outhouse, a hand pump, etc.

Upon her retirement, Carolyn Chalender, Extension Office Secretary was given a gift certificate by the SCMGs.

One area in the Heritage Garden lacks sufficient irrigation. The SCMG association will cover the expense of running a water line to that area, using funds already set aside for improvements in the Heritage Garden.

Charlie Colman presented the comments and recommendations from the member survey questionnaire which was filled out at the May 2015 SCMG monthly meeting. See a summary of the recommendations elsewhere in this newsletter.

Linda Sargent, project leader for the Juvenile Services project, presented an update on that project and where it will be going in the future. See her report in this newsletter.

Keith Hansen's retirement is set for the end of August. Plans for honoring him were discussed, including a reception for him at the Extension office and later at the October member picnic.

E. T. Garden Lecture Series



The 2015 series resumes on September 19th at the Tyler Rose Garden Center. Dr. Jared Barnes presents, *Herbaceous Design—Incorporating annuals and perennials in your garden.* Registration 8:30 AM, lecture at 9:00 AM. Tickets are \$15 each.

On October 24th, Dr. William Welch presents *Redesigning Your Garden—Give Your Landscape Pizzas.*

Finally, on November 14th, Dr. David Creech presents, *Camellias—The Winter Garden Shouldn't be Boring.*





HUMMINGBIRDS IN THE GARDEN

Some Plants They Love

By Dee Bishop

I have dozens of hummingbirds buzzing all around my gardens and as I watched, (while watering of course), I noticed the flowers they were most attracted to. They love garden phlox for sure. I see them sipping nectar from them all the time, but they love the old-time Chinese abelia. Flowers of these wonderful drought tolerant shrubs smell heavenly; so I am not surprised that the hummers love them too. I have always seen butterflies around them and I think since both butterflies and hummingbirds sip nectar, they would like any nectar producing plant.

Hummers also stop at altheas, salvias, esperanza, cuphea, geraniums, begonias, impatiens, zinnias, and a whole host of summer annuals. I feed hummingbirds as well and through the years have decided to use only six feeders. I once had about thirty and filled them all up two to three times a day. I decided that I was not going to spend my summers waiting on hummingbirds each year; so took up all but six large ones. These hold 48 oz. of sugar water and I fill them up about every three days. I have plenty of flowers and no longer 'worry' about them when we go off for days at a time. Sure, I do not have as many, but enjoy the ones I do have much more. My neighbors tell me they know when we are gone because the hummers go over there. I was having trouble with bees covering the ports of the feeders and running the birds off. I knew I was feeding a whole hive of bees for someone nearby and looked for bee proof feeders. I finally found one, holds 48 oz. (there are 16 oz. and larger too). Bees nor wasps ever go near them; so I now know my birds are getting all the nectar I put out.

I love lots of movement in my gardens and the best way is to plant perennial shrubs that bloom all summer as well as flowering annuals that provide nectar for whatever hummers, butterflies, or other pollinators are out there doing a host of good things for all my plants. I have wonderful little funnel spiders, grand daddy long-legs, as well as a host of assorted wasps and bees. I have seen many insect-eaters out there taking care of pests that show up occasionally. I have grasshoppers, but have seen many in the beaks of nesting birds. I have never had insect problems in my yard. I just have critters like rabbits and deer. I have to put up ugly chicken wire fences around anything I don't want munched. Looks ugly, yes, but they work. This year my phlox are beautiful and very few have been nibbled.

Gardens provide so much entertainment. Where else do you get to listen to a symphony of birds and cicadas without taking a step away from your yard? Where else can you get a free moving picture of colorful flowers, insects, and birds provided just for you? Where else can you enjoy watching a warty old toad catch a fly or a bright green anole grab an insect while you stand watching? I am sure if I could see in the dark, I would get and even more entertaining picture---a mama deer and fawn chowing down on any plant without protection, a raccoon attempting to rob the bird feeder, rabbits hopping around snipping anything the deer don't get. We need our coyotes back to take care of a few of the larger problems.

A garden is to love, just like a home is to love and share with family and friends; so pull a few weeds, throw out a little more mulch, clip off a few dead blooms---if you wish, but enjoy each day and all it holds.

