



# MG Grapevine



<http://scmg.tamu.edu>

December 2016

<http://easttexasgardening.tamu.edu/>

Vol. XXIII No. 12



## Inside This Issue

Greg Grant sez...	2
New MG Speakers series	2
Brrrr, it' Cold	3
Garden Work Days	3
Policies & Procedures	3
Ex. Committee meeting	4
Earth-Kind Living conf.	4
Events & Conferences	4



**The next SCMG Meeting**  
**December 1, 2016**  
 At the Rose Garden Center  
**11:30 AM**

**MG Grapevine Staff**  
 Martin Davis, Editor

**MG Grapevine Contributors:**  
 Anne Brown, Greg Grant, Sam Griffith,  
 Sherri Matthews, Deanna Olson, Ann Smith,  
 and Susan Stone.

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

## SCMG Association Luncheon December 1, 2016

The Christmas luncheon takes the place of the SCMG meeting each December. Meat and drinks are furnished. If you have not already done so, send a note to Ann Smith at [smithvae@aol.com](mailto:smithvae@aol.com). Let her know what your side dish will be and how many in your party. Remember to bring serving utensils.

It all starts at 11:30 AM at the Rose Garden Center.

## 2017 NE Texas Gardening Guide and Calendar

Now available at these locations:

Anderson's Garden  
 Blooms  
 Blue Moon Garden  
 Breedlove Nursery  
 Cycle of Seasons, Lindale  
 Dory's Garden  
 Fleming Farm & Ranch, Lindale  
 Gardening Angel  
 Harris Nursery, Hwy 69  
 Harris Nursery, Spur 248  
 In the Wind  
 Joe Smith Plant Farm, Jacksonville  
 Nooday Ace Hardware  
 Nooday Feed  
 Pandora's Box, Frankston  
 Petty's Landscape  
 Potpourri House  
 Rainer's Nursery, Lindale  
 Roquemors, Whitehouse  
 Rose Museum and Gift Shop  
 Rubicon  
 Senters Nursery, Whitehouse  
 Southland Feed  
 Style Day Spa  
 Tyler Public Library

## Susan Stone Sez....

There is a saying that the only thing constant in life is change. Sometimes good, sometimes not so much. But 2017 promises to bring new and exciting changes to our Master Gardener program. We look forward to working with Greg, who undoubtedly will have some new ideas. We have a new slate of officers who bring new skills and enthusiasm. There are great ideas afloat for changes and enhancements to our Fall Conference and Bulb Sale. And we are embarking on a new partnership with the Tyler Public Library for a new lecture series. All good things!



And while it seems as if we go from Halloween straight to Christmas, don't forget Thanksgiving tucked in there. There is a lot to be thankful for.

The next thing on the MG horizon is our Christmas luncheon on December 1. Please RSVP to Ann Smith and come celebrate the season with us. Some surprising entertainment is planned and you won't want to miss it. There's also Holiday in the Park at the Rose Garden on December 10. Come see the IDEA and Heritage Gardens decked out for Christmas and visit the MG education table inside the Rose Garden Center.

See you Thursday, December 1 at the Rose Garden Center.

Susan Stone, President

## 2017 MG Class Signup

Information on MG training, beginning in January 2017 and the forms to signup is available on the web at <http://txmg.org/smith/>

## Caring for Holiday Plants

By Greg Grant



**Amaryllis:** Place your amaryllis in the brightest spot you can provide. Since they are tall and top heavy, clay or ceramic pots are best. Any high quality potting soil will do, but remember that the pot must have a drainage hole. Keep the soil evenly moist, but not wet. After blooming, cut off the spent flower stalk. After all danger of frost, the pot can be set outside in full to partial sun and grown as a pot plant, or the bulb can be planted in a bed and

grown as a spring blooming perennial. It will take the bulb at least one more growing season to store up enough energy to bloom again. It is difficult to make them bloom again at Christmas, but if you want to try, stop watering, and fertilizing in the late summer and leave outside until the first frost. At that point, cut away any dead foliage, repot if necessary, bring inside again, and start the process over.

**Christmas Cactus:** Place your holiday cactus in the brightest location you have and only water when it dries out. After all chance of frost, place outside on a deck or patio in partial shade and leave there until new buds form during the short days of fall. Fertilize with a water soluble plant food each month. Just before the first frost, buds should have formed in response to the short days. Bring inside to a bright location and repeat as last year.

