



MG Grapevine



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The next SCMG Meeting

May 5, 2016
Rose Garden Center
11:30 AM

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SCMG Association Meeting

May 5, 2016



Dr. Vanessa Corriher-Olson the Forage Extension Specialist in Overton will speak on "Genetically Modified Foods".

1st Tuesday Lecture

At noon in the IDEA Garden

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

MG Hours

At the April 7th luncheon, it was announced that Pat Welch had the most volunteer hours for 2015, with 612 hours.

Other Smith Co. MGs who had notable hours include: **With 100+ hours**, Dana Anderson, Betty Atchley, Cheryl Black, Carolyn Chalender, Sandra Dugan, Martha Fowler, David Gary, Margaret Herring, Brooks Kerr, Linda Munn, Susan Nelson, Julia Randolph, Andie Rathbone, Linda Sargent, Ann Smith, Chris Steavenson, Clayton Turner and Pat Turner.; **with 200+ hours**, Charlie Colman, Martin Davis, Anne Pattullo, Susan Stone and Rebecca Ann Wilson; **with 300+ hours**, Hazel Bateman, Monette Colman and Cindy Harrington; and **with 500+ hours**, Jean Smith.

Susan Stone Sez....



I have a favorite new thing to do and I wanted to share. I absolutely love going to old, abandoned houses and digging up bulbs! Maybe it's the history of the old home site, the idea that someone cared enough to plant the bulbs years ago, or the understanding that bulbs take care of themselves, strive to reproduce and not only live but also can thrive in the direst of circumstances. These are things many of you already knew, but I'm a late-comer to the bulb-loving culture!

You can probably tell that many of us are knee-deep into planning for the October 8 "Bulbs and More" Sale. This year's event promises to be somewhat different and exciting, with an honest-to-goodness "bulb expert" as speaker and some new and different bulbs for sale. Stay tuned.

The annual Home Garden Tour is scheduled for Saturday, May 28, rain or shine. Sign-up sheets will be available at the May meeting, so if you have not yet signed up for a garden, please do.

And finally, for every MG with a phone (that's everyone, right?) start snapping pictures of your garden masterpieces and send to Sherri Mathews. Your special photo just might grace the cover of the 2017 Smith County Master Gardeners Calendar and Garden Guide. Wouldn't that make a great, personalized Christmas present for your friends and family?

Hope to see you at our next meeting, May 5. Susan

Kyle Tengler comments....



Warm season greens

As temperatures warm up a lot of our cool season greens will begin to turn bitter and/or bolt. Some might think that's the last of the greens until Fall brings us cool temperatures, but if you're willing to experiment with some less conventional edibles you can be eating greens straight through the Summer.

Malabar spinach is one such green. In its natural range Malabar spinach is a perennial vine, but here in Smith County it must be grown as an annual. Instead of climbing with tendrils the stems wind around structures, hopefully a well-placed trellis. The fleshy leaves do have some similarities to spinach, but when eaten raw has a more mucilaginous texture, so it is often eaten as a cooked green or in sandwiches where the texture is less of an issue. I personally don't mind it and love that it can grow tasty greens even in high temperatures. It can be started from seeds but germinates slowly, so if you can find them in a nursery or take cuttings from existing plants you can get a faster start on them.

Another green that does well in warmer temperatures is chard. I've planted chard in the Spring to be rewarded with leafy greens all the way to the next Fall! Chard, of course, is also quite ornamental and can be commonly found in landscapes. There is a variety called Perpetual Spinach that is particularly popular for looking and tasting more like spinach than other varieties. Pick small tender leaves to use as salad greens, and larger leaves make good cooked greens or wraps.

Getting into the lesser known vegetables we have the Amaranths. There are ornamental amaranths, amaranths that are common weeds, and then there are amaranths that have been selected for either their grain or their leaves. There are many varieties to choose from that are selected for their leaves like the bright red leafed Molten Fire, or the Green Calaloo Amaranth. Young tender leaves make great and colorful additions to salads, while bigger leaves go great in soups and stews or even omelets. As with all amaranths these can seed prolifically, so unless you are growing a grain variety or saving seeds, I would try and keep flowers lopped off.

