



**SOMERVELL
COUNTY
MASTER
GARDENERS
ASSOCIATION**

**SCMGA
Officers 2012-2013**

President:
Shirley Smith

Vice President:
Donna Hagar

Secretary:
Bonnah Boyd

Treasurer:
Kathy Gosdin

Historian:
Julie Conner

Special Committees

Education Chairman
Bob Lancaster

Webmaster and
Newsletter Editor:
Donna Hagar

SCMGA Newsletter

TEXAS A&M
AGRILIFE
EXTENSION

THE GREEN PIECE

Volume 5, Issue 9

September 2012

Native Texas Plants!

SCMGA Community Horticulture Education Program

Monday, September 10, 6:30 PM

Somervell County Citizen Center, 209 SW Barnard

Free and Open to the Public

Come join the Somervell County Master Gardeners at their September Community Horticultural Educational Session and learn all about Native Texas Plants and the Native Plant Society of Texas. The program is scheduled for Monday, September 10th at 6:30 p.m. at the Citizens Center on Barnard Street and will be presented by Gailon Hardin, a past president of the Native Plant Society of Texas. Gailon retired as an accountant in 1999 and began her next career learning about native plants. Since retirement, she has developed a "sustainable" native plant landscape



on her one-acre property that requires watering of established plants only in times of drought. She is such a native plant enthusiast, her three dogs Chile Pequin, Sumac and

Lancelota are all named after Texas native plants.

She became a Master Naturalist in 1999, a Master Gardener in 2000, President of the North Central Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas in 2003 and in 2009 became the President of the Native Plant Society of Texas.

The meeting is open to the public and free. Refreshments will be served.

Remaining CHES Programs for 2012

October 8, Plant Propagation - with our own Certified Master Gardener, Debbie Botkin-Parker. More info TBA

November 12 - Special MG Roundtable
Don't miss this year's final Somervell County Master Gardener's Community Horticultural Education Session scheduled for Monday evening, November 12th at 6:30 p.m. November's program will be a special event featuring a round table

question and answer format provided by our own local certified Master Gardeners. Our group has a lot of combined knowledge, training and experience and we want to share that with our community. We look forward to hearing your gardening and horticultural questions and helping you find the answers! Refreshments will be provided and this interesting and informative program is FREE.

September Gardening Tips

By Becky Altobelli, Somervell County Master Gardener

With the unexpected, and absolutely welcome, recent rains in Somervell County this August, the Garden Tips for September are many.



For the vegetable garden, September is a busy time. You can put out transplants of winter crops such as cabbage, broccoli, and kale. Fertilize to

speed growth before any early freezes that are always possible in North Texas. Swiss chard, mustard greens and bok choy are some of the greens that can be planted now. Peas also, can be planted early September to allow for growth before a hard freeze arrives. Spinach and those in the onion family would be best left to plant a few weeks into fall as the temperatures cool. Seeds for root crops, such as radishes and carrots, can be sown. Warm season vegetables will be ready for harvesting. Picking green beans and squash before they are full size and mature will provide you the ones most tender and tasty.

Annual and perennial flowers and shrubs can be rejuvenated with a light shearing. Fall-blooming flowers and shrubs can be planted now for their best show. And as temperatures moderate, plan and prepare to plant perennial shrubs and trees soon, so they will have adequate root development to carry them through the winter and into the spring.



Lawns continue to need deep watering every 7 to 10 days, and frequent mowing will help to have a denser turf and with less weeds. Fertilize in September with a 3-1-2 or 4-1-2 ratio of nutrients.

September is the month to still be diligent with providing vegetables, flowers, shrubs and tree with adequate soil moisture. Texas rainfall is far too fickle to count on. Temperatures can also still climb and the plants and soil can dry out.

Enjoy the Beginning of Fall in your garden!

Wade's WallyWorm Word - "Anas platyrhynchos"

Submitted by Wade Moore, Somervell County Master Gardener

"WallyWorm, come out here and meet a new member of our little world. This is Cha-Cha. Cha-Cha, meet WallyWorm. WallyWorm, Cha-Cha is a dancing duck. Just watch her dance when I set her down on this tin box." crows Wade tap-tap-tap-tap



lost her ability to fly, so I can contain her in a low fence of a couple of feet or so. I can harvest her eggs also, maybe as many as 250 to 325 per year. She told me she arrived at her previous residence in the mail. Not being fed or watered prior to her arrival, she was ready for some nourishment.

