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President’s Message
by Wayne Rhoden

It is really strange when we celebrate two inches of rain, but that is what happened last week. We keep hearing about El Niño and hope we will have a wet winter. Just this week I looked at the latest news about it and hope is waning about how much relief we will eventually get from the phenomenon. This is from the Climate Prediction Center: “The chance of El Niño is about 70% during the Northern Hemisphere summer and close to 80% during the fall and early winter.’ No doubt we are experiencing major changes in our climate, but if you look back over the last 50 years there are ups and downs in the weather. Anyway we cannot change the weather, so we just plan to adjust what we need to do to live with it. We as Master Gardeners need to continue to teach our community to conserve by planting native and adaptive plants that do not require as much water as many of the plants we have been able to grow in the past.

We did get enough applicants to hold our fall training classes and although we did not get the 35 we wanted, we did get 29 which will still be a good number for the class. We will be starting the class on August 5 and look forward to our new students.

Be mindful of the opportunities available for volunteers each month, especially Joss Growers. David Scott, the owner is allowing us to learn about the propagation of plants and has been very generous with his donations of plants for many of our projects. He also agrees to grow some of the plants which we use in our annual Plant Sale Fund Raiser that he would not normally grow.

Another reminder of the Help Desk: if you are inclined to volunteer to help answer questions that come into the extension office, you will gain valuable knowledge by seeing the questions that are asked by our clients, the residents of Williamson County. If you wish to have additional training to be able to work the desk, let me know and I can set up another session. It is not really that hard and you will be surprised of how much you will learn.
Trying to get your required volunteer hours in can sometimes be a challenge, sometimes tedious, and sometimes exciting! It would be great if you could always say you are learning something when you volunteer; not just providing free labor.

This is why I always enjoy volunteering for Berry Springs Park and Preserve. Susan Blackledge is constantly teaching us something as she works right alongside of us. She’s there to answer our questions, explain why we are doing what we are doing, and how it will benefit. Today was no different, however, it was probably the most difficult and strenuous of all the jobs I have done.
Today was pond clean-up day and perhaps seeing that only two other people had signed up should have given me inkling that this would not be a “walk in Berry Springs Park” day, but I am up for most challenges.

As directed, I arrived with my rubber boots, sunscreen, water, and gloves at about 8:15 a.m. Only one other MG showed up and the other volunteers were from the San Gabriel Fly Fishing club. Eight young people and three Staff personnel from Williamson County Juvenile Services were there as well.

They had their own project and were working with rakes and ropes across the pond removing floating algae in the main spring area of the pond. For our project two Parks personnel rowed the john boat out into the pond with a specially designed water tiller with lots of bent tines on it.
The water tiller had a heavy duty rope attached and the opposite end was attached to a small Bobcat skid steer. The men on the row boat dropped the tiller into the water and the Bobcat pulled it across the pond bottom and up onto the bank. The tiller pulls up the weeds. The tiller was covered with lots of heavy wet aquatic weeds, predominantly milfoil and musk grass, and often several crawfish or baby blue gill fish. We would then cut the weeds off of the tiller and then pile it into three foot tall piles. These piles would then be lifted into the dump gator driven by Susan and she would zip across the park to their compost area and dump it out. The aquatic weeds are then mixed with donkey manure to make a very rich compost which is used in the parks flower beds and around tree and shrubs.

This procedure continued for the next three hours! Several hundred pounds of weeds were removed from the pond; about 30 crawfish and a dozen blue gills were saved. And Berry Springs Park and Preserve will have the healthiest compost pile around. Someone said that this was the most they had ever taken out in one day! Even though there is still a great deal more that needs to be removed, you could actually see a difference in the pond that local fishermen as well as other park patrons will appreciate. The spring fed pond is a year round green house for aquatic vegetation with its 68 degree water temperature. Therefore this cleaning of the pond is important for the health of all of the aquatic habitat.
I had never held crawfish before and not only was I their super hero; I also learned how to tell if they were boy or girl crawfish!

MG Rebecca Caldwell and Pat Carlson (San Gabriel Fly Fishing Club) comparing their "Crawfish Catch of the Day."

