



MG Grapevine



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MG Association Meeting
April 11, 2013
Rose Garden Center

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Our President says...



Masters Gardeners: Spring has "sprung" and it is time to get those flowers, shrubs, etc. in the ground. It's great to be a Master Gardener or any gardener at this time of year. Keith had a good article in the Tyler paper on March 21 telling us it was time to put those tomato plants in the ground and that they require "mucho" sunshine every day; up to ten hours is best!

The Horticulture Committee put together a very fine program on March 16, at the Rose Center. There were presentations by three experts on container gardening. I didn't know it was OK to squeeze potted plants to make them fit into a container so there would be no empty space in your containers. This makes them appear much more pleasing to the eye.

Thanks to Neysa Mueller, Melva Hermes and Joyce Napolitano for volunteering to help set up the room in the Rose Center for the graduation of our new trainees next month on April 11 (note the change of the meeting day from the usual first Thursday of the month).

We still need volunteers to head-up the Speaker's Bureau and the "Sunshine Committee." In addition, Lisa Fisher, who works with Texas Commission on Environmental Quality asked if any Master Gardeners would "man" a booth/table at Camp Tyler for Earth Day on gardening, or whatever would be appropriate. It is scheduled for April 14, 11:00 – 4:00. If anyone is interested please let Keith Hansen know.

Don't forget to bring a dish for our "Pot-Luck" lunch on the April 11. See you there!

April 11th Luncheon

Remember, the date has changed from April 4 to April 11. The time is still 11:30AM and the location is at the Rose Garden Center.

We are having a potluck, so bring whatever sounds good and don't forget to bring a serving piece. Would love for you to bring your recipe - one of these days MG's still might do a cook book.

Let me know how many will be in your party and what you plan to bring so I can send out a menu as time gets closer. Beans are wonderful, but we don't want 20 beans.

Please send your information to Ann Smith at smithvae@aol.com or call me at 903-565-0153. Thanks—Ann Smith

Home Garden Tour

The date is June 1st and the hours for the tour will be 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM. Ticket prices are: Pre-sale \$10 – at tour \$12.

These homeowners have graciously allowed us to showcase their home gardens this year:

Paul and Laurie Breedlove - 1216 E Dulse St,
David and Linda Gary - 3601 Flagstone, Violet
Bournes - 3819 Broadmoore Ct., Ben and Cecilia
Anderson - 3880 Brighton Court Cir., and Larry
and Bunny Rentfro - 3811 Long Leaf.

Posters will be available at the April graduation luncheon so please be thinking of places to display them. Remember many hands make light work.

Sign-up sheets for each home will be available at the May meeting. Shifts will be 2 hours so there will be plenty of time for docents to view the other gardens. There will be no preview tour this year since the week preceding the tour is Memorial Day weekend. We need all Master Gardeners to volunteer for this event to showcase the Smith County Master Gardener Association and make this fund raising event a fun success.

The deadline for Guidebook Ads is April 15. Ads are not limited to garden or home related businesses. An ad form is available on the SCMG website "Members only" page with pertinent information.



I'm looking forward to seeing everybody on April 11 at our annual Class Graduation and Awards Luncheon. Congratulations to Class 19 who made it to this point, and welcome to the 18 members of Class 20! We have a great organization with great volunteers and I appreciate your support of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension programs!

Please consider answering the call for help in various programs and leadership (coordinating) positions. We really appreciate it when new faces step up and get involved in planning programs and projects. Your fresh ideas and input are valued and welcome.

Now that springtime is progressing full-steam ahead, we need to be thinking once again about water conservation and the possibility of dealing with drought. Now, I'm not predicting anything, but we are starting springtime kind of dry, and many parts of Texas are in drought conditions, and facing water conservation measures. I have handy links to several drought and water conservation resources on the right column of the <http://easttexasgardening.tamu.edu> website.

The Smith County A&M AgriLife Extension Leadership Advisory Board is hosting a second in a series of water conservation program on April 25 on Landscape Water Conservation, with Dr. Dotty Woodson, Extension Water Specialist from Dallas. The program will be at the Extension office meeting room from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Dotty's enthusiasm is infectious and her conservation message is coupled with practical ways of implementing water-saving measures in the home landscape.

The 3rd East Texas Garden Lecture Series program is April 13 on Growing a Cut Flower Garden, and Arranging Cut Flowers. It will be held at the Tyler Rose Garden Center, starting at 10:00 a.m.

