



Mission Statement

To support and assist Texas Cooperative Extension by providing the community with information on horticultural practices consistent with Texas Cooperative Extension recommendations.



President's Notepad

Mid winter to the inexperienced eye suggests dormancy. We know that there is more activity in our soils and garden plants than is apparent. We have the late winter pruning, any last minute garden cleanup and those pesky winter weeds to deal with; but TCMGA, like our gardens, is busily preparing for the active growing season ahead. Our organizational tools like our garden tools need sharpening for the busy time nearly upon us. Since the season allows time for a little introspection, we might ask what does it mean to be a Master Gardener or why do we have a Master Gardener Association? Most of us are here because of a love of gardening and the desire to learn more and share that knowledge with others. As Dotty Woodson so succinctly puts it: "Master Gardeners are volunteer extension educators". Fortunately we are all different; with different personalities, different degrees of expertise in various subjects, different skills, etc. Not surprisingly we pursue a common goal in many different ways. The organization's role is to efficiently marshal our resources to accomplish this common goal. Committees organize and prepare to support their missions. Project leaders organize their work groups to effectively manage their projects. Support of the Extension Office is an ongoing effort. The bottom line or the "so what" measurement of our efforts is the extent to which our community is a better place because of our activities.

As I look forward to the year, I anticipate a year of learning; a year of sharing information and another year of fun. I am pleased to be part of such a knowledgeable and enthusiastic group.

Warren

February Monthly TCMGA Program

It's time to get started on that Spring garden planting plan and all you will need to know to propagate your own plants will be presented at the Feb. 3rd. meeting. Master Gardeners **Mary Margaret Halleck, Gailon Hardin, Pat Lovejoy and Ben Oefinger** recently completed the Propagation Specialists training and they are ready to share all that they learned with us. Now we can all learn to propagate our own plants and save lots of \$\$\$\$\$.

Bring pruning scissors or pruners for the workshop!



9:30 Sign-in and coffee.

10:00 Propagation presentation.

11:00 Business meeting and social.

12:00 Propagation Workshop. **Be sure to bring your pruning scissors or pruners.**

Start making plans now to attend the State Conference hosted by Denton Master Gardeners beginning May 5th. That will be our monthly meeting for May. Let's have the largest group in attendance!

OK - one last time. **Please be sure to bring your pruning scissors or pruner to the February meeting.** We will have a lot of fun!

Ginger Bason

Tarrant County Master Gardener Association Meeting Minutes - January 6, 2005

The meeting was called to order by President **Warren Tingley** at 10:45 a.m. 139 members were in attendance. The minutes of the December 2004 meeting were approved as published in the Sharecropper. The proposed budget for 2005 was provided by Treasurer **Rita Hottel**. Discussion was held regarding project monies. President **Tingley** stated a Planning Committee will look at how money is expended and a report will be made to the membership. The proposed budget for 2005 was approved by the membership.

Announcements were as follows:

- (1) A call screener is needed for the first Sunday in the month for the Howard Garrett Radio Program. **Millie Ruby** is to be contacted by any interested member.
- (2) **Dottie Woodson** announced the Extension Office Annual Report was available at the check-in table. She announced that TCMGA members had volunteered 33,000 hours in 2004. She also reminded Project Chairman to send in monthly reports including the number of people reached. Recertification cards were also available at a table in the back.
- (3) The website is to be up and running by the coming week-end.
- (4) Members were reminded the speed limit at the Resource Connection is 20 mph and tickets are being given for speeding.
- (5) Members in attendance were requested to verify their addresses, etc. for the 2005 Directory.
- (6) Volunteers are needed for the two up-coming Home and Garden Shows: Ft. Worth Home & Garden Show on Feb. 18 - 20 and the Neil Sperry Show on Feb. 25 -27. Contact **Shari Stanfield**.
- (7) Speakers Bureau training will be held on January 19th from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Extension Office for current and future speakers. Anyone planning to attend was requested to bring a PowerPoint Presentation if available. A speaker is needed for January 13th. Contact **Edith Pewitt**. It was also reported that the Speakers Bureau provided 124 programs and reached 6,278 people in 2004.
- (8) President **Tingley** requested announcements be submitted to him in writing prior to each monthly meeting.
- (9) He also advised the May Meeting has been cancelled due to a conflict with the State Meeting in Denton.
- (10) A Master Gardener Group from Pittsburg, KS will landscape the front of a church on Hattie St. in Ft. Worth on Saturday, January 22nd and would appreciate help.