One vegetable I always find amusing to see at the occasional farmer's market is Lamb's Quarters. You find it growing wild all over Texas and is most often thought of as a weed, but it is also one of the most nutritious greens around. The taste is often compared to spinach but many people actually prefer it as it is a very mild flavored green. They stand up to the challenge of Texas Summers and can be grown very easily.

If you find yourself missing your spring greens and want to try something different, consider some of these warm season greens!

"No - I'm Not Crazy"

Well, that's what I had to tell a couple visiting the IDEA Garden last Tuesday when they caught me watering the stonewall in the succulent section. He asked me, as he walked by, if watering the stones made them grow?



Thinking he was just kidding, I replied, "I don't know, I have been watering them since September and can't tell they have grown an inch." Well they looked at each other and hurried off to another section of the garden.

As I continued watering the stonewall, it occurred to me, "They may think I'm crazy." So when I went to refill the watering can, I ran into them again. As they shied away from me, I said, "So you may know I'm not totally crazy, what you couldn't see from your side of the stonewall were all the succulents in the cracks and crevasses on my side of the wall."

As they moved further away, I thought to myself, "Perhaps I am a little crazy, after all, who tries growing plants that prefer 15 to 20 inches of rainfall in an area with an average rainfall of 46 inches?"

Come by and see how crazy I am.

Clayton Turner, Succulent Leader, IDEA Garden

Speaker's Bureau

As all Master Gardeners know, our Speaker's Bureau is an extraordinary outreach program offering free educational opportunities to the local Community from our own First Tuesdays in the Garden, to programs for nearby county MG groups, to lectures at the local Library, and to smaller venues such as local garden clubs. A select group of your fellow MGs have been doing this for years, and if you ask them they'd tell you it's a very rewarding experience.



Would you like to join? All you need is a desire to help others learn the joys of gardening. A new "MG Programming Committee" is working on refining our processes, including offering "canned" programs for beginners to use at their first speaking engagement. We also plan to offer a short class offering tips on how to speak to groups of people. Just a couple of things to help get you started.

If you're interested in joining the Speaker's Bureau, please sign up at our meeting on May 5. If you have questions, call Susan Stone at 903-526-1363 or email at slstone11@gmail.com.



Spring has sprung boldly, with heat, then cold snaps, dry and then heavy rains. Kinda normal “Springtime weather” in east Texas.

Vegetable gardening is going full blast. There is not much of your summer vegetables that you cannot plant now, except maybe sweet potatoes which generally appreciate a slightly warmer soil tempera-

ture.

One odd thought: plant your turnip greens in the fall in Texas, not the spring, like we did when I grew up. Why? Because, as an Irish farmer explained to me, the cold weather turns the carbohydrates in the turnips into sugar, making them sweet. In the spring, in Texas, turnips turn bitter as they age.

Another suggestion: As you are planting those tender store-bought tomatoes and pepper plants: Beware of cutworms. Cutworms are little green worms that curl around the stalk of tomato and pepper plants just under the soil surface, and gnaw through the stalk, killing the plant. Old timers used to put a stick in the ground beside the stalk, preventing the cutworm from curling around the stalk, and saving the plant. I slice open about a one third length of plastic drinking straw length-wise, and wrap it around the stalk of the plants. The plant is then planted in the ground with the drinking straw around the stalk, and the straw about half an inch below the surface.

And, for those who like interesting critters wandering in your yard and garden, consider getting a few chickens. Places like Atwood's Farm Supply on the north Loop and Southland Feeds on Glenwood have little baby chicks ready to be raised and put to work eating bugs and laying eggs. Atwood's and Tractor Supply on the west Loop have fancy pre-made chicken houses for sale. Several suggestions: Get “sexed” chicks rather than “straight run” chicks, if you can.

“Straight run” means half of your chicks will be roosters, who grow up to crow, bother the neighbors, and in town, are forbidden. Also, roosters lay no eggs. “Sexed” chicks mean you only buy pullets (females/hens). Southland Feeds allows you to order all kinds of neat chicken varieties, including beautiful “Golden Seabright” bantam chickens, and large Golden Wyandotte and Chinese Cochin (with feathered feet) (don't those just sound beautiful) chicks, among countless other varieties. One of my favorite varieties is Speckled Sussex chickens. The Sussex are lustrous bronze, with green highlights, and a white dot on each feather - beautiful. Look at the sales charts of pictures of neat chicken varieties available to buy. The Araucana variety of chickens from Chile produce either green or blue eggs, which are pretty neat - if you have kids, you can get some ham and have your “green eggs and ham” right in your own backyard. And, in a couple months, your back yard chickens can be providing you fresh free-run yard eggs.

