



MG Grapevine



<http://scmg.tamu.edu>

December 2014

<http://easttexasgardening.tamu.edu>

Number 12



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SCMG luncheon
December 4, 2014
Rose Garden Center
11:30 AM

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Published for the Master Gardeners of Smith
 County, Texas under the auspices of the Smith
 County Office of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension,
 1517 W. Front St. Tyler, TX 75702.

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SCMG Association Meeting December 4, 2014 Rose Garden Center

The December meeting is the annual
 holiday luncheon. Brisket will be provid-
 ed. If you have not already done so, you
 need to advise Ann Smith (at [smith-
 vac@aol.com](mailto:smith-vac@aol.com)) that you plan to attend and
 what you plan to bring. Don't forget to
 bring a serving spoon!

This is your chance to relax, eat and enjoy
 visiting with your fellow Master Gardeners.
 See you there!

It is That Time Again

Time to reassess where you stand with
 regard to the required hours for re-
 certification. For those who have made
 monthly reports and long ago passed the
 minimums, you need not read any further.

For those who really don't know where
 you stand, please contact Martin Davis (at
mred2853@sbcglobal.net) for information.

For those who have not made a report
 lately, please send your reports to Martin
 Davis. Wait no longer.

There are not many opportunities to vol-
 unteer to work left this year, but don't over-
 look volunteering to work at the office tele-
 phone help desk. Check the calendar for
 open dates and call the office to get your
 name on the list.

For CE's, check **Keith's Column** where
 he spells out some opportunities.

Texas A&M Soil & Crop Sciences Department Turf Management Survey

This group is seeking input from end users (landscapers, homeowners, Master Gardeners, etc.) regarding what traits they see most value in for their Turfgrass research effort. For example, is it more important that they focus on creating drought tolerant varieties or pest-resistant varieties? The survey is multiple choice and takes only 1-2 minutes to complete. Click the link below to go to it:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1-5KmHUQSZ0ONq9-T8ggvZHUYwnczMgOvHBaqYEGWNjw/viewform?c=0&w=1&usp=mail_form_link

David Gary sez..

Friends,

I was watching the
 Weather Channel this
 morning, and it was 25
 degrees--which was colder
 than New York
 City! This is only mid-
 November, and the temperature is below
 normal. I wish I had room for a green-
 house because I could store my ferns and
 other warm-weather plants. Unfortunately,
 the cold will get to them, and I'll end up
 replacing them next spring.



The Master Gardner Picnic at Cindy
 Harrington's house was a success, and a
 great time was had by all who attend-
 ed. We appreciate Cindy opening up her
 home to us once again. We had a lot of
 delicious food, and Cindy's husband
 Gary grilled the hot dogs. It was a good
 time to meet the new Master Gardeners
 and get to know them better. My wife Lin-
 da was with me and felt right at home with
 everyone. She is not a Master Gardener,
 but she has a lot of input on our home
 garden!

The annual Christmas Luncheon will be
 held on December 4 at 11:30 a.m. at the
 Rose Garden Center. This is always
 a wonderful time of food and fellowship,
 so be sure to RSVP with Ann Smith. She
 sent an email earlier about this event. I
 hope everyone can attend, and I look for-
 ward to seeing you!

See you in the garden,
 David Gary, President



Keith's Column



While planting pansies and some other cool season annuals in pots, planters and in flower beds this weekend, I was reminded about nematodes. As a refresher, nematodes are microscopic roundworms that live in the soil, and the bad types feed on roots and other plant tissues. I first realized I had nematodes several years ago when I planted tomatoes in what I thought would be great gardening soil, but their growth was anemic and yield was poor. When I pulled them up, their roots were gnarly and distorted, signs of nematodes. That's when I switched to growing my tomatoes in containers. Later, after a poor showing of the upright sedum 'Autumn Joy' in a different part of my yard, I found yet again nematodes had done their damage. So, any sedums I grow are now confined to pots. Pansies don't seem to be affected by nematodes, so why am I concerned? Because I'm planting in both pots and in the ground. Since nematodes live in soil, it is very easy to transfer them on your gardening tools from infected soil to clean soil. The best thing would be to have 2 separate sets of gardening tools, like trowels, one for the yard, and one for pots (which should have clean potting soil), to prevent cross-contamination. If you don't have dedicated tools, then be sure to thoroughly clean all your tools of all soil between locations.

How time flies when you are having fun! Thanks to all of you for a great year and many wonderful accomplishments, including once again #1 Master Gardener Association in Texas for our size. Thank you David Gary and all the members of the Smith County MG Executive Board for your time and leadership in guiding us through another year. I look forward to seeing everybody next week (December 4) at our annual holiday luncheon where we can relax and enjoy the fruits of our labor.

