



# MG Grapevine



<http://scmg.tamu.edu>

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## SCMG meeting

**June 5th**  
**Rose Garden Center**  
**11:30 AM**

## MG Grapevine Staff

Martin Davis, Editor

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Dee Bishop, David Gary, Keith Hansen, Linda Billings and Jean Smith.

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## Extension Office

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## SCMG Association Meeting

The program for the June 5th meeting will be presented by MG Neysa Mueller, a member of Class 19. She will present a program on "Arranging Flowers from your Garden".

## 2014 Home Garden Tour

The tour this year is on June 7th 9 AM-3PM.

Homes included in the tour are: **Babin Garden** – 207 Charnwood, **Powell Garden** – 6913 Holly Tree Circle, **Thompson Garden** – 1019 Santa Rosa, **Rhodes Garden** – 711 West Heritage. For pictures of the homes go to

<http://txmg.org/smith/coming-events/> and <https://www.facebook.com/SmithCountyMasterGardeners>

Looking back, the first Home Garden Tour was held on May 11, 2002. All of the gardens were at Master Gardener's homes, including Ed & Jo Helen McGee, LaVerne Wood, Bill Kelldorf, Dee Bishop and Paul Ferguson. The



2004 tour included the Babin's garden. For pictures of that garden taken 10 years ago (then called the Holly Cottage Garden) go to [http://www.pbase.com/mrd/holly\\_cottage](http://www.pbase.com/mrd/holly_cottage). It will be interesting to see how it has changed.

## 1st Tuesday in the Garden

This month's topic is **Succulents** to be presented by Clayton Turner at noon on June 3rd. The program, open to the public, will be presented in the IDEA Garden.

## David Gary sez..

The Home Garden Tour is coming up fast--it is Saturday, June 7th. I want to thank everyone who is working on this project. Sheryl Rhodes is the project leader, and she is doing a great job. If you can help on the day of the tour, please contact us.



David Pierson and I got all the Home Garden Tour banners put up. As you are driving around Tyler, look for them at the following locations: Azalea Post Office on Broadway, Quick and Easy Carwash on Broadway at Grande, Remax Realty Office on University Blvd and Broadway at Heritage intersection.

I want to thank David Pierson for his hard work on this important aspect of the Home Garden Tour. He assembled the banners on the display posts, and we installed them at the locations listed above.

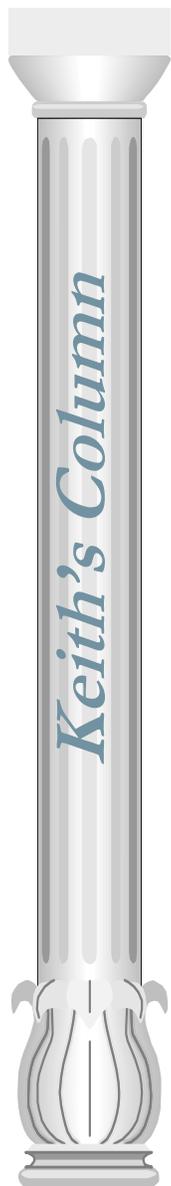
On another note, if you didn't attend the East Texas Lecture Series Program on May 17th, you missed a great program presented by Brad McCullough of Ewing Irrigation. This was a hands-on demonstration in the IDEA Garden about how to install a drip irrigation system.

I hope to see everyone at our meeting on June 5th. Pat Welch has another great speaker for us.

## Horticultural Field Day

One of the most popular projects for the Smith County MG's is the Overton Field Trial project. Dr. Brent Pemberton has repeatedly said, "Without the Master Gardener help, the ornamental plant evaluations program would not be possible."

This year's evaluation will be on June 26th when plant professionals and the general public are invited to the Overton AgriLife Research Center for the annual Field Day. Go to <http://flowers.tamu.edu/field-day/> for further information, including a map and the schedule for the day.



June is the month when troubles show up in the garden. Today I experienced “the 3 ‘Ts’ in less than 4 hours. What are the 3 T’s?? Trees, turf and tomatoes – the 3 most common plants with problems we get asked about in just about any Extension office. Trees suddenly dying (maybe due to the neighbor’s pool and chlorine? - Nope, not solved, but not the pool’s fault); turf dying in patches (could be any number of things – have been seeing lots of Take All Root Rot, probably brought on by the stress of the cold winter, mild spring, occasional extended periods of rain or frequent irrigation); and dying tomatoes. I’ve seen more tomato problems this year than in recent years. Soil-borne fusarium wilt fungus seems to be a common problem (which is why we need to rotate our crops and not grow plants in the same plant family in the same spot/container year after year). Spider mites are also a common problem, and you can probably expect early blight fungus on tomatoes due to this spring’s mild and moist weather conditions. There is a good visual tool for helping diagnose tomato problems at [aggiehorticulture.tamu.edu](http://aggiehorticulture.tamu.edu) (also linked from the Texas Master Gardener website - [txmg.org](http://txmg.org) under “Resources”).

I’m looking forward to the home garden tour this month. Four great home gardens to see and learn from. If you haven’t signed up to help, contact Sheryl Rhodes, Tour Chairman) as there may be areas where help is needed.