Class 19 Alert—Happy New Year

At last, as of March 31st your intern year is over. You have completed the volunteer requirements and you will be certified as a Texas Master Gardener at the April potluck meeting. Congratulations!

You are beginning a new year and it is only nine months long. Your minimum requirements have changed to at least 9 volunteer hours and 6 continuing education credits. You can make certain what events are available to earn CEs by looking in the back of the Address Book for a list.

Don't forget, your New Year ends on December 31, 2013.

Ipheions

By Herb Coursey

I gotta tell you at the start; these are Spring-flowering bulbs. Furthermore, my wife, Josephine, and I are extremely fond of ONLY ONE VARIETY: **Rolf Fiedler**.



These make small blooms, a little bit less than an inch in diameter, and they produce uniformly alike blue blooms the heavenly color of the bluest eyes you'll ever see!

They show a thin, deeper blue line in the middle of each petal. All their flowers are identical, and open up six petals at about 4-to-5 inches atop very thin stems. Their color is really scrumptious. I know not how many other varieties of Ipheion there may be, but the *only other one* we know about is Wisley Blue, and it is distinctly inferior. We've seen it growing in a few Tyler lawns, but it does not produce a very handsome bloom. We have never seen anyone else's Tyler lawn or flowerbeds to contain the gorgeous **Rolf Fiedler** flowers. We got our start of them several seasons ago by ordering from White Flower Farm, a splendid nursery in Massachusetts.

Fortunately, the tiny **Rolf Fiedler** bulbs reproduce prolifically. If you dig some up to get them started elsewhere in your garden or that of a friend, you need not fret. They've made enough seeds *and bulbs* to beautify the spot you moved them from, as well as the spot you are moving them to. In Tyler, they never need chilling, fertilizing, or special watering. BUT! If you want them to continue to bloom next and every other year, **DO NOT MOW DOWN THE LEAVES AND BLOOM STALKS AND FLOWER HEADS UNTIL AFTER THE SEEDS ARE MATURE AND SCATTERED.**

Just look! They're easy to see!

Are these gorgeously-blue-blooming plants eventually going to *take* your flowerbeds and lawn and vegetable garden? **Yes!** Why not? And you and everyone else who sees them will enjoy them as long as you allow them to make seeds that grow into bulblets every year. Their leaves come up in fall and through winter, but March is the big time for blooms!

Just think: *no more cost!* Enjoy! - 'erb



by Dee Bishop

SPRING'S HERE!

It's here! Spring that is. Don't you just love seeing the 'greening'? (We won't discuss the tons of pollen all over everything.) Spring is one of the busiest seasons gardeners have. So much to be done and so little time to do it knowing that summer can start any day.

I went to King's nursery yesterday and things are going gangbusters there. Andrew had gone to Forest Hill for another load of plants and Sheryl was really busy waiting on customers. I prowled the greenhouses to see what's ready and what's coming later. I was so glad to see the family carrying on as usual, but I really missed our old friend, Aubrey. For those of you who don't know King's Nursery in Teneha, this little family owned nursery has always been one of our prime sources of brand new, never sold anywhere yet, plants for the gardens. Aubrey King was a good friend to all gardeners and a source of boundless information about the plants. He died last year but left a new generation to carry on. Kings has been in business since the early 50s when Aubrey's granddad and father owned it. Aubrey's son Andrew is following suit, for which I am thankful.

You can read about the nursery and Aubrey in Greg Grant's book, *In Greg's Garden*. Greg Grant and Aubrey were best friends and Greg, Bill Welch, and Jerry Parsons all saw that King's Nursery was the first source of the plants they introduced. We Master Gardeners could get all the newest and best, and for a mere fraction of what others would charge. I believe this will continue since Andrew is being mentored by these men as well.

If you carried any plants through the winter, now is prime time to take cuttings to set out in a few weeks. I try to do this each year so I can keep some of my very favorites year after year. Cuttings taken in spring (once the night temperatures are above 50) will often root in days. Plant seeds of summer flowers and vegetables and watch them pop up in less than a week. Seeds are the cheapest way and often the only way to get plants that are not the same old same old. Just beware, the seed racks are full of things that should be planted in fall. Remember if it blooms in spring, plant in fall! Now is the time to buy those seeds so you will have them in fall when they need to be planted.