I hope each of you take some time at this time

of year to remember the most important things in life, count and be thankful for all your blessings, and to remember those in need. One of the things I am very thankful for is all of the support and friendship the Master Gardeners have given me over the years. You are a wonderful group of people to have as volunteers for the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service.

As 2014 slips away, please take a moment to send in your volunteer and CE hours to Martin Davis. Your volunteer activity is needed for my year-end reports, and to be accurate and on time, I need the most up-to-date information. I want to count all of your valuable time that you have contributed to the success to this organization and our educational outreach for Texas A&M AgriLife Extension. One of my most important reports is due on December 1, and included in that report are volunteer hours and of course, our educational efforts for 2014. So, please, while you're thinking about it, send in your report.

If you are short in CE's, here are a couple of easy ways to get some hours:

- 1) Write a Tip-Of-The-Week article (up to 4 per year). These should be short, little inspiring tips for passing along to readers. You also get volunteer hours for writing tips.
- 2) Master Gardener Earth-Kind Online Training – (<http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/earthkind/training/>) - select from any of the 12 on-line modules to obtain 1 CE (up to 3 hours CE's per year). You have to take the little quiz (see link) to get credit. Do not seek re-certification credit for training modules you have completed in previous years. Progress through the training program is tracked "on-line" and the results for each completed module are automatically forwarded to me.

Of course, Class 21 has until the end of March to complete your hours, and the above CE requirement does not apply to you.

If you have any concerns about your recertification, please do not hesitate to contact me.



Executive Committee

The committee met on November 20th at the Extension Office.

The planned one day regional MG conference was discussed. The conference is set for June 6th at the Rose

Garden center. Nick Staddon will be the keynote speaker. (Nicholas Staddon is the director of the New Plants Team at Monrovia). While planning is still ongoing, publicizing will begin in January. Many volunteers will be needed.

Keith Hansen reported he and Jean Smith attended an Extension meeting concerning a new program growing out of the JMG

program targeting youth toward healthy life styles called Lead – Grow – Eat - Go. The program will target 3rd thru 5th grades particularly in Title 1 schools where there is a greater need. MGs will be a big part of the volunteer force for this program which will include all elements of Extension services. The board supports this program.

The handbook for state awards is available. Applications are due in January 2015. David Gary, Keith Hansen and Pat Welch will meet ASAP to choose submission possibilities and writers.

Jean Smith will handle the installation of the new officers at the January SCMG association meeting.

Determinate, indeterminate: That is the question!

By Mary Claire Rowe



Last February, while visiting Tucson, I went to the local farmers' market. It is held in a lovely small shopping center in the streets and walkways, which are beautifully landscaped. Trees, flower beds, fountains, and seating areas are everywhere. Hot, locally grown coffee, freshly roasted and ground is available by the bag, but more importantly,

by the hot steaming cup. Local bakeries bring their beignets, scones, sweet rolls, and croissants to tempt one and all. Individuals set up their booths offering their vegetables and flowers, handmade soaps and fragrances, frozen meats and cheeses. Some sell soup-makings in a bag, and offer samples to try first. It is a wonderful event, and it happens year-round.

The local organic growers are the founders of this market, and many also offer heirloom seeds in small packages along with the grown vegetables. I was particularly drawn to one of these displays, where there were dozens and dozens of seed packets. Each one offering me dreams of a fantastic garden, filled with delicious, beautiful fruits or vegetables, or flowers galore. My imagination went wild with visions of glory in the garden. I could just see it.

Sadly, however, practicality intervened, and I came back to reality. I bought three packages. When we came home, I placed the seed packs in a basket, waiting for spring to arrive, and soon forgot about them. One day, I think it was summertime by then, I noticed my basket of dreams. Full of guilt, I grabbed the three, determined to not lose the season. I put the coreopsis in a pot, where they rather slowly grew and finally bloomed a little last month.

The green beans were overshadowed by papyrus, which ran rough-shod over the entire back garden. I was actually afraid to go into the garden to check, for fear of stepping on some slithering thing. I think I harvested 3 or 4 beans. The tomato was a different story.

I threw the seeds on top of the ground right outside my back door. Nothing happened for a long while. In the meantime, the moon vine seeds from previous years went wild and grew amazingly fast. One day I noticed that there were two small tomato plants. I twined the moon vine around them, as they grew. Months went by, and they continued to grow, but, no blossoms, and no tomatoes. Finally, when they were about 8 feet tall, a few blossoms appeared, but still nothing set. I sprayed with tomato-set solution, and one set. Then another and another appeared.

We harvested three small green tomatoes right before the freeze.

