



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

By the time this is published, spring will be upon us. For now, I will present to you a "State of the Organization" message. As announced at the last meeting, there are two new issues from extension. One, is the coming requirement, that criminal background checks will be necessary for recertification. The other, is the issue regarding liability coverage of Master Gardeners for events occurring while volunteering. It was believed that the state would provide a defense, as well as cover any damage awards. It has been clarified that Master Gardeners would have to obtain counsel on their own. The state would provide assistance to the private attorney in filing the immune defense but would not represent us. At least one homeowners insurance company has said that it would provide the defense as part of the homeowners policy. This is worth each of you checking.

During all of this, I engaged an attorney who evaluated our corporate standing with the state and necessary filing requirements. The summary is as follows: Tarrant County Master Gardener Association was incorporated as a Texas Non-Profit Corporation 3/11/1996. We are a 501c3 corporation under the Internal Revenue Code, which exempts us from income tax on money received in conjunction with our charitable activities. We have a letter dated January 13, 2005 from Texas Comptroller, Carole Keeton Strayhorn, stating that "Tarrant County Master Gardeners Association INC" is exempt from payment of franchise taxes and consequently is in good standing with her office". The requirements for filing with the IRS are gross receipts of \$25,000 a year. As a charitable corporation we are not required to pay state sales tax for purchases related to our charitable activities.

So what does it all mean? We must remember that we are a corporation and, as such, we must be in compliance with all relevant state and federal regulations. It appears that we are in such compliance. Back to the real business. Good Gardening!
Warren

March Monthly TCMGA Program

Sondra Wallace, owner of Barn Tours, Inc., Granbury, Texas, and director of Little Hands on the Farm, State Fair of Texas, will be our morning speaker at our March 3rd meeting. Sondra presents agriculture awareness programs all over the U.S., Canada and Australia. Growing up in Kansas and a descendant of 14 plus generations of farmers, she has an abundance of knowledge. Her concerns for citizens', particularly children's, lack of information about where their food originates helped to propel her into developing the Texas version of Little Hands on the Farm.

- 9:30 Sign-in and coffee.
- 10:00 Little Hand on the Farm,
Sondra Wallace
- 11:00 Business meeting and social.
- 12:00 **Amanda Vanhoozier** founded Coppell Community Gardens in 1998 after many years of involvement in other community gardens. Amanda will tell us about community gardens and how to start one.

THANK YOU to our TCMGA members for a great February program. **Gailon, Mary Margaret, Pat and Ben** taught us so much about propagation, Tarrant County will probably be over run with plants this spring!!!!!!
Ginger Bason

Tarrant County Master Gardener Association Meeting Minutes - February 3, 2005

The meeting was called to order by President **Warren Tingley** at 11:05 a.m. President **Tingley** welcomed the new interns to the meeting. Treasurer **Rita Hottel** gave the Treasurer's Report (a copy of the report was available for all members). Minutes of the January meeting were approved as published in the Sharecropper.

New Business

A report from the 2004 Audit Committee of the Treasurer was given by **Charlie Shiner**. The TCMGA Financial Statement was deemed acceptable. However, the Committee recommended all TCMGA committees follow established policies using appropriate forms in forwarding collected money to the Treasurer.

Extension Items

Horticultural Extension Agent **Steve Chaney** discussed the need for background checks on all members. These checks will be optional for 2005 but mandatory for 2006 in order for a member to recertify. The cost of these background checks will be borne by Tarrant County this year only. A form will be mailed to all members within the next few weeks.

A discussion was held regarding liability for members in the event of a lawsuit filed for alleged negligence during their volunteering duties. The members would not be provided with counsel but awards for damages would be paid by the State. Further investigation into this issue is on-going.

By-Laws

The proposed changes in the By-Laws of the Organization had been provided to the members. After discussion regarding the By-Laws, a vote was taken to approve them as written. The vote passed.

Announcements

- Ft. Worth Botanic Garden needs Butterfly Volunteers
- A representative from the Ft.Worth Sister Cities Project was available to discuss the up-coming trip to Trier, Germany April 26 - May 5.
- Members were advised of the bus trip tour to Tyler on March 30th.
- The telephone schedule for working Extension phones is up and running on the website.

Submitted by **Judy Butler**, Secretary

Hospitality Notes

March is Hot Dog Month! A TCMGA Tradition!

At the March TCMGA Meeting **Ben Oefinger** will once again be grilling those juicy hot dogs for all the Master Gardeners and the newly trained Interns. I will be calling/e-mailing all those who signed up to bring all the yummy things to go with the hot dogs.

Thank you, thank you to those of you who supplied the great goodies for our February meeting. The food kept coming and coming and...! See you on March 3rd!