A presentation of the new TCMGA timesheet was given by **Dolores Geisel**. The timesheet is available on the website in both PDF and Excel. It can be sent via e-mail from Excel or printed off. **Steve Chaney** and **Dolores Geisel** explained the new format and answered questions.

Steve Chaney advised of the following:

- The year end date for submission of hours will be October 31, 2005.
- The graduation party in 2005 will be for interns only. Awards, etc. will be given at the Holiday Party for Certified members.
- **Mary Benavides**, Extension Office Secretary, is retiring as of January 7th. The Extension Office is in need of administrative help for the next 3 to 4 months.
- Members will be required to attend 3 meetings a year. Anyone who has difficulty with this change should contact Steve for a one-on-one discussion.

The meeting adjourned at 11:30.

Submitted by **Judy Butler**, Secretary

“Texas Master Gardener Emeritus /a” Status

Following are the guidelines for granting Texas Master Gardener Emeritus/a status. **This will be discussed at the March 6 TCMGA meeting.** Hope to see you there!

Steve Chaney

Purpose

The purpose of these guidelines is to establish eligibility criteria for Texas Master Gardener Emeritus/a status and to define the rights and privileges associated with such status.

Definition

“Texas Master Gardener Emeritus/a” is an honorary title awarded to a Master Gardener volunteer for distinguished service to Texas Cooperative Extension (TCE). County Extension Agents, serving as County Master Gardener Coordinators, may bestow the title on a Master Gardener who is permanently retiring as an active Master Gardener and who has served TCE with distinction. The decision to bestow this exclusive title is serious and should be made after consultation with the State Master Gardener Coordinator, County Extension Agents, and/or Master Gardeners.

The bestowal of emeritus/a status is a distinctive honor, not a right. The terms, emeritus and emerita, are singular, masculine form and feminine form, respectively.

Eligibility

Nominations for emeritus/a status are limited to certified Texas Master Gardeners, preferably with 7 to 10 years

of service to TCE as a Master Gardener. Recognizing that some Master Gardeners may make a significant contribution to TCE in a much shorter time period prior to retirement, discretion regarding time of service is given to the local County Extension Agent.

A Texas Master Gardener may be nominated for emeritus/a status while still an active volunteer, but the status will not be conferred until the individual ceases service as a Master Gardener. The awarding of emeritus/a status is made once yearly, in December, and conferred at an appropriate county event.

Emeritus/a status may be bestowed posthumously.

Nomination

Each nomination for Texas Master Gardener Emeritus/a status shall be addressed to the local County Master Gardener Coordinator/County Extension Agent. Nominations can be made by County Extension Agents and Texas Master Gardeners. Nomination letters should provide a succinct recommendation and highlight evidence of the nominee’s meritorious service to TCE and the Texas Master Gardener program.

Upon receipt of a nomination, the local County Master Gardener Coordinator may seek additional evidence, input and recommendations from fellow Extension faculty members and Master Gardeners. The County Master Gardener Coordinator/County Extension Agent shall make the final decision regarding emeritus/a status and notify the nominated Master Gardener in writing of the final decision. The Texas Master Gardener Coordinator should also be sent

a copy of the notification letter.

Recognition and Privileges

A Texas Master Gardener Emeritus/a is considered an important and integral part of the Master Gardener community. Emeritus/a Master Gardeners shall be recognized by:

- Presentation of a certificate of emeritus/a status at an appropriate event/ceremony;
- Other recognition items may include an ID card, name badge or plaque indicating status as an emeritus/a Master Gardener; and
- Listing of name, county, and title in a permanent Texas Master Gardener Emeritus/a roster located at the State office of the Texas Master Gardener program, Texas A&M University.