Juvenile Services Youth Garden

by Linda Sargent



The program is doing well and ready to take a major step forward. It will now be a two pronged avenue of service. The first will be working with the at-risk youth needing community service hours. The new format will be completing and having a functioning greenhouse in which we can show the kids how to grow and care for plants. The large garden will be covered except for a few raised beds. There will be no formal classroom lessons; the learning will be from actual hands on experience. The entire session will be composed of three 6 weeks segments which should accommodate the rotation of students and will meet once a week. With a functioning greenhouse, it hoped that students and MGs can grow plants which can be used in. This informal format will provide an opportunity for MGs who want to participate but do not feel comfortable about teaching a class. Those participating will still need background check and fingerprinting.

The second will be a new program called Hope Academy which is for incarcerated youth. It will begin in January, meeting twice a week for approximately 20 weeks and follow the Junior Master Gardener curricula. There will be classroom sessions as well as planting in raised beds. The student enrollment will remain constant and it is hoped we will be able to graduate them as Junior Master Gardeners.

Hope Academy will need those comfortable with teaching as well as the hands on portion. The JMG curriculum has a workbook with lessons and fun activities. It is not difficult but does require some lesson preparation. Each lesson is 20-30 minutes. It is hoped that with enough MGs interested it will only require attending one of the two weekly sessions. Hope Academy is part of the Vocational Institute being established by our local JV Services and will be the first statewide. It will provide us the opportunity to fulfill our Master Gardener goal of education and service and to showcase the MG Association.

Heritage Garden

By Anne Brown



If you haven't been in the Heritage Rose Garden lately there has been several changes. A new rock area was created and a bench has been placed so visitors can sit and enjoy looking at the garden. For several years the brick planter has been losing bricks and mortar as the garden crew passed with equipment that was too big to fit the sidewalks. Thanks to Ronny Duncan and several other MGs, the bed now has a lower profile and the irrigation has been replaced.

The garden crew brought in new soil, (the old soil had been in place from the 1980's or 1990's) and later this fall new roses will be planted. The garden roses have struggled for the past few years so some of the roses were given a severe pruning with the hope that they can rejuvenate. If not they will be removed and also replaced in the fall.

Thanks to the many volunteers who have been coming to the garden on Tuesday mornings the garden is looking colorful and healthy, even in the hottest weather of the year so far. We still have weeds to pull each week along with deadheading and pruning but the workdays are short with breaks for drinks and conversation so come any Tuesday, scheduled or not.

AgriWorld

This year, the East Texas State Fair will celebrate its 100th fair. The focus will be *how it was 100 years ago* in the various sections of AgriWorld. There will be a train theme throughout the building depicting how agriculture was shipped to various places for sale. Our Secret Garden will be focusing on water - the ways people got their water and how important it was to be careful not to waste it, and the home vegetable garden - if you didn't grow a garden, you didn't eat. Also information about how people used to plant by the moon phases. Lastly, we will show prices of different things 100 years ago.



I encourage anyone who wants to help set-up, to show up at the fairgrounds at Building E at 10 am. September 2. We will work most every day until it is finished. You will not have to work every day, just the days you want. We will not work on Thursday Sept. 3 because of our Master Gardener meeting nor Sept. 7, which is Labor Day. I know I will need some guys to help redo the rain water flow on the little house. It was on its last legs last year. If you are not able to help set-up, please come by the fair which open Sept 25 - Oct 4. Gate admission is free until 2:00 pm. weekdays. Also the first day of the fair, September 25th is Senior Citizen's Day with lots of special things going on all day (and gate admission if free until 6:00 pm on that day).

I'm looking forward to this fun project. Hazel Bateman

Bulbs & More

From now until Oct. 10th you will be hearing and reading about the upcoming Bulbs & More sale. Sign-up sheets will soon be available at the monthly MG meetings. Look them over; ask questions if needed, then pick an area where you would like to serve. Or, get out of your comfort zone and try working on something or with somebody different.

These are wonderful opportunities to make new friends and/or renew old acquaintances. It can be a lot of fun. We remain amazed at the dedication and hard work of the Smith County MG organization. We applaud you and hope to be working with you in all aspects of this tremendous event! Jim & Laquita Showen

Landscape Design School September 21-22, 2015

The George Bush Presidential Library at Texas A&M University will be the site of the school. The school is sponsored by Texas Garden Clubs, Inc. & the Texas AgriLife Extension Service.

Registration for the course will be \$145 by September 1st and \$165 after that. Registration forms and the tentative schedule may be obtained at aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/southerngarden.

Last January, a group of Master Gardeners built the greenhouse at the Juvenile Services Center.

Our very own Keith Hansen got down on his knees to help. In his 30 year career, this may have been a first!



Photos by Bill Kellendorf