Joyce Quam

Educational Opportunities for Master Gardeners

March 5	Texas Smartscape Seminar Resource Connection 2300 Circle Drive Fort Worth, Texas 817-884-1945	\$40.00 Check Payable Education Fund 8:30-4:00 Lunch Included
	Learn about Smartscape, Texas Superstars, Earth-Kind Roses, Drip Irrigation Conversion & Auditing, Composting & Turf Management	
March 19	Yard Smart Seminar Fort Worth Botanic Garden Main Building	Free
	Herbs, Native Plants & Vegetables	
April 16	Earth-Kind Rose Seminar Fort Worth Botanic Garden Main Building	Before April 1st \$35 Single \$55 Couple
	Learn about Earth-Kind environmental landscape management, beautiful easy care roses, designing an Earth-Kind rose garden, pruning and much more! Tours of the Perennial Trial Garden, and a propagation demo will be included.	After April 1st \$39 Single \$60 Couple 9AM-3:45 Lunch Provided
	One experimental rose per person/admission	
May 28	Texas Smartscape Grapevine Botanic Garden 411 Ball Street Grapevine, Texas Learn about Smartscape, Texas Superstars Earth-Kind Roses, Drip Irrigation Conversion & Auditing, Composting & Turf Management	\$40.00 Check Payable Education Fund 8:30-4:00 Lunch Included

Enjoy!

Steve Chaney

CHECK THE WEBSITE! WWW.TCMGA.ORG

If you don't check the TCMGA website weekly, you are liable to miss one of the special features. **Donna Turner** assembles inside info on Featured Members on TCMGA Superstars - and even includes some pictures of their gardens. **Dixie Norwood** provides detailed data on a new plant or animal each month. This month it is Mahonia! Did you know you can make wine and brandy from its berries? **Carla Pickens** gives us Seasonal Hints - and a little philosophical tidbit as laignappe. If you do miss a feature, just click on the archive button and you can see features past.

If you are in a hurry, the Member HotKey button on the first screen now has links to the current newsletter, timesheets, telephone schedule and other items of immediate member interest.

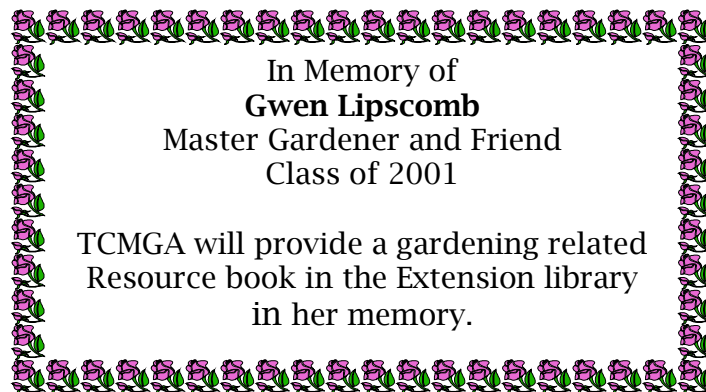
ONE FINAL HINT: Timesheets are provided in both Excel and Adobe format. If you want to download the format that will let you fill it out electronically each month, you will need to select the Excel format(.xls). The .pdf format is ONLY for printing.

Thanks to all of you (80+) who have elected to receive the newsletter via email. At current postage rates, that is a savings of over \$350 a year!

To receive your newsletter via email or forward website comments or content ideas, contact **Carolyn Barnard** at cbarnard@abacinc.com.

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.



In Memory of
Gwen Lipscomb
Master Gardener and Friend
Class of 2001

TCMGA will provide a gardening related Resource book in the Extension library in her memory.

Office Trainers Needed

Remember your office training after your classroom experiences? Want to be a part of helping Interns "get the hang of it"? Call **Eleanor Tuck, LaVonne Nowlin, Judy Ratzlaff** or **Barbara Finholt**. You could perhaps begin as an alternate to these ladies and work into full time next year. Call or e-mail us SOON!

Revision to New Master Gardener Timesheet

The timesheet for this year has been revised with the latest revision included in this newsletter. Please discard all timesheets you have previously received. This revised timesheet is available on the internet in pdf and EXCEL formats as well as at the Extension Office. As before, you may submit your time by mailing or faxing your paper copy to the office or your timekeeper or by completing the EXCEL version of the form on the internet and attaching it to an email to your timekeeper. Creating a paper copy by printing the pdf version on the internet always insures that you have the current version.

In addition, if you have email but do not use EXCEL, you may simply list your activities for the month in an email message to your timekeeper. Be sure to include the activity number, name, hours and travel for each activity you worked. If you are reporting multiple months of activity, separate activities by each month.

New Items

March 5 **First Time Home Buyers Show, Fort Worth Convention Center**
Volunteers needed; contact Shari Stanfield at 817-685-9990

March 11-13 **Fort Worth Home and Garden Show @ Will Rogers 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>
301 BRIT Activities	call chairman	Kay Yount	817-292-7690
311 Perennial Garden	8:30 a.m., Weds.	Patsy Johnson	817-292-5358
312 Trial Garden Maintenance	1 st , 3 rd & 5 th Tues.	Carole O'Connell	817-921-0713
312 Trial Garden Data	2 nd & 4 th Tues.	Carole O'Connell	817-921-0713
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.	Donna Turner	817-473-8253
326 Teen Challenge	every Wed. 9 a.m.	Debbie Bollinger	817-498-1508
401 Composting Demo	1 st Sat.	Don Graves	817-465-1667
	2nd Sat.	Charlie Shiner	817-548-7117
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
405 Liberty Garden	call chairman	Wendi Carlucci	817-488-5640
406 Veterans Park-Wildscape	Tues 9-12:00	Gailon Hardin	817-457-4703
407 Willow Park DemoGarden	2 nd Thursday	Judy Ratzlaff	817-441-6726
408 TX Smartscape Demo	call chairman	Michael Warren	817-531-6765
612 Henrietta Creek Orchard	1 st Mon. or 3 rd Wed.	Sue Short	817-439-3202

