



MG Grapevine



<http://scmg.tamu.edu>

March 2016

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The next SCMG Meeting
March 3, 2016
Rose Garden Center
11:30 AM

MG Grapevine Staff
 Martin Davis, Editor

MG Grapevine Contributors:

Sam Griffith, Mary Claire Rowe, Jeanette Ross, Susan Stone, and Kyle Tengler.

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Extension Office

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SCMG Association Meeting March 3, 2016

The program for the meeting will be presented by Kyle Tengler. His topic - "The Dirt on Composting"
Class 23 members will be attending the meeting. Welcome them!

Home Garden Tour Committee

The next meeting for the full committee for the Home Garden Tour 2016 will be on **March 3, Thursday just before the SCMG meeting** at the Rose Garden Building, at **10 A.M.**

All Team Leaders as well as all other chairman should attend. Please bring your sign up sheets to be put out front. Also bring sign up sheets for your cashiers for each garden. If you did not pick them up at the last meeting, I will bring them for you.

Thank you for your help.
 Margaret Herring

1st Tuesday Lectures

The 1st Tuesday series presentations have been announced for March, April and May. All are at the IDEA Garden at Noon. They are:

March 1, "Floral Design with Flowers from Your Garden" - Neysa Mueller and Monica Klein

April 5, "Bullet-Proof Plants" - Andie Rathbone

May 3, "Keeping Chickens in the City" - Sandy Pannett

Susan Stone Sez

Is it Spring? What happened to Winter? I've been sneezing a lot, so maybe I missed it. Someone told me that Eastern Red Cedar caused my allergies to act up...but I haven't had allergies since I was a kid. Always something new...like my lantana covered in beautiful blooms amid all the dead leaves. Now that is an interesting sight. Many things are blooming now, ahead of schedule, so surely if Spring is not here already, it's just around the corner.



If Spring is near, so is our busy time. Time to weed, time to plant. Time to sign-up to work at special events this Spring. Time to attend the First Tuesday lecture on March 1. Neysa Mueller and Monica Klein are presenting on "Floral Design with Flowers from Your Garden."

If you're looking for inspiration, checkout our awesome Facebook page. Andie Rathbone offers a myriad of tips and articles, as well as information on upcoming area events.

Finally, it's not Spring cleaning, but a little housekeeping. Please remember to send your volunteer hours to Pat Welch each month. Use the form available on the website, and as a reminder, CE hours are actual hours only...no travel time is included.

Hope to see you at our monthly meeting on March 5.

Susan

Kyle Tengler comments....



As some of you might know my background is primarily in edibles and native wildflowers. One notable native wildflower is *Monarda fistulosa*, sometimes referred to as wild bergamot or bee balm.

When I first planted a specimen I was primarily interested in it as a nectar source for bees and butterflies because it can bloom from May to September. And boy do the bees love it! Planted near our patio, it was a source of great entertainment when dining out of doors, morning coffee and tea, or when we were out in the garden. It invited such wonderful pollinator traffic that there was nary a moment absent of the gentle hum of our many legged flying friends. Occasionally you might even find a hummingbird enjoying the flowers also.

This is one of those plants that does double and triple duty. Yes it attracts lots of good bugs, but it is also beautiful! What looks like one



Photo by Kyle Tengler

big flower is actually many small tubular flowers. You can find them in white, pink, and purple. They are also perennials and once established are incredibly tough plants. Like other *Monarda*'s, they are in the mint family, a fact that is easily distinguished by their square stems. The flowers are also scented and can be used fresh or dried in herbal teas, although I prefer them fresh. Often you will find many long, straight, and strong stems and so it works really well as a cut flower to add to your arrangements.

Wild Bergamot does prefer moist well-draining soil, and can be prone to mildew if there is poor air circulation. If you're looking for a perennial that sails through the summer loaded with flowers, is equally tough as it is beautiful, and has many uses, this is a great plant to consider.



The committee met on February 18th and considered a number of important issues some of which are summarized here:

Project leader positions that have been filled included Trudy Menke for the Market at the Goodman Museum and Susan Stone temporarily leading the Speaker's Bureau. Sherri Matthews reports that planning for the 2017 MG Calendar will begin soon. The Home Garden tour planning is going well. Margaret Herring plans a committee meeting soon.

President Susan Stone proposed a Programming Committee which would come up with ideas for the Speaker's Bureau, First Tuesdays, etc. She suggested that the committee could come up with 'canned programs' that could be used for the various events. Several members were suggested for the committee and others will be added. A meeting will be scheduled to begin the process. She also thanked those who participated in the member survey saying that she has gained some insights into member skill sets from the survey.

Ed Bryant was approved as the new Alternate State Director, replacing Rebecca Bullock who resigned.

The scheduled time of the Executive Committee meetings was changed to 1:30 PM for the next three months.

MG Class 23

The class meets at 1:00 PM in **room 257** of the Cotton Belt building. The regular classroom is still not useable, due to water damage and mildew. Certified MGs earn 3 CE's for each class audited.

The class schedule is as follows:

March 1, Earth-kind Landscaping—Kyle Tengler (photos for the directory will be taken).

