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**December 2015**

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The next SCMG Meeting  
**December 3, 2015**  
**Rose Garden Center**  
 11:30 AM

MG Grapevine Staff  
 Martin Davis, Editor

MG Grapevine Contributors:  
 Dee Bishop, Anne Brown, Chad Gulley,  
 Kyle Tengler and Pat Welch.

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Extension Office  
 Phone - 903-590-2980  
 Fax - 903-590-2984

### SCMG Associa on Luncheon December 3, 2015

The December meeting is our annual holiday luncheon. Please bring a covered dish and serving utensil. Brisket will be provided.

If you have not already done so, please advise Ann Kelley ([limey68@slipstreamtx.com](mailto:limey68@slipstreamtx.com)) that you plan to attend.

This year's luncheon promises to be full of fun, food, and fellowship. Plus, you'll get to meet our new Horticulture Agent, Kyle Tengler.

### Reports Matter

Master Gardeners, have you reported your volunteer hours lately? Every year, as we get near the end of the year we ask that same question. Your reports do matter!

For those who have forgotten, the minimum requirement for certified MGs is 12 Volunteer Hours, plus 6 Continuing Education Credits. For those in Class 21, your requirements are 9 Volunteer Hours, plus 4 Continuing Education Credits.

Class 22 Interns have until March 2016 to complete your required hours, which are Extension Office Phone – 32 hours, Rose Garden Projects – 22 hours, other Volunteer Hours – 18, for a total of 72 hours.

Everyone needs to have their reports in by the end of December, with the absolute deadline for 2015 reports being January 10, 2016.

Please send your reports to Martin Davis at [mred2853@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mred2853@sbcglobal.net).

### Welch's Words

WOW! It's almost December! Where has the time gone?

The month of October was extremely busy but fun. We got through the Bulbs & More Sale & Conference, Bergfeld Park and then came the rain! Once we were able to find a facility and reschedule the member picnic and Keith's retirement, I think everyone had a good time. (I saw Keith taking pictures Saturday at the Lecture Series. I guess his gift from us was a hit).

We have one more event for the year. It's the member Christmas Luncheon. There will be entertainment (always interesting with Monette in charge).

You will also have an opportunity to meet the new Horticulture agent Kyle Tengler.

Please contact Ann Kelley at [limey68@skipstreamtx.com](mailto:limey68@skipstreamtx.com) with number of people attending and what you intend to bring.

Hope everyone has had a great Thanksgiving!

Pat



### Texas MG State Conference

The 2016 Texas Master Gardener Conference. Buds and Bark: Earth-Kind® in the Park to be held at beautiful Myers Park and Event Center in McKinney, Texas.

Learn from renowned garden experts at the May 17-19, 2016 event.

3-day Conference registration now thru December 31, 2015 is \$175.00, after January 1 2016 - \$200.00 and after April 17, 2016 - \$225.00

### Chad Gulley's comments...



The year is almost to an end. December will be busy for many as they get together with family and friends to celebrate the Christmas holiday season. 2015 has been a good year but a different year. We went from an extremely wet year in the spring to an extremely dry year in the summer to a wet fall. It's been said before if you don't like the weather in Texas just wait because it will change.

I hope everyone has had a chance to meet Kyle. Kyle is excited for the opportunity to work with the clientele of Smith County. Kyle will be here full time in December as he has been training through the month of November attending various opportunities meeting new people in the county.

The 2016 Master Gardener Class schedule will begin January 7. The 2016 East Texas Garden Lecture Series is also planned with dates and speakers lined up. The dates for the Garden Lecture Series are February 13, March 5, April 2, September 10, October 8, and November 12. The annual East Texas Turfgrass Conference is set for February 4 and the East Texas Fruit and Vegetable Conference is February 24.

I have enjoyed working with everyone in the Smith County Master Gardener program during this transition from Keith to Kyle. I'm still around and will be assisting Kyle with various educational opportunities including the 2016 Master Gardener Class. If you ever have questions or need assistance, I am here as a resource.

I would like to wish all of you and your families a wonderful Christmas season and a Happy New Year. May each of us take time out of our busy schedules to visit friends and family? Thanks for all you do for the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service of Smith County.

### Kyle Tengler comments....

While I usually spend my Decembers celebrating with loved ones and winding down for the year, this year, December marks a beginning for me rather than an ending. This time around I'll officially be at the Smith County Extension office as your new Horticulture Extension Agent.

Coming from the Llano Estacado in the Western part of Texas where near-zero or even sub-zero degree winter days and meager rainfall are common, my mind is racing when I consider all of the fantastic gardening opportunities in Smith County. For most gardeners this is a time of reflection and planning, with hours upon hours spent digging through all of our favorite seed catalogs and ordering bare root trees for spring. Gardeners are optimistic people, and I've rarely met one who could exercise restraint with hundreds of varieties of tomatoes and curious cruciferous vegetables like kohlrabi staring back at them from the pages of catalogs, no matter the size of their garden.

This is the beginning of a new chapter for me and I am looking forward to getting to know the Smith

County Master Gardeners and what we can all learn from each other. No doubt it will be filled with new and fantastic challenges and opportunities both in and out of the garden. But with all that is new, some things don't change. I'll be spending the next month with my nose buried somewhere between *Amaranthus* and *Ziziphus*.

We had a great turnout for the Master Gardener Intern Orientation meeting in November and I'm looking forward to the start of the 2016 training program January 7<sup>th</sup>. Judging from the people I met in November, we'll have an inspired group of interns ready to learn, serve Smith County, and extend the Master Gardener family of plant nuts and compost junkies. I'm can't wait!

I wish all of you a splendid holiday season. Don't be stranger, my door is open!