I started a new Facebook page where I’ll be regularly (I hope) posting pictures of plants and problems. It’s at <http://facebook.com/easttexasgardening>. Let me know if there are things you’d like to see posted or talked about.

I’m putting out a call again for help with a result demonstration, where you would implement some water conserving measures so we can measure and document the effectiveness of water conservation practices. We would compare pre-implementation monthly water bills (from 2013) to current water bills for documentation. I realize that all of you are Master Gardeners, and therefore have probably already implemented many of these best practices. If you haven’t, but plan to, please get with me ASAP about this opportunity. And, maybe you have a friend or neighbor who would be a good candidate for this program, and would be willing to cooperate.

What are some of these water conservation measures?? Outdoors: Converting spray nozzles to multi-stream nozzles; or convert spray irrigation to drip irrigation. Other options include harvest rainwater for irrigation; redesign bed with plants with lower water requirements; maintaining 2-4 inches of mulch in planted areas in previously unmulched beds; doing an irrigation system evaluation/checkup to improve efficiency; install/retrofit water-sense labeled smart controller; install rain/freeze sensor; use “cycle and soak” irrigation schedule; aerate lawn and apply ½ inch compost; use Potential EvapoTranspiration (PET) for scheduling irrigation.

Indoors: take the 40 gallon challenge - see <http://www.40gallonchallenge.org/pledge.cfm?state=TX> (this web site is a place to pledge to do only new practices or actions to save water, not things you are already doing, it includes both indoors and outdoors practices).

Again, your role would be to implement practices, and then provide water bills for last year and the next 2 years for comparison of water use. Please let me know if you are interested or have questions.

Thanks and have a great and safe summer!!

The Smith County Master Gardeners will be participating in a day camp at the YMCA in Whitehouse this summer. Hazel Bateman and Jean Smith are leading the camp which will be associated with the Junior Master Gardener program. Information about volunteer opportunities will be forth coming but meanwhile we need to start collecting items for JMG projects. These are items that are easily found around the house. If you can provide any of these, please bring them to the June 5 MG meeting, or to the Extension office.

Items needed: Magazines and newspaper, Wire coat hangers, 2 liter soda bottles with caps, Medicine bottles with caps, Water or other size plastic bottles, Grass seed, Glass Snapple bottles with caps, Any seeds, Greeting cards, Tissue paper, Craft items (yarn, beads, buttons, pipe cleaners, etc.), Paper towel/toilet paper tubes and 15 oz. empty cans.

Questions? Contact Jean [smithjean17@hotmail.com](mailto:smithjean17@hotmail.com) or Hazel [thebatemans@hughes.net](mailto:thebatemans@hughes.net)

Don't forget!



### New E-Mail Addresses

Maury Hudson [HUDSON.MAURY@GMAIL.COM](mailto:HUDSON.MAURY@GMAIL.COM)  
 Andie Rathbone - [andie.rathbone.66@gmail.com](mailto:andie.rathbone.66@gmail.com)  
 Janice Suggs – [momojan1@yahoo.com](mailto:momojan1@yahoo.com)

### SFA Lecture Series

SFA Gardens at Stephen F. Austin State University will host the monthly Theresa and Les Reeves Lecture Series at 7 p.m. Thursday, June 12, in the Ina Brundrett Conservation Education Building at the Pineywoods Native Plant Center, 2900 Raguet St. in Nacogdoches.

Former president of The Native Plant Society of Texas, Peter Loos, will present “Native Plants That Work for You.”

**Beauty or Beast**

By Linda Billings



Location of your tree selection makes a huge difference if your tree will be a beauty or a beast. My tree consultant recommended that I grow Dura Heat River Birch as a desirable landscape tree, so I planted 500 seedlings and grew them up to 30 gallon size trees before I sold the last of them back in 2007. Heritage River Birch won Urban Tree of the Year in 2002. This Winter I noticed the bark on my new Hideaway Lake neighbor's trees and fell in love with them. My neighbor told me they were River Birch from Neal's in Lindale. Neal said they were the regular species from Tennessee and were not Dura Heat or Heritage. I am often asked to recommend a fast growing tree. River Birch is a vigorous, fast growing, medium size shade tree that will tolerate moderate flooding. It also has some drought resistance. Avoid very alkaline soils. Prune only when dormant and not when sap is flowing.



Dr. Michael Dirr recommends River Birch for their beauty and hardiness. I think River Birch is a beautiful tree in my neighbor's yard. Many people are happy with them in their landscape. In my research I discovered that 8 out of 10 people hate them and consider them high maintenance and extremely messy trees. The biggest complaint is the twigs that constantly fall and the seeds that drop



and mess up patios, driveways, porches and lawns. I didn't notice the twigs under them until I approached the fence. I have enjoyed watching the parade of birds attracted to these trees and the way the breeze causes the leaves to ripple back and forth. The spectacular cinnamon colored peeling bark is what makes River Birch a popular landscape tree. It's distinctive bark, graceful crown and yellow fall foliage adds to its beauty.