"Well that's fine and dandy and I know you have good reasons to harbor such a creature, but tell me, what possessed you to bring Cha-Cha to our serene habitat? That tap-tap-tap is already getting on my nerves; both of them." fusses Wally worm ... tap-tap-tap-tap

Her previous owner was careful not to feed her medicated feed; which could have killed her. Her water supply was always fresh and limited access to her dish prevented her from getting her torso into it.' continued Wade tap-tap-tap-tap

"She is a descendant of the wild mallard duck (*Anas platyrhynchos*). In fact, all domestic ducks except Muscovy ducks descended from *Anas platyrhynchos*. She, like most domestic ducks, has

"She was fed the first three weeks on a 20-22 % crude protein feed ration. Weeks 4 through 12 was with a 16-18 % ration and the 13th through

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

26th weeks with a 16% protein ration. By then she was able to forage a lot of her food from the pasture, requiring very little supplemental feed. Could be that the fire ants in the pasture may have contributed to her learning some of her fancy dance steps; they sure do make me dance a jig. Oh! by the way Wally-Worm, you might want to give her a wide berth since she eats ground critters like slugs and the sort.”

says Wade tap-tap-tap-tap

“Fine! Fine! Just get her to stop that infernal tap dancing. It’s more than I can stand, and I can’t even stand.” screams WallyWorm tap-tap-tap-tap

“Okay! Okay! Tell you what; I’ll hold up Cha-Cha and you open the lid to the tin box and blow out the candles.” concludes Wade

Pilfered from www.themodernhomestead.us

Favorite Plants Of Master Gardeners - “Plumeria”

By Barbara Lancaster, Somervell County Master Gardener

Common name: Plumeria, frangipani, melia, temple tree and many named cultivars.

Scientific name: Plumeria Rubra L., P. Obtusa L., and hybrids.

Native/ Adapted: Plumeria is native to tropical America. In Hawaii, it is grown as an ornamental and is not found in the wild. It has widespread use in tropical landscapes around the world and is frequently associated with temples and graveyards. Plumeria is not cold tolerant in North Texas. It can be container grown and protected during the winter; or planted in the landscape and removed during the winter months to a protected area.

Height: In tropical climates the Plumeria is generally a small tree growing to 30 feet high. In cooler climates Plumeria can be grown to a relatively large size in large containers.

Spread: It’s broad usually round headed canopy is often about as wide as the tree is tall. Plumeria vary somewhat by species and hybrids in tree size, compactness and branching character, leaf and flower size and color and deciduousness.

Light: Full sun **Evergreen/Deciduous:** Varies by variety.

Seasonal Interest: Flowers during the growing season.

Color/Features: Flowers are tubular, expanding into a pinwheel of five petals that averages 2-3 inches diameter. The flowers may be white, red, yellow, pink or multiple colors, varing by variety and in profusion of blooms. Flower qualities include color, size petal fullness, fragrance, keep-ing quality and tendency to face. Flowers of most cultivars are highly fragrant and are most fragrant at night. The flowers have no nectar. Plumeria flowers are excellent lei flowers and are especially common and traditional for leis. Some cultivars have compact upright growth, while others are lanky and open with good evergreen foliage but poor flower qualities.

Water: Well drained, slightly acidic soil.

Maintenance: Plumeria is easy to grow in hot, dry areas. It has a moderate wind resistance and salt tolerance. Plumeria may be easily propagated from cuttings of leafless stem tips in spring. Cuttings are allowed to dry at the base before planting in well drained soil. Cuttings are particularly susceptible to rot in moist soil.

Wildlife: Hummingbirds are attracted to Plumeria. **Deer Resistant:** Yes

Comments/Experience: I have grown Plumeria for several years from two plants received from my Mother. I have propagated several plants from these plants over the years. I grow these plants in large containers outdoors in the summer, bringing them into a protected area during the winter months.

Source: Dr. Richard A. Criley, Department of Horticulture, College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources, University of Hawaii at Manoa. Publication Ornamental and Flowers, Feb. 1998, OF-24.



The 'Tater - for real!

By Shirley Smith, Somervell County Master Gardener

Ode to a Spud

Dear beautiful potato,
When I gaze into your eyes,
I'm fearful 'cause all I think about
Is making you French fries.

I want to appreciate you,
I know I really can,
But I appreciate you most
With two eggs in a frying pan.

I love you, dear potato,
And swear my heart will break,
If someone else devours you,
With butter after you bake!

Anonymous



Have you ever really considered that potato you are eating and how it came to be here in America and on your plate? The potato has an interesting history. In the Americas, it is thought to have been cultivated by the Incas as early as 3,000 BC. Those potatoes had dark purplish skins and yellow flesh. The Spanish conquistadores discovered the potato in 1537 and took it back to Europe. At first, the Europeans thought this strange vegetable was poisonous and would even cause leprosy! However, a few prominent Europeans helped dispel this myth and the potato became a mainstay of many Europeans diets.

The potato made its way to North America when Captain Nathaniel Butler, then governor of Bermuda, sent two large cedar chests containing potatoes and other vegetables to Francis Wyatt, governor of Virginia at Jamestown. Archeologists have found evidence that proves the potato was being grown by the early Irish immigrants in New England in 1719. But, it still was not widely accepted as a food staple. During the 1850s, most Americans considered the potato as food for animals rather than for humans; and, as late as the middle of the 19th Century, the Farmer's Manual recommended that potatoes "be grown near the hog pens as a convenience towards feeding the hogs."

In Isabella Beeton's 1862 book called Book of Household Management, she wrote about the potato:

"It is generally supposed that the water in which potatoes are boiled is injurious; and as instances are recorded where cattle having drunk it were seriously affected, it may be well to err on the safe side, and avoid its use for any alimentary purpose."