Emeritus/a Master Gardeners shall be accorded the following privileges:

- Freedom from recertification requirements to maintain Texas Master Gardener certification;
- Access to Extension facilities and educational resources;
- Invitation to maintain membership in the local county and state Master Gardener association (note: annual dues would be paid by the Master Gardener Emeritus/a unless waived by the association governing board);
- Invitation to participate in Master Gardener educational and social events;
- Right to serve as an invited advisor to County Master Gardener programs;
- Other rights and privileges as approved by the local County Master

Gardener Coordinator/County Extension Agent.

Revised December 17, 2004

Douglas F. Welsh

Texas Master Gardener Coordinator

"To own a bit of ground, to scratch it with a hoe, to plant seeds and watch the renewal of life - this is the commonest delight of the race, the most satisfactory thing a man can do."

Charles Dudley Warner

Hospitality Notes

Winter is here, at least for the moment! The Hospitality crew is trying to keep up making coffee and having hot water for tea at our meetings. Be patient, please! A huge thank you to the Hospitality Crew: **Ginger Bason** (Chief cup-washer), **Rachel Clark**, **Raelene Darling**, **Mary Margaret Halleck**, **Jolene Hetrick**, **Bea Stevenson**, and **Shari Stanfield**. They help set up, clean up and everything in between, making our Master Gardener lunchtime a pleasant time for eating, visiting and "networking." If you would like to offer suggestions, talk to one of us.

Also, a big thank you to the nice people who brought the yummy foods to our January meeting. The variety and amount of goodies was amazing! If you forgot to sign up to bring goodies, look for the clipboards at the beginning of the food line. Don't miss a chance to share your culinary skills with us! I will be e-mailing/calling folks who signed up to remind them. See you February 3rd, 2005!

Joyce Quam

New Items

March 11-13 Fort Worth Home and Garden Show @ Will Rodgers Coliseum
Volunteers needed; contact Shari Stanfield at 817-685-9990

<u>Project Code & Name</u>	<u>Work Days/Times</u>	<u>Project Manager</u>	<u>Managers Phone</u>
311 Perennial Garden	8:30 a.m., Weds.	Patsy Johnson	817-292-5358
301 BRIT Activities	call chairman	Kay Yount	817-292-7690
401 Composting Demo	1 st Sat.	Don Graves	817-465-1667
	2nd Sat.	Charlie Shiner	817-548-7117
405 Liberty Garden	call chairman	Wendi Carlucci	817-488-5640
402 FW Nature Center	call chairman	Leeann Rosenthal	817-237-7180
403 FW Library at Hulen St.	4th Thurs, 10 am	Evaline Woodrey	817-295-4683
404 SW Sub Courthouse	2nd Sat, 4th Tues.	Gailon Hardin	817-457-4703
406 Veterans Park-Wildscape	Tuesdays 9:00-12:00 noon	Gailon Hardin	817-457-4703
407 Willow Park DemoGarden	2 nd Thursday	Judy Ratzlaff	817-441-6726
605 Henrietta Creek Orchard	1 st Mon. or 3 rd Wed.	Sue Short	817-439-3202
326 Teen Challenge	every Wed.	Debbie Bollinger	817-498-1508
321 Thistle Hill	Wed. 9:30 a.m.	Emily Ward	817-281-5925
322 Union Gospel Mission	every Mon. 10 a.m.	Gay Larson	817-441-6560
324 Mansfield Main St. Proj.	3 rd Wed. 9 a.m.	Lindsey Hannah	817-477-1696
409 CEMAP	call chairman	Benita Reese	817-483-5950
408 TX Smartscape Demo	call chairman	Michael Warren	817-531-6765
311 Trial Garden Maintenance	1 st , 3 rd & 5 th Tues.	Carole O'Connell	817-921-0713
311 Trial Garden Data	2 nd & 4 th Tues.	Carole O'Connell	817-921-0713
325 Weston Garden	call chairman	Rose Marie Mercado	817-923-9555

School Gardens

601 Alice Carlson	8:30 a.m. Mon/Thurs	Sharon Chastain	817 926-2575
601 Bransom	call chairman	Glenda Page	817 447-8348
601 Brewer	2 nd & 3 rd Thursday	Joyce Hallbauer	817 367-3582
601 Fitzgerald	3:15 p.m. Wed	Leeann Rosenthal	817 237-7180
601 Oakhurst	Contact Ginger	Ginger Bason	817 838-7321
601 South Davis	call chairman	P.J. Lockwood	817 860-1680

Note: Master Gardeners are welcome to submit articles to the newsletter for consideration.
 All non-regular features should be submitted to **Linda Hardy** at hardyjandl@netzero.net.
 The newsletter editorial staff reserves the right to edit articles submitted
 for content, brevity, and correctness.