Another example of the importance of proper location is the beautiful Muskogee Crape Myrtles in the Heritage Garden where they have room and are allowed to grow big. I planted 5 single trunk Muskogee's over eight years ago in my farm house front yard and have wanted to cut them down for the past two years because they have become super huge and leave black seeds all over my front porch. Also, the beautiful JFK roses no longer bloom up against the house because of the shade created. Muskogee's are a beast in my yard.

**Bullies in the Garden**

By Dee Bishop



Spring is here and after a long cold winter, we are ready, or are we? As you walk around your yard enjoying your pretty flowers, do you see any leaves that are yellow, or do you notice the white fuzzy looking stuff on your crape myrtles? The yellow leaves may be due to spider mites. They crop up when we are busy admiring our colorful flowers, not the leaves. They can decimate a plant almost overnight so; keep an eye out and get a handle on them before you lose your plants. The white fuzzy stuff on your crape myrtles is powdery mildew. We found some in the garden today on our Dynamite crape. Give crape myrtles plenty of room for good air flow. You can sprinkle the leaves with water and sometimes get rid of it.

Look for holes in leaves and blooms. Determine what rascal is at work and take care of him. In my yard, rabbits and deer--- and birds on my succulents. I feed birds, as most of you know and I watched a cardinal pick the ends of each leaf from one of my little aloes then flit to some sedum for dessert. I have placed wire fencing around my phlox and hope I can watch them bloom this year. Our resident deer herd loves the buds of my John Fan-ick phlox. I love them too; so I have tried to 'fix' the problem.

Love hosta? So do slugs and snails. If you have had trouble with either of these, you might try some remedies we master gardeners often use. Here goes a few: Place sweetgum balls or pine cones all under the hostas; mulch with sharp gravel or mulch with aluminum foil. Place a band of copper around the stem area and keep the leaves off the ground. I tried the sweetgum balls and had far less trouble than before. Of course my yard is dry and nothing stays damp long in summer (now I have no hostas because of this problem)

If you have fig trees, keep them moist. The little figs are growing and will be ready by July. Berries of all kinds need water but do not over water. Your berries will have little taste if grown too moist. Let them dry out before watering and water deep when you do. Keep veggies watered and watch for myriads of pests. Take care of any pest as soon as you find it. Mulch, Mulch, Mulch!

*Editor's note—Linda Billings has advised that her June article is her last. We thank her for her informative columns. Starting next month, Mary Claire Rowe will change to doing a monthly column.*

**Executive Committee Notes** The committee met on May 15<sup>th</sup> at the Extension Office.

The Home Garden Tour preparations were reviewed. David Gary reported that he and David Pierson had placed four banners in strategic locations around town. Scherel Carver is finalizing the Tour Guidebook. Volunteers are still needed at two locations. Pat Welch will try to arrange a pre-tour for volunteers in the Babin garden.

A solution for the recurring problem with the plant signs in the Rose Garden has been found. The plastic signs have fallen off of the metal brackets because the glue on the plastic is not continuing to hold. The solution is to drill through the metal brackets and then mount the plastic signs with sheet metal screws.

The date of the 2015 TX State MG Conference, April 16-18, 2015, been announced. This date conflicts with projected date of the Regional MG Conference which is planned for Tyler. The planning committee will consider an alternate date.

Keith Hansen advised that AgriLife Extension District 5, which includes Smith County, will host a State Extension Conference in Lufkin in July. He also advised that Smith County Extension Service will make a presentation to the Smith County Commissioners court on May 20<sup>th</sup> noting the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the creation of the Extension Service.

## COMING EVENTS

**1st Tuesday in the Garden**  
**June 3rd—noon—IDEA Garden**  
 Clayton Turner—Succulents

**MG Home Garden Tour**  
**June 7-9 AM-3PM**

A unique opportunity to view four private gardens and landscapes. This year's gardens showcase a variety of landscaping styles and methods, ranging from a woodland setting to an intimate garden.

For more information on the tour, go to  
<http://txmg.org/smith/coming-events/>  
**Tickets \$10 in advance**

**Horticulture Field Day**  
**June 26-Texas A&M AgriLife Research  
 and Extension Center at Overton**

From 8:30 AM—3:00 PM  
 Tour Ornamental & Vegetable Field Trials

**Gourd Painting Workshop**  
**August 15**

Wincie Caskey—more details later

**East Texas Garden Lecture Series**  
**September 13**

“Enjoy Your Home Landscape—Make Your Yard Fit Your Life”  
 David Gary

<http://txmg.org/smith/coming-events/>

**Texas Master Gardener Conference**  
**September 25-27**

The 2014 Texas Master Gardener conference will be held in Odessa, hosted by the Permian Basin Master Gardeners.

<http://2014tmgconference.org/>

**Fabulous Fall Festival at SFA**  
**October 4**

**Southern Region Master Gardener Conference**  
**October 21-24**

Inviting all gardeners! 2014 Southern Region MG Conference at Baton Rouge. For information and registration go to...

<http://www.southernregionmgconf2014.com/>



After working in the gardens, MGs go to lunch and find themselves “in their cups.” Or are they “around their cups?”

Baby birds watch  
 workers at the IDEA  
 Garden.

Photos by  
 Jean Smith