**Christmas Tree:** Make a new cut at the base of your Christmas tree to allow the plugged vascular system to take up water. Immediately place in water and keep adding fresh

water the entire duration of the holidays. The best location is one away from heater vents. If you purchase a living Christmas tree, try to limit the amount of time indoors, place in the brightest location you have, and plant in the landscape immediately after the holidays.

**Cyclamen:** Cyclamen are beautiful flowering plants that prefer cool temperatures and bright light. Unfortunately they can't tolerate freezing or hot temperatures, so most people discard them after the plants finish blooming. If you want to attempt to keep them as pot plants, move them outside in early spring, fertilize monthly, then allow them to go dormant during the summertime by withholding water. Before the first frost, bring them inside and begin to water again.

**Paperwhite Narcissus:** Paperwhites are not adapted as long term house plants but are certainly adapted as garden perennials. After they finish blooming indoors, plant them in a sunny location in the garden. They will generally skip blooming the first year, then bloom between Thanksgiving and Christmas each year in the landscape.

**Poinsettia:** It's best to treat poinsettias just like Christmas cactus. Place in the brightest, least drafty spot in the home, then on the patio or deck during the growing season where they should be potted into a larger pot fertilized monthly, and tipped to make them bushier. Just before frost, hopefully they will have received enough short day stimulation to set blooms again. For most busy homeowners, discarding them and starting over each Christmas is the smartest option.

**Rosemary:** Rosemary is from the Mediterranean, prefers full sun and warm temperatures, and doesn't make a good house plant. Do not overwater. Place them in the brightest location you can provide indoors and plant in the sunniest, most well drained location in the garden after all chance of frost in the spring.

## New MG Speaker Series to Begin ...



We are all familiar with our current speaker series, "First Tuesdays in the Garden." Well, beginning in early 2017 a new series will begin titled, "Master Gardeners at the Library." The "First Tuesdays" program will go on hiatus this Spring and will resume for the 2017 Fall season.

"Master Gardeners at the Library" is a series of 5 lectures sponsored and provided by the Smith County Master Gardeners. The programs will be held on Fridays at 11:30 in the Tyler Library's Taylor Auditorium. The schedule follows: January 13, "Winter Sowing" with Trish Wittinger, February 10, "The Rose Rustlers" with Greg Grant, March 10, "Azaleas" with Keith Hansen, April 21, "Garden Flower Arranging" with Neysa Mueller, and May 5, "Heat Loving Plants" with Andie Rathbone

This series promises to be innovative and informational, and hopefully will attract a larger community audience in this new venue. Each lecture is worth 1 CE. Please plan to join us on Fridays next year for "Master Gardeners at the Library".



## Brrrr, it's cold!

By Sam Griffith

Yikes, winter is here. Or will be. At least until Wednesday or Thursday, when the temperature is supposed to be back in the 70's.

In my October column, I sagely counseled the conventional wisdom: Put your vegetable garden to bed for the winter, removing all the old, tired tomato plants and beans and peas and cucumbers, and composting or otherwise disposing of the old plants to dispose of possible lingering plants diseases and evil bugs and their eggs concealed among the leaves and in the debris, that has accumulated around the plants. But . .

Okay, I got busy and didn't clean out my garden. But it was dry and I didn't think much about it, as I was too busy trying to get my next book to the publisher.

And then . . . And then in early November, I was driving by the vegetable garden spot after feeding the cows some hay and cattle cubes, and I looked over, and the garden plants were abundant, verdant, and deep green, growing fabulously, flowering profusely. The plants looked more beautiful than they had all season long. So, I began some picking, a few tomatoes and peppers and okra and eggplants again.

And last night (Saturday night), we were to have our first frost. So, my niece, Emily, came out and we spent about two hours harvesting the long-ignored crops. We gathered an astonishing five-gallon bucket of eggplants which she will share with a lady at work who has five children, a limited budget, and a peculiar appetite for eggplant parmigiana. And well over a heaping bushel of delicious, luscious tomatoes, and another two gallons of Roma tomatoes which Emily said she will turn into spaghetti sauce. And a peck (1/4 of a bushel) of okra. And a couple of gallons of peppers - cayenne peppers, and red and green and yellow bell peppers, and poblano peppers. And about a bushel of green tomatoes, which I will wrap in newspapers, and store in a very dark place, where in the darkness and their natural methane

gas, they will slowly ripen, so I'll have fresh-ish tomatoes around Christmas.

