



# MG Grapevine



<http://scmg.tamu.edu>

June 2015

<http://easttexasgardening.tamu.edu>

## Number 6



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**SCMG Meeting**  
**June 4, 2015**  
**Rose Garden Center**  
**11:30 AM**

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 Pat Welch.

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## SCMG Association Meeting June 4, 2015 Rose Garden Center



Our speaker for the June 4th meeting is Dr. Doug Welsh, Professor Emeritus from Texas A&M.

Dr. Welsh will discuss the new

Earth-kind Texas A&M garden project, "Gardens and Greenway - a Premier Teaching Garden".

### A Women's Touch

The Smith County Master Gardener Association will hold a dedication ceremony on Thursday June 4th at 1:00 PM to unveil a bronze sculpture dedicated to the memory of Master Gardener Sue Adee.

The sculpture is a gift from John Adee. Sue was a member of the original Master Gardening class in Smith County in 1994. Sue was instrumental in establishing the IDEA Garden, a multi-functional demonstration garden which the Master Gardeners oversee and maintain.

### Jewels in the Garden

The Jewels in the Garden Conference is upon us. June 6 is the day and if you have not registered, it is not too late. Contact Pat Welch or Jean Smith and they will get you signed up. A count for lunches is needed so if you are planning on attending, register as soon as possible. It is shaping up to be a fun informative day with some great speakers. Thanks to all who have volunteered to help. Set up will begin on Friday, June 5 at 1:00 PM. If you have a couple of hours to help, join us at the Rose Garden Center. Doors will open for check in at 8:00 AM Saturday, June 6.



### Welch's Words

Have you ever heard the old saying "time flies when you're having fun?" That is how this year seems to me, it is just flying by!

It's almost Home Garden Tour time. As you know, we have four great gardens, people to work, the garden tour book has gone to the printer, tickets are available for sale, Thank You letters are out and lastly everyone is crossing their fingers for sunshine. Hope to see everyone somewhere on the Tour on May 30th.

Please mark your calendar for 1:00 pm on June 4th, directly after the monthly Master Gardener meeting, and join us in the IDEA Garden for a dedication ceremony. "A Woman's Touch" will be dedicated in memory of our own Sue Adee.

Talk about a busy two weeks. Next comes the Jewels in the Garden Conference on June 6th. Plans are moving along at "warp" speed. The good news is things are coming together nicely. If you haven't sent in your registration yet, please contact me at 903-530-4496 or [grayball\\_234@yahoo.com](mailto:grayball_234@yahoo.com).

Lastly is the rescheduled bus trip to Clark Gardens and North Haven Garden Center on June 10th. I'm sure everyone going on the trip is going to have a wonderful time. Pat



### One More Award

This stone resides in David Gary's garden.



"Thanks so much for your year as President of Smith County Master Gardeners!" Pat Welch



What a weird year, weather-wise, this has been so far! (Seems like I may say that every year now). Cold winter, late freeze, and rain, rain, rain and chilly, cloudy days. I mean, here it is Memorial Day weekend, and I'm wearing a jacket and long sleeves! All this rain is a two-edge sword for our plants. On the one hand, healthy plants in well-drained soils are growing with abandon. Some of the garden plants that we might be growing that are rated for a cooler zone than ours are pretty happy right now! On the other hand, saturated soils can lead to root rots, and constantly wetted foliage, coupled with mild and cloudy days provide ideal conditions for leaf diseases of all kinds. And then there's the thousands of millipedes seeking dryer ground, and pill bugs (or roly polys), slugs and snails that thrive in these conditions and can become plant pests

A couple of years ago I brought to your attention the discovery of the crape myrtle bark scale that has become a major pest of crape myrtles. Since then this insect has spread across the south, and is likely to become well established in all regions where crape myrtles are grown. We are still learning about how this insect is affecting our crape myrtles. The obvious affect is the black sooty mold growing on their sugary exudate on the trunks and limbs. If you see a crape myrtle with black trunks, you can bet that it has or had the scale. The twice-stabbed lady beetle is a very effective prey on the scale, and by the end of the growing season, can really clean up an infestation, but not before the sooty mold has started growing. It also is apparent that while the scale is not killing the trees, it does put them under stress. Some initial observations in Arkansas showed a reduction in bloom, and also poor emergence out of winter dormancy.

For more information and control information, do a search on "crape myrtle" on the <http://citybugs.tamu.edu/> website, hosted by Dr. Mike Merchant, A&M AgriLife Extension Entomologist in Dallas.

I'm looking forward to the home garden tour this month. Four great home gardens to see and learn from. And of course, the regional Jewels in the Garden Conference is June 6 – I hope you have signed up for that. Three outstanding speakers, 4 topics and a day of learning. You will get 4 CE's by attending. It is dedicated to Sue Adee, as this was originally her idea about a year and a half ago. And speaking of dedication, I hope you will be able to attend the June 4 monthly meeting. Immediately following the meeting there will be a dedication of the new bronze art work in the IDEA Garden, donated by Sue's husband, John Adee.

