



<http://scmg.tamu.edu>

May 2013

<http://easttexasgardening.tamu.edu>

Number 5
Volume 20



Inside This Issue

Keith's Column	2
Are You Out There?	2
Critters in My Sedums	3
Plants Around the World	3
New Address Books	3
Water Conservation	3
IDEA Garden News	4
Plant Thief	4
New E-mail Addresses	4



MG Association Meeting
May 2, 2013
Rose Garden Center

MG Grapevine Staff
Martin Davis, Editor

MG Grapevine Contributors:
Sue Adee, Dee Bishop, David Gary, Keith Hansen, Susan Nelson, Jim Powell and Jean Smith.

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.

Educational programs of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension are open to all individuals without regard to race, color, sex, disability, religion, age or national origin. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas cooperating.

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

Tyler Day Nursery Award



Jean Smith.

On Thursday April 18th the Tyler Day Nursery held its *Storybook Dinner*. The Smith County MGs received the **Helping Hands Award**. Pictured here are Susan Linnard and Joann Adair who accepted the award. Photo by

SCMG Awards Luncheon

The annual awards luncheon was held on April 11th where a number of awards were handed out by Keith Hansen and Ronnie Duncan. For pictures of all the winners go to <http://txmg.org/smith/about/awards-recognition-3/>.

Executive Committee

The committee met on April 19th. The various projects of the SCMG were discussed. Pat Welch advised that attendance was low at the Flower Market, but our sales were good. Jim Showen reported that he had attended the recent TX State MG director's meeting. Theft of plants at the Rose Garden was discussed at length.

Keith Hansen said that Smith County will be part of a Water Conservation pilot project. See page 3 for more information.

The committee will meet on the 3rd Thursday each month in the future.

May 2nd MG Meeting

Our speaker for the May meeting is **Kathleen Cunningham** who is a volunteer at the Dallas Arboretum and served on the Arboretum's Board of Directors for six years. She has also served on the Board of the Women's Council of the Arboretum.

The Children's Adventure Garden, named for Rory Meyers, will be opening in the spring of 2013. Her presentation will give us a bird's-eye view of this new garden, now under construction. It will be an indoor/outdoor wonderland and learning experience for children of all ages, where they'll explore and enjoy the role of nature in their lives. The eight-acre garden has fifteen learning areas and 150 hands-on exhibits that teach key concepts to meet state and national science education standards.

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 Bourne - 3819 Broadmoore Ct., Ben and Cecilia Anderson - 3880 Brighton Court Cir., and Larry and Bunny Rentfro - 3811 Long Leaf.

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. All Master Gardeners need to volunteer for this event to showcase the Smith County Master Gardener Association and make this fund raising event a fun success.

Speakers' Bureau

Are you passionate about your dirt work? Do you enjoy sharing your knowledge & skills? Are you willing to dig into a topic & become an instant "expert" - and entice a new gardener into the fold?? We need you! Especially if you are interested in water conservation or trees – we have a real need in these areas.

Also, be aware Smith County Texas A&M AgriLife needs to track your presentations and the audience. And we have a form for that!

Please contact Susan Nelson with your areas of interests or if you have been invited to speak. Phone 903-561-2179 or snelson300@gmail.com



Keith's Column

A nice rain is falling as I write this note, and I am thankful for this blessing. The strong cold front continues to make this an odd spring weather-wise. With unusual weather, you might see unusual things happening in the garden. Perhaps large populations of an insect you've never seen before, odd growth patterns on plants, or diseases that you might be unfamiliar with.



An example is azalea leaf gall, brought to my attention by a Master Gardener. Swollen and distorted leaves on new growth with a white powdery appearance are typical of this fungal disease (Exobasidium gall) on our evergreen azaleas. The good news is that it is a temporary problem, and once the galls are noticed, it is too late to do any preventive spraying. And you really don't need to spray anyway, since the occurrence is correlated with mild, wet spring weather and ends with warmer weather. Pick off and discard the infected leaves and be at peace. Another Exobasidium will infect young camellia leaves, causing them to swell, thicken, and turn a lighter or reddish-brown color. Again, just pick off and discard (not on the ground near the plant).



Congratulations to all who received recognitions during the annual graduation and awards luncheon in April. I appreciate the efforts that all of you do to educate the citizens of Smith County. And, that is our purpose, to teach and educate through various methods those whom we serve. As a reminder, the mission of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service is improving the lives of people, businesses, and communities across Texas and beyond through high-quality, relevant education.

Speaking to groups is one of our primary ways of educating, and we have a new Speaker Bureau chairperson, Susan Nelson. She is working on updating the speaker's bureau's listing of MGs who are willing to talk to groups and on what subjects, and on improving the reporting system once a program has been given. If you have a topic or topics you are comfortable about, please consider adding yourself to our listing. And, if you give a talk to any group, large or small, young or old (or in between) please remember to report to Susan afterwards, no later than the end of the month. You also need to include that event in your regular monthly reports to Martin.