March 3, Join the SCMG Association meeting at 11:30 AM—Rose Garden Center followed by Composting at the IDEA Garden—Tim Krizan.

March 10, Diagnosing Plant Problems, Working with the public—Chad Gullely/Kyle Tengler.

Other class activities are field trips for the class only.

MG Phone Desk

Take a look at the March MG calendar and you will quickly notice there is only one person scheduled to be at the phone desk during the month.

With the start of the growing season it is logical that March could be a busy month with questions from the public.

Anyone who wants to sign up to volunteer at the Phone Desk needs to call the Extension office (903-590-2980) to get your name on the calendar. Weather is never a factor and your help is needed.



A January Thaw that Lasted Until Spring

By Mary Claire Rowe

Everywhere I visit garden shops; I see bedding plants of beautiful colors and vigor. It is so tempting to buy some and give my garden a little more life. However, it seems to me too early for many, if not most. These hothouse grown plants are used to the heat and moisture, and their adjustment might not look so pretty in the short term.

There is also the question of what will Mother Nature bring our way before spring has officially sprung. We could have ever hotter days, or we could have a cold wave. That is the question. Snapdragons and pansies won't do as well if it continues to heat up, and it is way too early to take a chance on spring flower that live into spring and summer. As an experienced garden store owner said yesterday at his business, "It is best to wait a few weeks."

I am planting more azaleas to fill in where others have grown too leggy, because of my neglect. Some of mine are forty years old, and are at least twelve feet high, but are thin. This will be the year to trim them way back after they bloom. I love azaleas, they are pretty all year long, and they give us their all each spring. Not much work to keep them going, but my shear neglect didn't do them any service. So, I make a new resolution: trim at the right time.

February was the time for trimming roses, dead things, and shrubs, and I really did well at this project. One of my neighbors will be happy. When I first met him some years ago, he said, "Oh yes, you're the one with all the stuff growing out in the front" "Stuff!" Clearly he was not a gardener and didn't appreciate azaleas, crab apples, dogwood, forsythia, camellias, St. John's Wort, native fern, maples, yaupon, crinum, daisies, rosemary, roses, crepe myrtles, wax myrtles, windmill palms, or that plant whose name I can never remember.

March is a wonderful month for gardening. I will be busy every day, making my garden ever more perfect: digging, clipping, fertilizing, transplanting, starting new plants, everything! How glorious is East Texas, where we can grow just about anything. Lucky us.

Spring Has Sprung, Master Gardeners . . . And Bees

by Sam Griffith



Spring is almost upon us. Even my peach trees have gloriously plunged into full bloom. Whoops, okay, maybe it's a little early for tomato gardeners, or peach trees, to be so boldly optimistic that there will be no more frosts. So I guess I will wait a month longer before I plant tomatoes. Because I can control when I plant tomatoes to avoid a freeze. But I cannot control the eagerness of a peach tree with a warm breeze luring it into full bloom. And it looks like I'll be buying my peaches from a commercial grower this year. Drat.

I would refer everyone to the February edition of "Texas Co-op Power" magazine, the monthly magazine distributed to electric co-op customers from Cherokee County Electric Co-op, and other Texas co-ops. The February cover story was "Texas Master Gardeners: Volunteers Nurture Love of Horticulture." The article tells the history of the Texas Master Gardeners' program and has personal stories from a number of east Texas Master Gardeners. Get a copy, and remind yourself of the unique role you play in a vast network of community-minded volunteers dedicated to serving their communities through horticulture.

Buzzing on to another topic: Bees are a key element to a bountiful garden, especially vegetables. Every garden should foster and welcome bees in their gardens. Bees are the "canaries in the mines" for gardeners - for what harms the bees cannot be beneficial to people and pets. To learn more about bees, and about bee keeping -- it is fun and you get to keep the honey! -- go to a monthly meeting of the East Texas Beekeepers Association (www.etba.info) or call Richard Counts 903/566-6789. They meet on the first Thursday of each month, at 6:45 p.m. at the Whitehouse United Methodist Church, 405 West Main Street, in Whitehouse.

As gardeners say: "Carpe daffodils!!! -- seize the daffodils!!!"

Pay 2016 SCMG Dues

Mail checks for \$20 made out to SCMG to:

Jeanette Ross, 2702 Old Bullard Rd., Tyler, 75701..or bring your checks to the March 3rd SCMG meeting.

Looking Ahead...



The Garden Lecture Series will take place at the Tyler Rose Garden Center, except October which will be in Harvey Hall in conjunction with the Bulb Sale and Fall Conference.

- 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” at Harvey Convention Center
- November 12, 2016—Kyle Tengler “Fruit & Vegetable Production”

More information available on the SCMG website.

2016 Texas MG State Conference

The Texas MG State Conference May 17 to 19 at McKinney, TX. At the Myers Park & Event Center. Visit the website, www.ccmgatx.org/txmg2016 for up-to-date information.

Cost for the three day conference is, \$200 and after April 17, 2016 \$225. There are no one-day packages.



Rose City Artisans & Flower Market

March 26-27 10AM to 4 PM
Goodman-LeGrand Museum
624 North Broadway

Tyler's Azalea Trail—March 25 thru April 10

Smith County Master Gardener Association
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