Keep gardening, and have fun!

### Clark Gardens Trip Rescheduled

The bus trip to Clark Gardens in Weatherford, Texas, has been rescheduled due to the rainy weather in May. The new date is Wednesday, June 10. As a result of the change, a few people cannot go and extra tickets are now available.



If this new date works for you and you'd like to join us, please let me know and we can add your name to the list. Tickets are \$40.00 which includes a tour of the magnificent gardens, lunch at the Lakeside Pavilion, and a shopping trip to North Haven Nursery in Dallas. Checks should be made payable to SCMG and can be mailed to **Susan Stone, 1208 S. Wall Ave., Tyler** or can be brought to the June 4 meeting.

If you have any questions, please contact Susan Stone at 903-526-1363 or email [slstone11@gmail.com](mailto:slstone11@gmail.com)

### New Address

Jim Powell

7434 Prinedale, Tyler, TX 75703

E-Mail – [jspawp58@suddenlink.net](mailto:jspawp58@suddenlink.net)

### Corrected Phone Number

Sylvia Hofman – 719-646-0422

### Executive Committee Notes

The Executive Committee met on May 21<sup>st</sup>.

Since the fair this year is celebrating its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the AgriWorld display will show children what a farm looked like 100 years ago, according to Hazel Bateman.

The cancellation of the May bus trip to Clark Gardens, due to weather, may result in a small loss of money. The date of the rescheduled tour is June 10<sup>th</sup>.

Pat Welch reported that the May 30<sup>th</sup> Home Garden Tour project is on track. She also announced that the dedication of the bronze statue honoring Sue Adee will be on June 4<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 PM at the IDEA Garden. Plans for the June 6<sup>th</sup> Jewels in the Garden conference are coming along nicely. It is expected that the conference will over by 2:30 PM with the tours of the gardens to begin afterward.

### TAMU 2015 Scholarship

The SCMG Association 2015 scholarship at TAMU was awarded to **Sarah Hollis**, a junior horticulture major. She says, in her letter to us, in part, "It is an honor to receive a scholarship from the Smith County Master Gardeners for the 2015-2016 year. I will be graduating in May of 2016 with a Bachelor of Arts in Horticulture with an emphasis in floral design and event planning. Over the past three years spent at Texas A&M University I have greatly expanded my knowledge of horticulture.

This scholarship will allow me to stay focused on my studies and not worry about the financial burden of attending college."

## Garden Tidbits

By Dee Bishop



I was cleaning out some old garden publications---very hard to do---and stumbled across these little bits that I thought you might enjoy.

Annuals for shade conditions are usually tender perennials or tropical. I thought about this long and hard and do agree. For instance, impatiens; they are tropical, perennial, and very tender. They are among the few plants that bloom well in quite a lot of shade. I am glad for all the new introductions that perform beautifully, giving us so much color and interest. Other annuals (tender perennial tropical) that do well in a good bit of shade are: torenia both the trailing and upright ones and browallia which does very well in bright shade, but is very hard to find. Of course hostas, ajuga, begonias, some ginger take quite a bit of shade, as well as other color such as caladiums and coleus.

If you are a seed planter and enjoy growing your own plants from seeds, this tidbit of information is for you. If you want all your impatiens seeds to sprout at once, set the planted seed tray in total darkness where it is warm for forty eight hours; then place it under lights. The seeds will sprout in 9 – 14 days --- all at once! How neat is that? If you lack a good dark place to put the tray just place aluminum foil over it sealing out all light for that 48 hours of darkness. I love planting impatiens, they are among the easiest seeds to grow. They are tiny and you will have to prick them out once they have the first two true leaves (remember the first two 'leaves' you see are the cotyledons not true leaves) and plant them in individual cups. I like the little 72 cup planters. Impatiens are tiny, but grow rapidly (with heat).

More good plants to start even now---zinnias, marigolds, celosia, gomphrena ---- all of which love summer's heat and sun. All sprout in a few days, grow rapidly, and will be ready plant out in 6-8 weeks. Actually zinnias and marigolds had rather be planted right where you want them to grow. They do so much better, grow so much larger, and perform better all round. Remember to pinch zinnias and most other annuals as well, when there are three to four sets of leaves. Pinch out the top two and they will branch out and stand up better. If you get zinnia transplants, look for the small young plants that are not blooming if you can find them and pinch out their tops. They will grow quickly and make a much tidier plant.