Web sites to follow: The internet is full of information, some great, some not so great, and a lot just downright wrong. When researching information for yourself or for answering clientele questions, you need discernment as to who wrote the piece, what is their background, etc. In this and future columns, I'd like to provide you with some links to interesting, enlightening and pertinent information that I believe you will find useful personally and as a Master Gardener. Some of these might provide you with the ability to sign up to receive email alerts when new information is posted, or they may have a RSS feed you can subscribe to.

Insects in the City. Mike Merchant, Extension Entomologist in the Dallas area, writes a very interesting blog for homeowners (also another one for professional pest control operators) on current and interesting insect topics. His web site also has lots of publications for common insect problems. The web site is <http://citybugs.tamu.edu> – go to News Updates to see his current articles. His most recent blog article “Good Grooming Makes Good Pest Control” discusses why cockroaches groom themselves and how we can take advantage of that, and includes a link to an interesting video.

The Garden Professors. Take 4 horticulture professors from 4 different areas of the United States, let them talk frankly and humorously about current horticultural topics, let the public comment on their postings, and you have a very lively and often entertaining discussion. The following is taken from one of the author's introduction to the Garden Professor's blog: “The theme of the blog follows Will Rogers' famous line, “It's not what we don't know that causes us trouble, it's what we know that ain't so.” As Jeff and Linda have documented in their books and articles, there is a lot of science related to landscape horticulture that we choose to ignore. So, if you don't like the facts getting in the way of a good story then this blog is probably not for you.”

The discussions are stimulating and interesting to the horticulturally-minded. Here is the link to the Garden Professor's blog, hosted by WSU (Washington State Univ.) Extension or you can Google “the Garden Professors” to find it: <https://sharepoint.cahnr.wsu.edu/blogs/urbanhort/default.aspx> (note the https in the address).

One of the Garden Professors, Dr. Linda Chalker-Scott from WSU also has an interesting web site, and you might find her research-based Horticultural Myths page very interesting:

Are You Out There?

As this is written more than half of the Smith County Master Gardeners have made **no report of their volunteer hours in 2013!** Reports of volunteer activity should be made monthly. Send your report to Martin Davis at mred2853@sbcglobal.net. Get current now and then report regularly.

Timely reports are an absolute necessity. The effectiveness of TX A&M AgriLife Extension is measured, in part, by the number of reported MG volunteer hours. Monthly reports are made to the TX State level for inclusion with others from around the state. Old information is of no use to them, which is why it is so important to make on-time reports.



CRITTERS IN MY SEDUMS

by Dee Bishop

This spring has been typical ‘Texas’, cold one day hot the next with a frost or two thrown in for good measure. Our poor plants want to grow so badly and are determined to do so regardless of the weather. My sedums, especially the Autumn Joy hybrids became covered with zillions of aphids in what seemed like overnight. The tender new leaves were all puckered and maimed and totally ugly----- so what to do?

I washed them off with a strong jet of water, but there are so many little crevices and pockets that that was nearly useless. On some of the larger ones, I pinched them back so new growth will come out later hopefully when aphids aren’t so bad. On the smaller ones, I wrapped the pot with a cloth and dipped the plant head in a mixture of 1 part alcohol and 4 parts water. Then I rinsed them off with water. I have been doing this for years with success.

I have read you can use ammonia, vinegar, and of course insecticidal soap. I expect any of these ways would work fine. I do it with alcohol because a dear old friend of mine (40 years ago) told me to do it that way. *I sometimes use the alcohol and water in a spray bottle and spray them well, then rinse them off. Just get the little critters off before they completely ruin those beautiful little sedums and succulents.*

New Address Books

Each Master Gardener that attended the April 11th meeting should have picked up one of the new 2013-2014 Address Books. If you were not at the meeting or did not pick up a book, copies are available in the MG office in the bottom drawer of the phone desk.

It is always hoped that the information contained in the book is correct, but that is not always the case. Check the book for your personal information and if it is incorrect, notify Martin Davis.

**Plants From Around The World
From Venice, Italy, to Tyler, Texas**

by Jim Powell



Many early East Texas settlers brought bulbs and seeds from their previous southern homes and planted them in their new yards. The bulbs and offspring’s of the seeds multiplied and have spread from one generation to another. After all, nurseries as we know them today didn’t exist. Therefore, many plants, seeds and bulbs were passed along from one person to another along with a special story about the plant. This pass-along tradition is still very alive today.

Just last year George Weisser, a fellow Smith County Master Gardener, asked me, “Jim, would you like a cutting of an ivy plant that originally came from Italy?”



Without hesitation I answered, “George, I have just the place for it.”