Think the "tater" just comes in white or orange like the sweet potato? Nope! After doing a little research, I found they can come in white, yellow, blue, purple, and red and here are a few varieties that we are all familiar with:

1. The Russet is the most widely used potato variety in the United States. These potatoes are available year-round, are high in starch and are characterized by netted brown skin and white flesh. Because of their high-starch levels, they have a floury texture when cooked, making them ideal for baking and mashing. They are also considered good all-purpose potatoes. Major varieties include: Burbank, Norkotah, Ranger, Shepody

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

2. Round White Potatoes are available throughout the year. Round whites are medium in starch level and have smooth, thin light tan skin with white flesh. These are creamy in texture and hold their shape well after cooking. Regarded as an all-purpose potato, round whites are very versatile and are particularly good for salads and for scalloped, steamed, fried or roasted preparations.

Major varieties include: Atlantic, Katahdin, Norwis, Reba, Superior

3. Round Reds are more widely available and can now be found almost all year round. They are characterized by their naturally rosy red skin, but can have white, yellow or even red flesh. Red potatoes have a firm, smooth and waxy texture, making them well suited for salads, roasting, boiling and steaming. Round reds are often referred to as "new potatoes"; however, technically, "new" refers to any variety of potatoes that is harvested before reaching maturity.

Major varieties include: Chieftain, Dakota Rose, La Rouge, Norland, Red La Soda



4. Long whites are oval-shaped, medium in starch level and have thin, light tan skin. These potatoes have a firm, creamy texture when cooked. They are available nearly year round. Long white potatoes are good for boiling, microwaving and pan frying, but are also a good all-purpose potato.

Major varieties include: Kennebec, White Rose, Cal-White

5. Blue and Purple Potatoes: These potatoes originated in South America and have begun to gain popularity in the United States. Blue and purple potatoes are mainly available in the fall. These relatively uncommon tubers have a subtle nutty flavor and flesh that ranges in hue from dark blue or lavender to white. Microwaving preserves the color the best, but steaming and baking are also good methods of preparation. Natural skin tones also provide an exciting array of blue and purple colors to any dish.

Major varieties include: Purple Peruvian, All Blue

Without getting too technical, let it be said that there is a great variety of potatoes out there. Potatoes should be planted in March for our area because they like warm days and cool nights. Okay, what is about to happen to our weather – the days will begin to cool down and can be called “warm” and the nights will get cool. Sounds like a great opportunity to have a fall crop of potatoes. However, it should be noted that if you are willing to try for a fall crop of potatoes, then they need to be in the ground now. I have found discussion on the Internet where folks have gotten a relatively good crop of potatoes by heavily mulching around the potatoes to protect them from excessive cold (do we have that here anymore?). Also, you can always protect any tender plants by using row cover or even plastic gallon milk jugs with the bottoms cut out and, of course, mulch to protect the roots. Our average first frost date (now the key word here is average) is from November 1 to 10.

So, if you are willing to experiment a little and think outside the box, then a fall crop of potatoes might be just the thing for you.

Sources:

United States Potato Board, Foodreferences.com, What's Cooking America (Potato-History of America)



**SOMERVELL
COUNTY MASTER
GARDENERS
ASSOCIATION**

Texas A&M AgriLife
Extension Service
Somervell County
P. O. Box 895
Glen Rose, TX 76043
[http://somervell-
co.tamu.edu](http://somervell-co.tamu.edu)

Phone: 254-897-2809
Fax: 254-897-9323
E-mail:
somervellmg@gmail.com

We're on the web!

<http://www.somervellmastergardeners.org>

The Somervell County Master Gardeners are volunteers who work with the AgriLIFE Extension to improve gardening skills throughout the community. Program objectives are implemented through the training of local volunteers known as Master Gardeners. We collaborate with Extension to conduct youth and community education; establish and maintain demonstration gardens; and provide a speakers bureau. We work with special audiences in the community for youth and community outreach of a horticultural nature. We recruit and educate new Master Gardener candidates for effective volunteering.

The training for Somervell County is held in combination with Hood and Johnson Counties and is currently held only every other odd year. The next training for our area will be held in the spring of 2013. If you are interested in the SCMGA, we would like to invite and encourage you to visit one of our monthly meetings, so that you might learn more about our various projects and activities. Our regular monthly business meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month at 10:00 a.m. in the Somervell County Extension Office. For more information, please contact Somervell County Extension office at 254-897-2809 or you may email the SCMGA at somervellmg@gmail.com.



The information given herein is for educational purposes only. Reference made to commercial products or trade names is made with the understanding no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by Texas A&M AgriLIFE Extension Service, The Texas A&M University System and its agencies is implied. Educational programs conducted by Texas A&M AgriLIFE Extension Service serve people of all ages regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, religion, handicap, or national origin. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating.

Individuals with disabilities who require an auxiliary aid, service or other accommodations in order to participate in Extension sponsored events are encouraged to contact the County Extension Office to determine how reasonable accommodations may be made.