Growing Potatoes, *Solanum tuberosum*

Submitted by **Dotty Woodson**

The first time I grew potatoes was just because I had thrown old potatoes into my compost pile. I found potatoes all summer every time I dug compost to add to my garden. Potato growing is easy and fun.

Commercial potato production takes many acres but a few seed potatoes in a small area in your garden will grow quite a few potatoes for you. Digging the potatoes is like a treasure hunt. Each piece of seed potato you plant produces 6 to 20 potatoes or 11 to 30 pounds depending on the potato variety and growing method.

Container Grown Potatoes

If you have a small space, try a tire stack potato garden or a five gallon bucket. Both methods use the same principles farmers use but modified on a smaller scale. A farmer amends the soil with plenty of compost, plants seed potato pieces 1 to 2 inches deep, every 12 inches, in 2 to 3 feet rows. As the plants grow, farmers move soil, compost or mulch around each potato plant stem. The potatoes grow along the stem in the compost or mulch. The higher the compost and/or mulch is piled around the potato plant stem, the more potatoes grow.

New and russet potatoes are available at most feed stores and garden centers. If you want to try other varieties, check seed catalogs. Plant new potatoes the first time because new potatoes grow fast. Cut the seed potatoes into 1 to 1.5 inch pieces with 2 to 3 eyes on each piece. The eyes are the sprouts where the new stems grow. Allow the potato pieces to dry or callus over for about three days. Potatoes from the grocery store are treated with a growth regulator so the potatoes will not grow in storage.

Take advantage of the way potatoes grow along the potato plant stem by growing potatoes in a stack of tires or in a five gallon

bucket. Find 3 or 4 tires. Wash the tires with soap to remove any oil and gas. Drill 4 or 5 holes in bottom sides of each tire so water will not become trapped in the lower part of each tire. Place the tire stack where the potato plants will receive 6 to 8 hours of light. Fill the first tire with compost, straw, shredded leaves or potting soil. Cut up the seed potatoes in 1 to 1.5 inch pieces with 2 to 3 eyes per piece. Plant 3 or 4 potato pieces in the tire. The plants will sprout and grow in about three weeks. Once the potato plant stem is about three inches taller than the tire, place the second tire on top of the first tire and add compost, straw or potting soil around the stem allowing the leafy top to remain above the soil. Continue this building method until you have 3 or 4 tires stacked around the potato plant.

Water the potato pieces enough to sprout the seed potato pieces. Once the tire stack is complete, keep the soil moist but not soaking wet.

If you want to use a five gallon bucket, cut the bottom off the bucket. Place the bucket in full sun. Fill $\frac{1}{4}$ of the bucket with compost or potting soil. Plant 2 potato pieces in the soil. As the potato grows, add more soil until the bucket is filled. Water to keep the soil moist not soaking.

Potatoes do not require much fertilizer. If you are using new compost that has not had all the nitrogen leached out, you may not need any fertilizer. Most potting soil has fertilizer in the mix. Check the label. Potatoes normally require one-fourth pound nitrogen per 100 square feet. Add fertilizer to the compost as you add compost around the potato plant. Over fertilizing with high nitrogen fertilizer will grow more plant and less potatoes.

Harvest the potatoes when the plants start to flower or wait until the plants start to yellow. You want to harvest the potatoes before the hot weather starts. To harvest remove one tire at a time and find the potatoes! Wash all soil off the potatoes. Allow the potatoes to

dry before storing. Store the potatoes in a cool dark place.

Feature Plant: Mistletoe

Submitted by **Amy Trauth-Nare**

Since we are winding down from the holiday season, I thought it appropriate to highlight one of the important plant symbols of our winter holidays. Mistletoes are associated with winter holidays probably because of ancient Druid civilizations, who associated mistletoe with fertility and introduced the tradition of kissing under its branches.