E-Mail [Kyle.Tengler@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:Kyle.Tengler@ag.tamu.edu)



**GARDEN DOINGS FOR DECEMBER**

By Dee Bishop



Winter is upon us so---- what's to do in winter? Now's the time to remove any limbs needed

to improve a tree's shape, to thin out branches so more light can get to the ground underneath the tree, or to keep heavy branches from growing over a roof. Trees are dormant now and any cuts made will heal faster and chances of disease are also lower.

Winter is a good time to plant hardy perennials and shrubs. You will have much better results planting bare root trees and shrubs at this time than at any other. If you need lots of shrubs, there are several mail order supply nurseries that sell bare root plants. I have ordered many and had very good results. When you get the plants just be sure to soak them in a bucket of water overnight before planting. They often get very dry in shipping.

Be sure and remember to plant the tulip and hyacinth bulbs you are keeping refrigerated either late in Dec. or early in Jan. Several times I have put them in my refrigerator

and forgot all about them.

December usually doesn't get too terribly cold until the last week or so and we have many good days. It's a good time to prepare beds for planting in spring or to renew beds. Sometimes plantings just get too old and woody and need to be replaced. Dig them out and start all over. Add lots of compost, alfalfa meal, cotton seed meal, blood meal, etc. or better yet, lots of good manure to build up your beds and replace fertility to the soil.

Of course, now is when to gather mulch for your existing beds. Pine straw is the very best mulch you can use and readily available. You may not want to add it until later in spring but you have to get it now. Either keep bags of mulch or pile it in places convenient to your plantings. I have several piles all around the yard that I use all year. Mulch needs to be added throughout the summer because it breaks down so much faster then. Mulch is easily hidden behind large shrubs.

Seed catalogs are coming by the score. Enjoy going through all of them. Read all the information about the plants you find interesting. Some catalogs have scads of pertinent information that can't be found in books. They are a great

source of good information. Try growing seeds. There is nothing more fun than planting a tiny insignificant seed and watching it grow into a large blooming plant, tree, or shrub.

Winter is a good time to re-plan areas of your yard that are not satisfactory to you. Sit out with a pencil and paper and sketch the shape and size garden you want, then add plants you like. Be sure to research plant sizes and needs. You don't want to plant a crape myrtle that will get twenty feet high under the eaves of your house, nor a huge tall bush in front of a window. If you are reading a plant label, remember the plant will probably grow twice as big as it says because our growing season is so much longer. Be sure to notice whether the area you are landscaping has enough sun too. That is often a big mistake people make. If you choose plants that will grow in your spot, you will have much better results than if you insist on planting something like roses in shady areas. Remember plants that bloom usually need more sun, at least when they are in bloom. Think, azaleas and camellias both take lots of shade, but they need sun in winter and late spring when they are blooming. Watch your area awhile before planting.

**Water Efficient Landscape Design**

The Water Efficient Landscape Design Program for Master Gardeners provides you the skills to be your own landscape designer. You will learn basic landscape design techniques, native/adaptive plant selection, rainwater harvesting and efficient irrigation to help your project become the envy of water efficient landscapes. This is a three day program with Wednesday and Thursday evening optional design workshops. This workshop is only open to current Master Gardener volunteers. One registration is good for two club members to attend with design materials to share. Additional design materials available for purchase.

Registration: Only 20 Master Gardener participant spots are available for this training (10 groups). Registration is first come/first served basis.

Cost: \$300.00: (includes lunch, dinner and design materials)

Wednesday - Friday, February 17-19, 2016—Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center, Building C Classroom & Large Hall, 17360 Coit Road, Dallas, Texas 75252

For additional information please email Karen Sanders at [karen.sanders@tamu.edu](mailto:karen.sanders@tamu.edu)

## Looking Ahead...

Plans for the 2016 East Texas Garden Lecture Series are complete with dates and speakers lined up. The Garden Lecture Series will take place at the Tyler Rose Garden Center except October which be in Harvey Hall in conjunction with the Bulb Sale and Fall Conference.

- February 13, 2016—James Wilhite “Water Features and Bubbling Jars”
- March 5, 2016—Dr. Charles Swanson “You Can Touch the Box” Irrigation Controls
- April 2, 2016—Dr. Joe Masabni “Aquaponics”
- September 10, 2016—Erfan Vafaie “The Good, the Bad and the Ugly”
- October 8, 2016—Brent Heath “Bulbs for Southern Gardens”
- November 12, 2016—Kyle Tengler “Fruit & Vegetable Production”

More information available on the SCMG website.



The committee met on November 19<sup>th</sup>. They reviewed the Texas state awards, finalizing those categories for which submissions will be made.

The preliminary budget for 2016 was reviewed and approved.

Pat Welch advised that the lecture series for 2016 had been finalized and that the speaker for the Bulb Sale will be part of that series. Brent Heath, of Brent & Becky’s Bulbs will be the speaker. This departure from the procedure used in past years and will be part of the restructuring of the Bulbs & More project, scheduled for October 8, 2016.

The change of Joyce Napolitano replacing Sheryl Chester on the Executive Committee was approved.

**THERESA & LES REEVES LECTURE SERIES**  
Agriculture Building, 1924 Wilson Drive, Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, TX 75962. 6:30 refreshments/social, 7:00 PM lecture

DEC 10 – Dave Creech – The Special Trees of SFA Gardens.



Photo by Pat Welch

### Retired Horticulture Agent Relaxes

A “laid-back” Keith Hansen visited the November 14<sup>th</sup> lecture at the Rose Garden Center. He took a few pictures and generally enjoyed himself. For those who don’t know, he has his own website at <http://easttexasgardening.com> Check it out.

E-Mail at

[keith@easttexasgardening.com](mailto:keith@easttexasgardening.com)