In a few days he brought me the ivy, rooted and in a pot. Better yet, he related the story of the ivy’s long journey to Tyler.

George said the ivy originated from a cutting obtained over fifty years ago (stolen?) from a plant in Venice, Italy, and brought back to Yerington, Nevada, by his mother-in-law. According to George, Yerington is a little “cow town” in the northern part of the state. Her ivy cutting thrived in the United States and its cuttings have been shared with relatives, friends and neighbors in California, Idaho, Alabama, Texas and through the years perhaps in additional states.

George said, “Our original settlers introduced new plants (plus diseases) to our country. I just hope that original ivy didn’t carry any parasites.”

Water Conservation Program Demonstrators Wanted

We are seeking at least 5 volunteers to implement practices and record actual or estimated water savings in gallons or percentage reduction in usage (compared to previous practice). A demonstration protocol and a volunteer training packet will be provided to each participant. The goal is to decrease water consumption by 20% through recommended conservation practices in 2013-2014.

Here is a synopsis of the program:

PURPOSE

To demonstrate recommended water saving, best management practices in residential landscapes, lawns and home.

The program is designed to collect actual and/or estimated water savings utilizing result demonstrations.

TRAINING TOPICS

- Earth-Kind® Water Conservation in the Landscape
- Irrigation for Water Conservation (Irrigation Evaluation and Drip Irrigation)
- Water Conservation in the Home (40 Gallon Challenge)
- Calculating and Reporting Water Savings

ROLE OF DEMONSTRATORS / DEMONSTRATOR RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Adopt recommended practices
- Calculate water savings
- Monitor actual data from meter or use estimated savings for various practices
- Serve as a demonstration site
- Report savings to agent via an online survey (Qualtrics)
- Assist in conducting educational programs

AGENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Select and train volunteers (demonstrators)
- Follow protocol and assist with demonstrations
- Monitor demonstrations
- Aggregate individual site data and submit to region via Qualtrics
- Utilize demonstration results in appropriate educational programs (tours, meetings, mass media)

Please contact Keith ASAP if you are interested. There will be an agent and demonstrator online training Monday, April 29, from 8:45 ~ noon. Even if you cannot make this, please let me know of your interest in being a participant.

IDEA Garden News

By Sue Adee

The IDEA Garden is a kaleidoscope of color, with the early spring plants still in full bloom. Blooming poppies line the sidewalk. Pansies are full and lush and the calendula is really putting on a show. Covered in blooms are the red honeysuckle on the north arbor and the yellow honeysuckle on the fence. Snapdragons are blooming as well, but have developed rust and will have to be removed shortly. We were hoping the snapdragons would last until the first of June.

On a sad note, we had to remove the Avondale redbud tree from the IDEA Garden. For several years the tree had been diseased with Verticillium wilt and looked sick most of the year. A couple of years ago we planted another variety of redbud named 'Von Golf' on the other side of the Avondale. Soon it will be big enough to add the brilliant magenta color to the garden in early spring that we are accustomed to.

One nice thing about the cooler weather, it has kept our spring blooming plants in bloom longer. The down side is we have not wanted to plant hot weather plants. Normally, we have finished planting the garden for summer by the end of April. We may have to put out a request for help when the plants are purchased to get them in the ground.

We hope you will visit the Master Gardener IDEA Garden. Hopefully, you will find the time to help keep our garden a place of beauty.

New E-mail Addresses

Changed since the new Address Book was printed.

Barbara Null - bzscheile@nctv.com

Jim & Laquita Showen - jimlaqshowen@yahoo.com

Plant Thief

The problem is not new, but it is increasingly worse. Someone is stealing plants out of the gardens maintained by the Master Gardeners at the Tyler Rose Garden. Usually the plants stolen are those that have only recently been planted, probably because they are more easily lifted. Whoever is doing this is very knowledgeable, taking plants that are new on the market or hard to find. So what can be done?

Several things have been recommended including:

Master Gardeners working in the garden should always wear their name badge.

MGs working in the garden other than on workdays should notify Craig Reiland (903-531-1200) or the Rose Garden Center office (903-531-1212) to let them know of their presence.

If the Rose Garden staff sees someone working in the garden, other than on a scheduled work day, they may notify Craig and may inquire as to the identity of the person. MGs touring the garden should take similar action.

It is possible that cameras will be installed in the gardens at some later date. Since the garden gates are closed in the evening, the thief is probably active in the daytime, thus the need for vigilance on the part of the concerned staff and MGs seems to be the only deterrent available at this time.



Susan Linnard, Joann Adair and Jean Smith volunteer at the Tyler Day Nursery

They line up for food at the April 11th MG Luncheon.



Photos by Jean Smith



Kathy Moore (center) is presented Lifetime membership by Sue Adee and Keith Hansen.

Photos by Bill Kelldorf