Remember to pinch the ends of your coleus plants every now and then. Pinching (pruning, whatever) is a necessary to help the plant grow into a beautiful sturdy plant that will hold up in winds and rain and just look better. When you pinch your coleus, go ahead, once they have some size on them, and break off ends with about three to four sets of leaves and stick them down in a pot of good soil. In a couple of weeks you will have good transplants or the makings for a lovely pot of coleus.

Gardening to some folks is work, to others it's a way to relax, to commune with God, to search your soul, as well as a way to beautify your surroundings for yourself and all who pass by. What a blessing!

## A Roly Poly Invasion

By Mike Marchant



Pillbugs are semi-aquatic organisms that breathe via gills. No wonder they seem to love this rainy weather.

Is it just me, or are we in the midst of a roly poly invasion? Now, I tend to not "see" some of the same pests other people see, because they just don't bother me. I'll look right past a spider in the house, because it's just doing its thing. Similarly, I don't tend to notice roly polies, also called pillbugs, because I'm so used to them living in the heaping piles of mulch around my home.

The past month, however, working on my lawn and landscape, even I have noticed the pillbugs. They are everywhere... BY THE MILLIONS. While I know to expect pillbugs in my garden mulch, I don't believe I have ever seen so many pillbugs in the grass of my lawn.

So what's going on here? Pillbugs are isopods, a type of Crustacean, and only a few evolutionary steps away from the water. In fact, pillbugs and sowbugs breathe, like their aquatic cousins, through gills, and do especially well in wet environments. They are also one of the few arthropods that have the ability to eat and digest cellulose. It appears that with our unusually wet Texas spring, pillbugs have everything they need.

I wouldn't mind pillbugs so much if they confined themselves to feeding on mulch (even if I curse them a little every spring when I have to re-mulch our landscape beds). But when numerous as they are right now, pillbugs are not shy about feeding on roots and tender stems of garden flowers and vegetables. In the past week I've watched my proud double row of green onions fall like dominoes, chewed at the base by hungry pillbugs.



I suppose some of this is our own fault. With the increased use of garden mulch and wood chips in recent years, we've provided lots of food for pillbugs. In yards hard hit by drought and disease and winter cold, there is plenty of food in the form of thatch and new growth to keep pillbugs happy.

While there's little we can do to stop the rain, there may be a few steps we can take to discourage pill bugs. Avoid putting too much mulch in your garden. A **four-inch layer is generally sufficient** for insulation and water retention, anything over that will serve to attract and feed more pillbugs. Keep mulch away from the foundation of your home by 6 to 12 inches. If you are planning to mulch, keep your initial layers thin (enough to hold the soil) until we see some drier weather. You can always add more later, and your garden does not need the mulch as much when it's wet anyway.

If planting new flowers or vegetables, consider treating the planting bed first with a liquid insecticide like permethrin, labeled for garden use. Newly emerged plants may need a protective spray every week or so. When treating vegetables, just make sure to allow enough time between last application and harvest, according to label instructions.

For more information about pillbugs, see <http://citybugs.tamu.edu/factsheets/landscape/veggie/ent-1006/>

### MG Specialist – Irrigation Efficiency Training

June 22, 23, 24, 2015

Harris County Extension Office

Irrigation Efficiency training will cover hands-on practices for determining irrigation efficiency, setting controllers, soak and cycle method, minor irrigation repairs, system trouble shooting, etc.

Registration fee of \$200.00 per person . See Keith Hansen for further details.

### Horticulture Field Day—Thursday, June 25, 2015

Texas A&M AgriLife Research & Extension Center at Overton

8:30—10:30 AM—Tour of Ornamental Trials at North Farm area.

10:30—11:45 AM—Tour of Ornamental Trials at Main Building

11:45 AM-1:00 PM—Lunch (sponsored BBQ) at the Main Building

1:00 –2:45 PM—Presentations at the Main Building

More info. including map, at <http://flowers.tamu.edu/>



### International Master Gardener Conference

SEPTEMBER

22–25, 2015

MID-AMERICA  
CENTER, COUN-

CIL BLUFFS,  
IOWA



MIDWEST FLAVOR (PRAIRIE PLANTS, LOCAL FOODS...)

HORIZONS (TECHNOLOGY, QR CODES, TRENDS, FUTURISTIC...)

FROM THE GROUND UP (COMPOSTING, PROPAGATION, GRAFTING...)

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (PROGRAM MANAGEMENT, VOLUNTEER RETENTION, RESOLVING CONFLICT...)

DESIGN (FLORAL, LANDSCAPE, CONTAINER...)

#### Full Conference Registration:

\$330—Early bird registration extended to June 1

\$385—Standard registration (June 2 to July 20)

For complete details, schedules, etc. go to:

<http://mastergardener.unl.edu/imgc2015>



*Don't miss the dedication of "A Woman's Touch" sculpture on June 4th at 1:00 PM in the IDEA Garden.*