BLOOMERS IN YOUR HOUSE Plants That Bloom Well Inside

By Dee Bishop



It is so much fun to have beautiful blooming plants inside during winter. Bulbs are some of the easiest plants to insure bright blooms and many are wonderfully scented. There are quite a few plants that will grow and bloom inside ---- if you have a bright sunny window or can provide a light. They must have ample light to bloom well.

Amaryllis bulbs are among the most common plants for the Christmas season. I like to grab a few and plant them in clay pots. I do not use the 'stuff' that comes with them, but instead use a good potting soil to which I add a little bone meal and blood meal. Amaryllis are heavy feeders so once they are up and growing, I give them some extra fertilizer (Peter's or such) at one half strength. Amaryllis looks so much prettier if you plant three or five in a pot large enough to hold them. I sit them down in the slightly dampened soil but leave half the bulb tops showing. Place moss or pebbles around to make the soil more attractive, and watch them grow. I like a heavy pot because it holds them up better. After they finish blooming, cut them off. Continue fertilizing the leaves. Plant outside in spring or save for another show next year. Lay the pot on its side in late summer (after many leaves have grown) and dry it out. Bring it out 6-8 weeks before you want blooms and begin the care process again.

Another little plant I love in winter is the lowly little impatiens. They bloom until the winter days get really short and dark. Dig one up from outside and pot it up in fall. Leave it outside until it gets rooted in well and growing then bring it in. I have had them bloom all winter. Do not try this with the sunpatiens as they need much more light than most of us can provide.

Narcissus such as Paper Whites are often forced. I always had them but hated the way they flopped until I found a way or two to fix that. You can plant the bulbs in a tall clear vase which will hold the blooms up or add some Vodka (2 Tbsp.) to the water. For some reason that alcohol will give strong spines.

Many bulbs may be forced for winter bloom, but once forced, the bulbs are spent and not good for planting outside. If you grow them in soil, they will be fine for later planting outside if you continue watering and fertilizing the leaves or better yet, move the pot outside.

Begonias are some of the best plants to grow inside. I take cuttings of mine and make pots of them to grow and bloom inside all winter. Grow them on the dry side. I like to add additional perlite to the mix to add extra good drainage.

Plants that seem to do well inside are tropical that love the heat such as: begonias, impatiens, browallia, African violets, geraniums, tropical bulbs such as amaryllis. Plants that like it cool will not like dry heated rooms. My grandma used to grow beautiful geraniums all winter on an enclosed porch that provided lots of bright all day sun.

If you are like me, you just have to have blooms all year long and winter is no exception. Winter can be dreary enough and without flowers, down right miserable; so get some plants that will provide winter blooms inside. You will be so glad to see those bright cheerful blooms on cold dreary days.

New E-Mail Address

Susan Wiggins

susan.wiggins@centraltitleco.com



The Texas Master Gardener Conference for 2015 will be held at the Bell County Expo Center in Belton, Texas. This event will start April 16 and conclude on the 18th. More information available at <http://txmg.org/2015tmgconference/>

Save The Date—June 6, 2015

For the one-day Regional MG Conference in Tyler.

Nick Staddon will be the featured speaker.

More information in January



International Master Gardener (IMG) conferences are held every

two years. In fall of 2015, the conference will be co-hosted by Iowa and Nebraska. Master Gardeners from these states are pleased to welcome Master Gardeners from all over to get a glimpse of "Horticultural Horizons in the Heartland". Plan to come to Council Bluffs/Omaha September 22-25, 2015.

Go to <http://mastergardener.unl.edu/imgc2015> for more info.

2014 THERESA & LES REEVES LECTURE SERIES

Held at the Ina Brundrett Conservation Education Center, 2900 Raguet Street, Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, TX 75962. 6:30 refreshments/social, 7:00 PM lecture followed by an exciting plant raffle! For more information, contact us: sfagardens@sfasu.edu

DEC 11 – Dave Creech, SFA Gardens – “The true and unbridged story of this past year.”

JAN 8—Tony Napolillo—*Why Solar is the Future of a Sustainable World.*

SFA Gardens to Host Holiday Wreath-making Seminar

The SFA Gardens will host a garden seminar “Deck the Halls—Using Evergreens to Decorate for the Holidays” on December 6 from 9 a.m.-noon in the Ina Brundrett Conservation Education Building at the SFA Pineywoods Native Plant Center, 2900 Raguet Street, Nacogdoches.

Join Dawn Stover, Research Associate at the SFA Mast Arboretum, to learn how to create elegant wreaths and garlands using materials from the garden. Participants will learn principles of wreath, garland, and centerpiece construction and make a wreath to enjoy at home for the holidays. All materials will be provided.

Class size is limited, so please register in advance for this wonderful holiday seminar. To register or for more information, call 936-468-1832 or email crode-wald@sfasu.edu. Cost is \$25 for SFA Garden members and \$30 for non-members.

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