MG Cheryl Alvis, Pat Carlson (San Gabriel Fly Fishing Club ) & MG Rebecca Caldwell with their aquatic weed, milfoil.
Recognizing the importance of keeping our ponds and creeks clear will be a never ending chore but until we take the first steps and show what a difference it makes, we will not win over others to also take care of our ponds and water ways. Even the juveniles could readily see what a difference they were making from their efforts.

Last year I learned how to harvest Blue Bonnet seeds from Susan and the importance of decorating a park for Christmas! This year she has shown me how to harvest Standing Cypress seeds and Poppy Seeds. Today, coming home dirty, wet and exhausted gave me a great feeling of accomplishment. (I recognized this only after a two hour nap!) This is just one of the many reasons that I maintain my accreditation as a Williamson County Master Gardener.

Now let’s see…….18 hours and 20 minutes to go……..!!!!!
This after shot gives a good idea of how hard everyone worked.
Looking for a Great Volunteer Opportunity?  
Go to Joss Growers!
by Jinna MacLaurin

Williamson County Master Gardeners frequently volunteer at Joss Growers. Working at Joss is considered volunteer work, but it is an excellent educational opportunity as well.

Joss Growers is a wholesale nursery located in Georgetown, which sells plants wholesale to area landscapers. Joss propagates thousands of new plants every year. Their products include flowering perennials, gorgeous ornamental grasses, cactus, succulents, bushes, shrubs, trees, vines, ground covers, ferns and bamboo. Joss Growers also is one of the suppliers of the wonderful plants we sell at our Spring Garden Fair!
Pictured from left to right: Jan Redden, Paul Howe, Barbara Faulkner, David Scott (owner of Joss Growers), Amy Wallingford, Catherine Schmidt and Christine Rogers. Not pictured: Jinna MacLaurin.
Recently, I went to Joss to work on propagation of Texas Sedge, which grows as a short, shade-loving, evergreen ground cover that rarely needs mowing and is drought tolerant once established. Texas sedge seeds had previously been planted in small flats and now it was time to separate the small plants and replant so that they could develop further. Each small bunch of plants was removed from its container and the roots were carefully separated, creating three or more bunches, each of which was then replanted.

We had an opportunity to talk and socialize as we worked. During the time we were working, it started to pour and the pitter-patter of the rain on the greenhouse roof, as well as the water gushing through the gutters created a wonderful background for our conversation. It was a very enjoyable morning.

Although they generally sell in huge lots wholesale, Joss does make an exception for volunteer Master Gardeners. Volunteer Master Gardeners can buy discounted plants and soil at Joss! The morning I volunteered, Christine Rogers and I went to the office so that I could buy three beautiful yellow yucca plants and Christine could buy a bag of Sunshine Professional Growing Mix. We were met by Scout, the friendly office cat and a Joss employee who helped us with our purchases.
New interns working on certification need to complete six hours at Joss Growers. It is one of the best volunteer opportunities because it gives you a chance to get to know others, to learn about propagation and to have the satisfaction of a volunteer job well-done! And, when you are finished, you might just want to wander the vast greenhouses and check out the various plants, and perhaps snag one or two (or three or....) for your home garden!

Volunteering opportunities at Joss are generally available every Wednesday from 9:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m. You can volunteer by going to the Texas Master Gardener Volunteer Management System. (Go to the Williamson County Master Gardener home page at [http://txmg.org/williamson/](http://txmg.org/williamson/), click on “Volunteering”, click on “Hours Reporting” and log into the system. You will see volunteer opportunities listed on the left hand side of the page. Click on “Joss Greenhouse” to bring up the calendar showing volunteer opportunities at Joss. Select a date and click on the heading in the date box. This will bring up a page with details about the event. Scroll to the bottom of the page and click on the button “Volunteer for Event.”) If you have difficulty with the system you can volunteer by contacting Paul Howe at (512)517-6078 or e-mail at lotuswami@aol.com.
Pillbugs, or roly-polys, are crustaceans, closely related to crayfish and shrimp. While terrestrial, these creatures must live in moist environments to be able to survive. They may sometimes invade homes in large numbers, but they are a nuisance pest and do not bite, sting, transmit diseases or cause physical damage to the home or its contents.