Spring is the time to be out nursery-hopping. I intend to go all around the area to see which nurseries are carrying what and where you can find fun things to plant.

Happy Spring, Dee

Getting to Know Us

By Pat Turner

One of the most appealing aspects of the Master Gardener program is the people. Gardeners are friendly, likable, hard working people. This month's column feature Joanie Matthews certainly fits that description. When I first met Joanie she put me to work in the shade area of the IDEA Garden which she coordinates. Her enthusiasm was evident and inspirational.



Joanie was born and raised in Batavia in upstate New York. She came to Tyler with her family at age eighteen when her Dad was transferred here. After retirement her Dad joined the staff of the Rose Garden to keep busy and because he liked gardening. She recalls fondly that he brought home cuttings from the greenhouse which at that time stood about where Craig Reiland's office is now. Thus began a passion for gardening which has now come full circle with her work in the IDEA Garden.

Joanie worked in retail as manager of a local shoe store retiring about eleven years ago. Her husband who passed away ten years ago was in TV and radio management. She has a son and a daughter, two grandchildren, another on the way, and three great grandchildren who are closer in age to the grandchildren since her son and daughter were seventeen years apart.

Joanie likes to read, two to three books a week and collects gardening books with over 100 in her collection. She "love, love, loves" her four dogs. At this time she also has a couple of cats, a spayed female and a neutered male, which adopted her and which she would like to give away to a cat friendly home. Til then she is gathering gumballs from anywhere she can to protect her flower beds from the cats.

Joanie's gardening philosophy is to do something in the garden every day. Her theory is that if she doesn't, her body may not start back up again! Joanie especially enjoys taking on a task and having a successful result which we do with all our Master Gardener projects because of people like her. Working and bonding with people with whom we have a common interest through the Master Gardener program, as Joanie points out, is a special benefit of participating in the projects of your choice.

Coming Events

April 2 and each Tuesday—Workday in the Gardens—start time changes to 9:00 AM

April 2—1st Tuesday in the Garden lecture—Tomatoes; How, When and Where—Patsy Besch

April 13—E.T. Garden Lecture Series—Growing and Arranging Cut Flowers

April 25—Landscape Water Conservation—Design—Plant Selection—Irrigation - Dr. Dotty Woodson

New Interest in Mosquitoes

By Mike Merchant

After last summer’s West Nile virus epidemic in north Texas there is a heightened awareness of mosquitoes and mosquito issues around the state. The Texas Senate gave thumbs up (28-3 vote) on a measure (SB 186) introduced by Sen. John Carona (R-Dallas) that would give municipal health officials authority to enter empty or abandoned properties to treat mosquito breeding sites that pose a public health nuisance.

The idea behind this bill is that abandoned homes, most notably those with untended, "green" swimming pools, can be a source of mosquito breeding that can affect homes within at least a mile radius. Such mosquitoes can be both a nuisance and a health hazard. It can be difficult for health authorities to gain access to such properties without a search warrant. This bill would allow a "public official, agent or employee charged with the enforcement of... laws" to enter the premises at a reasonable time to inspect or treat the nuisance stagnant water.

Any attention given to the problem of mosquitoes and mosquito-borne diseases is a positive thing, but the responsibility of identifying and eliminating mosquito breeding sites extends beyond state or local government to all of us. As the temperatures rise this spring, mosquitoes will become active

again very soon. It’s time to be sure that your back yard is not one of those nuisance sources.

Some of the more commonly overlooked mosquito breeding sites:

- Water- and leaf-filled bird baths
- Gutters that fail to drain properly
- Buckets, plant pots and wheelbarrows without drain holes
- Landscape and gutter drain lines that catch and hold water (should have a pop-up drain emitter)
- Water catch basins/septic tanks
- Uncapped steel fence posts
- Covers on boats or trailers that catch water
- Containers that catches and holds water more than a week
- Unscreened rain cisterns and rain barrels

A few years ago, Dallas County did an evaluation on the properties of citizens who complained about mosquitoes in their backyards. They found that 25% of these citizens had mosquito breeding sites in their own yards. This is a good time for all of us to check our own backyards to make sure we’re not contributing to the problem of biting mosquitoes.

Anne Brown forwarded this article originally published in *Insects in the City*, <http://citybugs.tamu.edu/>.

Dr. Brent Pemberton oversees MG Class 20 during the rose pruning class on March 5, 2013.

Photos by Jean Smith



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