Downside of chickens: the chickens need to be contained in a fenced area, such as an enclosed backyard, because critters, from dogs to raccoons and skunks, to bobcats and hawks, will enjoy a chicken dinner of your precious “yard birds.” But chickens are fairly low-maintenance and, it is a pleasure to eat the fresh eggs you have raised yourself.

Finally, the Zika virus is a dire health problem that is finally growing on the consciousness of Americans. Good news/bad [news](#): I have read that the mosquitoes tend to live and die within a few hundred feet of where they breed. So if you keep your yard free of standing water, and encourage your neighbors to do so, you will make an impact on the level of infection danger in your neighborhood. So, since we have already gotten over two inches of rain last night, it is time to make the rounds again to be sure there is no standing water in which the mosquitoes can breed.

Enjoy the fun spring planting season! Sam Griffith

Address Book 2016-2017

The address book was available at the April MG Luncheon. For those who did not get one, copies are available at the Extension office, in the drawer of the phone desk. If errors are found, please notify Martin Davis.

Changes and/or errors we have found in the new book include:

Ref. page 6 – Carolyn Chalender no long works at the Extension office, so her work phone number should not be there.

Ref. page 12 - Nancy Martin's new e-mail address is nancymartin133@yahoo.com.

Ref. page 16 – Sandy Pannett's phone number should be 903-504-5501.

Ref. page 23 – Hours reporting – hour's reports should be mailed to Pat Welch (not Martin Davis) or sent to her e-mail.



The 2017 MG Calendar is going to be wonderful but it is lacking something - your photos.

We need an amazing photo to put on the front cover and also photos for the inside. Get out your cameras and snap some great pictures or maybe you already have some you would like to submit. Please send them to: matthews1952@sbcglobal.net by May 31. The committee will meet and decide on the best ones and you will get the great satisfaction of seeing your name on the calendar. Thanks, Sherri Matthews

Home Garden Tour

To all Master Gardeners and their friends: Get ready for something really special this year. This is a tour not to be missed! There will be something for everyone. Something added this year is a garden home with a small lot. Big things come in small packages and you can be sure this is just what it is. All the gardens are inviting, shady, sunny, with water features and lots of unusual plantings.

Be sure to invite your neighbors, other organization club members and of course family members. Wear comfortable shoes, be sure to get your tickets early and pray for sunshine this year. Tickets are \$10.00 each prior to the event date and will be \$12.00 the day of our event. Save the date! MAY 28, 2016 9:A.M. till 3: P.M.

Go to <http://txmg.org/smith/coming-events/> for a list of the homes and for locations where tickets are available.

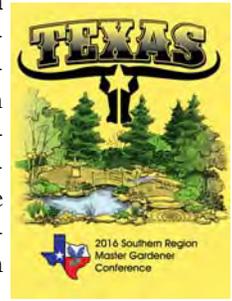
2016 Texas MG State Conference

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, \$225. There are no one-day packages.

November 1-4, 2016 The Cowboy Experience

Come to the 2016 Southern Region Master Gardener Conference in Arlington and Fort Worth, hosted by Tarrant County. Master Gardeners from thirteen southern states will come together to learn from gardening specialists, tour local sites and gardens, partake in The Cowboy Experience and be treated to some good old-fashioned Texan hospitality.



Go to <https://2016southernregionmg.com/> for more info.

2017 TMGA Conference Cruise



We are very excited to announce the launch of our 2017 Texas Master Gardener Conference! This is the first time we're taking the conference on a cruise ship! Come join us aboard the Carnival Liberty™ for four special days of education and fellowship, along with sun, fun and ocean waves!

For more information visit the conference website at: <http://texasmgconference.com/>

Three homes on the Home Garden Tour

The Anderton Home



The Scudder Home



The Wies Home