And then we decided to cover what plants we could, trying to protect a few of the plants from the frost. I had two tarps, and a couple big appliance boxes, which we spread out and laid over the best plants, and then we laid steel tee-posts to hold them down if a wind whirled through trying to blow the coverage away.

Back in 2012, we conducted a Christian revival event at Rose Stadium, and I had an advertising firm make some 4 X 4 yard signs, like politicians use in election season, to advertise the revival. I had picked up and stored nine of the bright red signs in the barn, and reasoned that hopefully the "Jesus saves" motif would carry over to save my tomato plants. So we laid those corrugated plastic signs over several more tomato plants.

This afternoon I checked the garden and found that all the exposed tomato plants had been killed by the frost, but some of the covered plants were still alive. And tomorrow I will uncover the living plants, and let them continue to flourish in the 70 degree days of late November in Texas, and hopefully, will continue to pick fresh, vine-ripened tomatoes for a few more weeks.

So, my slothfulness and laziness has inadvertently produced a bounty.

Unfortunately, the same great weather has allowed the few sprigs of Bermuda grass that had snuck into the garden to spread into a green carpet, choking out my gardening spot.

Win some - lose some.

And so, the uneven east Texas 2016 vegetable garden season lurches to its finale. But I have tomatoes in late November!!! - so I'm pretty content.

With almost half a bushel of tomatoes for which I am very thankful. May you, too, find much to be thankful for. We live in America - that alone should be a source of much abundant thanks to He Who has blessed us with freedom and abundance.

May you have a blessed Thanksgiving. **Sam**

## Work Days in the Gardens

Garden workdays will continue during December, but on a limited schedule. Work is scheduled only on December 6th and 20th. If weather is a problem, cancellation will be made via e-mail.

## Policies and Procedures Are Now Online

Check out our Policies and Procedures now online in the member section of the SCMG website. If you've ever wanted to find out how or why we do something, here is an easy, accessible resource. Not too much has changed, but some things are more detailed and clearer and some things may have been combined. And, there are a few new policies such as the ones on Membership, Investments, and the Annual Audit.

Of course, policies and procedures can always be reviewed in the dusty book in the MG office! Questions or comments can be directed at any of the members of the Policy and Procedure Committee: Deanna Olson, Pat Welch, Jeanette Ross, Linda Sargent, Anne Kelly, Charlie Colman, or Susan Stone.

### Executive Committee Meeting Notes

The Executive Committee met in brief session on Thursday, November 17. The following items were discussed:

- The new MG speaker series, "Master Gardeners at the Library", scheduled to begin January 13, 2017.
- Finalization of the D&O Insurance Policy, effective November 15.
- TMGA Awards currently being written.
- Holiday in the Park, scheduled for December 10.

### Holiday in the Garden and Bazaar

Tyler Rose Garden, 420 Rose Park Dr. Tyler, TX 75702  
Dec. 10, 2016.

MG Education table in the Rose Garden Center.

### THERESA AND 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 followed by exciting plant raffle!

Dec 8 – Dr. Dave Creech, Director SFA Gardens Garden Adventures In The Past Year.

### Earth-Kind Living Conference

East Texans will have the chance to learn about new environmentally friendly techniques around the home and ranch during the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Earth-Kind Living conference Dec. 2 in Palestine. Registration at 8 a.m. and ends at 4 p.m. inside Ben E. Keith Beverages, 2019 W. Oak St.

For more information and to register, go to <http://agrilife.org/earthkindliving>.

### IMGC 2017

Wherever your garden grows on this planet, you will find a wealth of new ideas at the 2017 International Master Gardener Conference in Portland, Oregon, July 10-14, 2017.

Early registration: **October 10, 2016 through January 13, 2017**

Website [blogs.oregonstate.edu/2017imgc/home-page/](http://blogs.oregonstate.edu/2017imgc/home-page/)



Smith County MG's at the 2016 Southern Regional MG Conference in Arlington, TX—November 3, 2016