Though a much-derided plant by naturalists and gardeners, mistletoe is part of our woodland ecosystems. Mistletoe is an often-misunderstood plant. I have heard plant lovers claiming that mistletoe will quickly kill landscape trees. In fact, the parasitic mistletoe rarely kills its host, instead only weakening branches or slowing growth. It hardly seems an effective life strategy to parasitize another organism on which you depend for water and minerals, only to kill your host during the peak of growth. Most commonly, mistletoe seeds are able to germinate and establish themselves on host trees that are already stressed by some other environmental factor, such as soil compaction or low available soil minerals.

Mistletoe is a hemiparasite since it can photosynthesize, but receives water and important minerals from its host plant. Thus, mistletoe is green because it has chlorophyll and produces its own food, unlike a true parasite that lacks green pigment and is fully dependent on its host for all life-sustaining nutrients. Mistletoe penetrates its host by root-like haustoria that anchor mistletoe to the branches of the host and absorb water and minerals directly from the vascular system of the host tree.

The genera *Phoradendron* and *Arceuthobium* include the mistletoes and dwarf mistletoes, respectively, in North America, while the genus *Viscum* includes the mistletoes of Europe and Old World tropics. All three genera are part of the family Viscaceae. The only species of mistletoe found in north central Texas is *Phoradendron tomentosum*, which reportedly grows on hackberry, bois d'arc, elm and mesquite trees. Other *Phoradendron* species grow on oak, ash, and other hardwood trees. The genus *Arceuthobium* occurs in west Texas. Dwarf mistletoes grow almost exclusively on cone-bearing trees such as pines, hemlocks, and junipers.

Most conspicuous in the winter after leaves have fallen from the host tree, mistletoe plants have simple, opposite leaves with a leathery texture and matted whitish hairs. The flowers of mistletoe are small and green, with male and female flowers growing on separate plants. The fruit is small, white, and single-seeded. The seed has a very sticky mucilaginous covering that can adhere to the beaks and feet of birds who occupy host trees. The fruit is eaten by cedar wax-wings and bluebirds, who disperse the seeds to new host trees when the seeds pass through the birds' digestive tracts. The seeds and vegetation of mistletoes contain nitrogenous compounds that are toxic to humans, but have been used in Europe to treat some forms of cancer and hypotension (low blood pressure).

INTERN SCOOP



The February Master Gardener meeting will be the first for our 40-member spring class. They are the new kids on the block. You'll be able to identify them easily by their not-blue badges. Please help them feel welcome by saying hello in your wonderful, warm, master gardener fashion. They are a great class and will contribute much to our organization.

Berry Bock for the Intern Advisors

Feature Project : Alice Carlson Applied Learning Center Outdoor Learning Environment

Step through a gateway shaped like an old-fashioned school house and enter a school garden where dragonflies flit through cattails and butterflies swoop over native grasses. On a typical school day, you may see students from reading stories under the trees or searching for butterflies and geckos. In 1997, this idyllic refuge was a cracked and weedy tennis court behind Alice Carlson Applied Learning Center. Nestled in the midst of a busy neighborhood near the Texas Christian University campus, the space is today a model of what can happen when a coalition of Master Gardeners, teachers, administrators, parents, neighborhood groups, and businesses work together to create a garden that serves not only the school but also the community.

Creation of an Outdoor Learning Environment (OLE) was seen as a natural complement to the school's instructional approach, which connects classroom lessons to real-world experience. Students were involved in every phase of planning, from garnering neighborhood support to mapping the flow of runoff. The outcome was a natural garden, designed by landscape architect Tom Galbraith, to represent Texas prairies, wetlands, woodlands, desert plains, and arroyos. Vigorous fundraising by the school and generous assistance from the Rainwater Foundation provided for the construction of an attractive perimeter fence and an observational gazebo. Numerous trees and shrubs were installed, wildflowers were seeded, and the garden seemed to be off to a good start.