Pillbugs are ¼-½" long with dark grey coloring (Figure 1). Their oval bodies are convex above and either flat or concave underneath. Pillbugs have seven pairs of legs and two pairs of antennae and roll up into a ball when disturbed.

Pillbugs are scavengers, feeding mainly on decaying organic matter. They may occasionally feed on young, tender plants, but damage is typically not significant. They can be found under mulch, flower pots, compost, stones or other items resting on the ground.

They often invade crawl spaces and homes at ground level with common points of entry being door thresholds and expansion joints. When these pests are seen indoors, there is usually a large population breeding on the outside of the home near the foundation. Since pillbugs require moisture, they do not survive indoors for more than a few days unless there are very moist or damp conditions.

To manage infestations inside the home, rely on sanitation and exclusion techniques. Repair or replace door thresholds and seal...
expansion joints where pillbugs may be entering the structure. Pesticides are not usually needed indoors to manage these occasional invaders. They soon die on their own from lack of moisture and can be swept up using a broom and dustpan or a vacuum and disposed of.

Outdoors, move any piles of debris away from the foundation of the home. If there are high numbers in and around landscape beds, turn the mulch to allow it dry out to make the area uninhabitable. Any leaky faucets or irrigation lines as well as leaking air conditioning units should be repaired to eliminate moisture buildup. You may choose a pesticide to treat mulched areas or other areas that are harboring large pillbug populations. Look for products labeled for pillbugs, sowbugs or isopods.

For more information or help with identification, contact Wizzie Brown, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Program Specialist at 512.854.9600. Check out my blog at www.urban-ipm.blogspot.com.
Remember: mulch, mulch, mulch!

Check daily for signs of stress: footprints left in turf; breaking branches in trees, plants wilted in morning.

You can trim oaks now, but paint all wounds any size, any season, immediately!

Hold back on fertilizing and planting now. Let the garden rest!

Keep mower set high, three to three and a half inches.

Check watering system and be sure someone has access to your sprinkler system when you are away to make needed adjustments or repairs, if needed.
Congratulations to our newly certified Master Gardeners: Jim Abreu and Jeff Metz!
2014 Board Positions

President – Wayne Rhoden

Vice President – Cat McGrath-Farmer

Secretary – Annie Bowersox

Treasurer – Sandra Lawrence

Past President – Jeanne Barker

Programs – Alicia Johnson

JMG – Jane Bowman

Landscape – Chuck McKelley, Janet White

Rose Garden – JoAnne Dieterich

Drought Tolerant Garden – Janet White, Sandra Lawrence

Water Conservation – Carol Parsonage

Vegetable Gardens – George Prall

Projects – Steve Echols

Awards – Claire Hall

Training – John Papich

Communications – Catherine Nickle

Publicity – Betty Jo Phillips

Help desk – Martha Baddour

Speaker’s bureau – Open

Online Presence – Diana Kowalska-Somerville

Newsletter – Jinna MacLaurin

TMGA Directors

1. Wayne Rhoden
2. Cat McGrath-Farmer

Alternates

1. Jeanne Barker
2. Claire Hall
Williamson County Master Gardener Meetings

Monthly meetings are held at the Williamson County Extension Office, 3151 SE Innerloop Road, Suite A, Georgetown, Texas.

**August 11, 2014, 6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.**
  6:30 p.m.: Social Time
  7:00 p.m.: *Bats* with Cindy Bolch. One hour educational credit.

**September 8, 2014, 6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.**
  6:30 p.m.: Social Time
  7:00 p.m.: *Herbs* with Grace Bryce. One hour educational credit.

**October 13, 2014, 6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.**
  6:30 p.m.: Social Time
  7:00 p.m.: *Seed Saving*. One hour educational credit.
November 10, 2014, 6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
   6:30 p.m.: Social Time
   7:00 p.m.: *Bromeliads* with Dr. Steve. One hour educational credit.