As is often the case with school gardens, it proved easier to generate enthusiasm for creating the garden than for maintaining it. By 2003 when Master Gardener Intern **Sharon Chastain** saw the garden, it was waist-high in weeds and brush. Nevertheless, the thoughtful design of the garden was evident, and

Sharon lobbied the school and **Dotty Woodson** to allow about a dozen enthusiastic interns to resurrect the garden. Since September 2003, Master Gardeners have worked thousands of hours in the Carlson OLE. The Sheriff's department and youth from the Juvenile Services, Master Naturalists and other community volunteers have also contributed hundreds of service hours. Through their combined efforts, the garden has been restored as a haven for students and the community.

Master Gardeners began by clearing weeds, rebuilding pathways and spreading mountains of compost and mulch. They built bridges over the arroyo, a raised nursery bed, a composting area, and a fenced equipment corral. All of the plant species in the garden were labeled with common and botanical names so that students and neighborhood visitors could learn more about the native plants in the garden.

In the popular Butterfly Garden, a path comprised of bricks the students decorated with mosaics was rebuilt to correct a drainage problem and to create a meandering route through the dozens of native and adapted plants that were added to the area. In a narrow strip adjacent to the Butterfly Garden, Master Gardeners constructed a series of stone and sand berms and installed drought tolerant plants such as yuccas and cacti. The weedy patch labeled "prairie" was completely cleared and Master Gardeners rescued hundreds of Little Bluestem and other native plants from a construction site to replant it. With a grant from the Rainwater Foundation, a 5,000-gallon cistern has just been completed that will collect rainwater harvested from the roof of the new school gymnasium for irrigating part of the garden.

Other projects currently underway include rebuilding the arroyo, developing the woodlands and bog, designing an herb garden and adding a solar-powered water feature. Several Master Gardeners are working with teachers and students to develop projects that utilize

this wonderful outdoor classroom.

For more information about the Alice Carlson Outdoor Learning Environment, please contact **Sharon Chastain**, 817-926-2575.

WAYS AND MEANS UPCOMING EVENTS

Ways and Means has many exciting opportunities for MGs at upcoming monthly meetings:

- February** Taking Orders for Caladiums
- March** Taking Orders for Caladiums
Vendor Tables
- April** Distributing Caladiums

Note: We have suspended publishing membership changes until after the printing of the 2005 Membership Directory.

VENDOR TABLES

There will be VENDOR TABLES at the March TCMGA meeting. Tables are available for \$15.00 and are only available to TCMGA members. Call Ann Couch 817-732-7103 to reserve your space.

Sunshine Committee

The Sunshine Committee would like to remind all of the TCMGA members that if you know or hear of someone that is ill or has a death in their immediate family, we would like to know about it so we can send them a card. Please contact **LaVonne Nowlin** at lavonne@ev1.net.

Happy Birthday, Master Gardeners!

- 2-1 **Charlie Shiner**; 2-4 **M. J. Martinez**;
- 2-6 **Sher Dunaway**; 2-7 **Pat Lovejoy**;
- 2-9 **Jim Beeler**; 2-12 **Greta Beckler**;
- 2-15 **Beatrice Stevenson**; 2-16 **Ed Vaughan**;
- 2-19 **Barbara Munn**; 2-21 **Renee Ramsey**;
- 2-24 **Marion Badey**; 2-25 **Evaline Woodrey**;
- 2-27 **Edith Pewitt** and **Judy Martin**.

This is a monthly feature. If your birthday is in this month and you don't see your name and date of birth, it is probably because **LaVonne Nowlin** does not have it. Please email your birthday - month and day only - to lavonne@ev1.net.

Butterfly Habitat Certification Class - March 8, 9:30 am-12:30 pm

Class will be at the Fort Worth Botanic Garden Center. Upon completion of the class you will receive butterfly attractant plants and a Butterfly Habitat Certification Certificate. Cost is \$30 and space is limited. For more information or to register, contact **Mimi Lyles** at mimilyles@aol.com or **JoAnn Hahn** at johahn@charter.net

Tarrant County Master Gardener Association
401 East Eighth Street



Calendar of Upcoming Events

- February 5 TCMGA Monthly Meeting at Resource Connection
- February 25-27 Neil Sperry All Garden Show -Arlington
- March 11-13 Fort Worth Home Show March Will Rogers Coliseum

For up-to-the-minute TCMGA news visit: www.tcmga.org
More state news: www.texasmastergardeners.com