December 8, 2014: TBD

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**TWO ROADS DIVERGED IN A WOOD, AND I—**

I TOOK THE ONE LESS TRAVELED BY,

AND THAT HAS MADE ALL THE DIFFERENCE.

*(ROBERT FROST)*
Educational Opportunities for Master Gardeners

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Master Gardener Classes

Monday September 8, 2014 through Friday, September 12, 2014

**Master Volunteer Entomology Specialist Training**
Travis County Extension Office, 1600-B Smith Rd., Austin, TX, with some field trips to local sites. More information at [https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/index.cfm/productDetails/productid/1540/](https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/index.cfm/productDetails/productid/1540/).

Williamson County Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and Master Gardener Classes

Wednesday, August 13, 2014, 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m

**Private Applicators Training**
Williamson County Extension Training Room, 3151 SE Inner Loop Road, Georgetown, Texas. The charge is $50.00, and you should reserve a seat by calling the Extension office at by 12 noon on Friday, August 8. Call 512-943-3300 for more information or see [http://williamson.agrilife.org/files/2014/05/Private-applicator-training-flyer6-11-14.pdf](http://williamson.agrilife.org/files/2014/05/Private-applicator-training-flyer6-11-14.pdf).
Williamson County Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Webinars

Webinars are held at the Williamson County Extension Office, Extension Training Room, 3151 SE Innerloop Road, Suite A, Georgetown, Texas. Webinars are free. Call 512-943-3300 to register by noon on the Thursday before the webinar.

All Bugs Good and Bad Webinar Series
For more information, see http://williamson.agrilife.org/event/all-bugs-good-and-bad-webinar-minimize-mosquito-problems/.

Friday, August 1, 2014, 1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.
Minimize Mosquito Problems
Molly Keck

Friday, September 5, 2014, 1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.
Kudzu Bug Takes Over the Southeastern U.S. / Brown Marmorated Stinkbug - All Bad
Dr. Michael Toews and Dr. Tracy Leskey

Friday, October 3, 2014, 1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.
Alien Invasions, Zombies Under Foot, and Billions of Decapitated Fire Ants
Dr. Michael Toews and Dr. Tracy Leskey

Friday, November 7, 2014, 1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.
Where Have All the Honey Bees Gone? Hope for the Future
Dr. John Skinner

eOrganic Webinar Series

Tuesday August 5, 2014, 2:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Weed Management in Organic Pastures
City of Cedar Park Gardening Classes

In partnership with the Williamson County Master Gardeners, The City of Cedar Park, Parks & Recreation will host the following free gardening classes. Classes are held at the Cedar Park Recreation Center Community Rooms, 1435 Main St, Cedar Park, Texas. For more information, call (512) 401-5500, or see [http://www.cedarparktexas.gov/index.aspx?page=444](http://www.cedarparktexas.gov/index.aspx?page=444).

**August 19, 2014, 7:00pm - 9:00pm**  
*Square foot gardening*

**September 16, 2014, 7:00pm - 9:00pm**  
*Water wise & fire-wise landscaping*

**October 21, 2014, 7:00pm - 9:00pm**  
*Introducing edibles into ornamental gardens*

**November 18, 2014, 7:00pm - 9:00pm**  
*How to Grow and Propagate Tough-as-Nails Roses and Perennials*
Travis County Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and Master Gardener Classes

Seminars held at Zilker Botanical Garden are free; Zilker park entrance fee is $2 per adult, $1 per child or senior. For more information, call (512) 477-8672

You must register for seminars held at Travis County Extension Office https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/TravisCounty or by phone 979-845-2604. $10 fee, $15 at site. Class size is limited.

Saturday, August 16, 2014, 10:00 a.m. - noon
Insect Visitors in Your Garden
Zilker Botanical Garden, 2220 Barton Springs Road, Austin, Texas
Update your understanding of good bugs and bad, with Master Gardeners Pat Mokry and Sheryl Williams. Pat, an entomology specialist, will describe the common insect visitors to your garden, and help you determine if and how you should treat for them. Following identification of beneficial insects, Sheryl will then share a fascinating project she has constructed to attract insects into her garden for observation, pollination and just plain fun. Don't miss these two lively, informative ladies!

Thursday, September 4, 2014, 10am – noon
Fall Season Vegetable Gardening
Travis County AgriLife Extension Office, 1600 Smith Rd #B, Austin, TX, (512) 854-9600
With its warm days and cooler nights, along with more stable weather patterns, fall just may be the best season for vegetable gardening in Central Texas. In our second class on Backyard Basics, Master Gardener and vegetable specialist Tommie Clayton will share her many years of experience in gardening, with details on planting schedules, proven varieties for our area and other helpful resources. Part of the Texas AgriLife Extension Backyard Basics Series. Register at https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/TravisCounty or by phone 979-845-2604. $10 fee, $15 late and on-site. Class is limited to 40 people.
Thursday, October 2, 2014, 10am – noon

**Integrated Pest Management**
Travis County AgriLife Extension Office, 1600 Smith Rd #B, Austin, TX, (512) 854-9600
Wizzie Brown, Integrated Pest Management Specialist for the AgriLife Extension Service, will discuss natural pest control in the garden and landscape, as she teaches about pests and the damage they inflict at various times of the year. Learn to encourage the good guys and discourage the bad guys in your vegetable garden in this third class on Backyard Basics. Part of the Texas AgriLife Extension Backyard Basics Series. Register at https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/TravisCounty or by phone 979-845-2604. $10 fee, $15 late and on-site. Class is limited to 40 people.

Monument Cafe Market Gardening Classes
500 S Austin Ave, Georgetown, Texas 78626, 512-240-4715

**Saturday August 2, 2014, 10:30 a.m.**
*August In the Garden.* Join us for our monthly first Saturday series where we go over the garden to-do list for the month. Learn what to plant, what to harvest and timely garden tasks. This class is perfect for the beginning gardener and those new to growing in Central Texas.

**Saturday August 9, 2014, 10:30 a.m.**
*Starting Veggies and Herbs from Seed* with Michelle.

**Saturday August 23, 2014 10:30 a.m.**
*Preparing the Soil for a New Garden:* Learn how to get started and the basics about keeping your soil healthy.
Natural Gardener Gardening Classes
8648 Old Bee Caves Rd, Austin, Texas 78735, 512-288-6113. Classes are subject to change so please call first to confirm. Classes are held outdoors under an open air canopy – be sure to dress for the weather. Arrive early for best seating. You are welcome to bring your own chair. Classes last about an hour. For more information see http://www.naturalgardeneraustin.com.

No classes during August.

Online classes

The state Texas Master Gardener Association allows only three online educational hours per year. They offer 12 different free online EarthKind Modules from which to choose. The link for these classes is here: http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/earthkind/training/

WCMGA also has approved the webinars from the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, http://www.wildflower.org. There is a small fee associated with their webinars.

A total of three online educational hours per year is allowed whether they are all through A&M or a combination of EarthKind and Wildflower.
Events of Interest to Master Gardeners

Friday, Saturday and Sunday, August 15-17, 2014

*Austin Home and Garden Show*

Austin Convention Center. See [http://www.austinhomeandgardenshow.com](http://www.austinhomeandgardenshow.com).

September 25-through 27, 2014

*2014 Texas Master Gardener Conference*


October 21 through October 24, 2014

*2014 Southern Region Master Gardener Conference*

This issue of the *Williamson County Master Gardener Newsletter* was made possible because of the contributions of the following Williamson County Master Gardeners: Wayne Rhoden (president), Jinna MacLaurin (editor), Catherine Nickle (proofreader), Rebecca Caldwell, Wizzie Brown, and Winola Van Artsdalen. Cover photo of *Blue Rose Echeveria at Joss Growers* by Jinna MacLaurin.

If you would like to contribute to the October 2014 *Williamson County Master Gardener Newsletter*, please send your submissions to Jinna MacLaurin at austindadamama@gmail.com by September 16, 2014. As you garden, volunteer and learn, please take a moment to share your experiences with other gardeners. Thank you!

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