School Gardens

601 Alice Carlson	8:30 a.m. Mon/Thurs	Sharon Chastain	817 926-2575
602 Bransom	call chairman	Glenda Page	817 447-8348
603 Brewer	call chairman	Joyce Hallbauer	817 367-3582
604 Fitzgerald	3:15 p.m. Wed	Leeann Rosenthal	817 237-7180
605 Oakhurst	Contact Ginger	Ginger Bason	817 838-7321
606 South Davis	call chairman	Mary McCoy	817 891-0598
611 Children's Garden	Mar 2 & 23 9-11 a.m.	Judy Sargent	817 589-0221
	Also Apr 6 & 27 9-11 a.m.		

Vegetable Gardening

Submitted by **Dotty Woodson**

(Excerpts from Vegetable Gardening Workshop recently presented by **Dotty Woodson**.)

This is a perfect time to plan a spring vegetable garden and take advantage of the remaining beautiful sunny winter days to prepare an area for a vegetable garden.

A successful garden is accomplished with planning and preparation. Many vegetable gardeners grow the entire year in this area. Many vegetables and herbs grow during mild Tarrant County winters. Vegetables like onions and potatoes are planted in February.

Sight Selection

- A sunny location. Most vegetables need 6 to 8 hours of sun.
- Well draining location. Low spots that hold water encourage diseases. If your only choice is a low area, use raised beds.

Soil Preparation

· An addition of organic matter every year. Add 6 to 8 inches of organic matter a year. Add organic matter by tilling compost into the soil and using mulch on the top of the soil after planting. Every year add more organic matter. The best source of organic matter is your own yard and garden waste. Don't bag it.

· If your soil is the type of clay better used to make clay pots, considered raised beds.

· Remember you need water for the garden. Make watering convenient by running water to the area or using enough garden hose to have water near the garden.

Plan

· Start small. Plant only what you will eat. You can always extend the garden.

· Plant as early in the spring as possible. Spider mites like tomatoes and hot temperatures. The average date for the last frost is March 17 but be prepared to cover the plants just in case.

· Plant recommended varieties for this area. Plant disease resistant varieties. List of vegetables and planting dates are available from the Extension office or on the web site, <http://tarrant.tamu.edu>.

· Only plant the amount you will use fresh or preserve by canning, freezing or drying.

· Give the plants room. Over crowding reduces air circulation. Good air circulation prevents disease.

· Grow vertically. Squash, cucumbers and even with help, melons will grow vertically if supported. Use welded wire cages for support. Ladies hosiery will support melons if tied to a strong support.

· Rotate crops. Avoid planting the same plant family in the same location every year.

Water

· Water early in the morning. Foliar diseases like damp leaves. Use drip irrigation. Garden centers, feed stores and home stores carry do-it-yourself drip irrigation supplies. Soil kept moist by proper watering and mulch does not dry to the point where the soil cracks. The cracks in the soil tear roots and damage the roots from air exposure.

· Use slow release fertilizers. Fertilizers are available from garden center, feed stores or home centers.

Weeds

· Start with a weed free area. Before planting, kill Bermuda grass and other weeds by solar sterilization, digging or with a herbicide. Moisten the ground and cover it with black plastic for two sunny weeks or longer. Weeds attract many insects such as spider mites. Weeds use a lot of water that should be available to the vegetables.

· Keep weeds under control by using mulch to cover the soil. Mulch also increases the water absorbing and holding capacity of the soil. A heavy mulch layer smother existing weeds and makes pulling weeds germinating easier.

You must give some time to your fellow men.
Even if it's a little thing, do something for others - something for which you get no pay but the privilege of doing it."

Albert Schwitzer

Walking Sticks

Submitted by **Greenfingers**

We called them stick bugs when I was a kid on the farm. At that carefree time, I didn't think about whether they were good bugs or bad bugs. I only knew they were fun to hold as they robotically rotated their little green head watching my every movement with their bulging eyes.

When my brother and I had friends from the city visit us during the hot Oklahoma summers, the stick bugs were a part of our guided country tour for the unsuspecting city kids. The walking sticks would bring squeamish squeals as we passed them from our bare arms to theirs. As I reflect on this scene, I feel quite sure that the stick bugs were probably as alarmed as our friends, but somehow they always seemed to outwardly maintain their composure.

Once the master gardener side of my brain was unlocked, I realized these little green sticks were not a gardener's favorite insect, but that didn't diminish their charm. I also realized that I hadn't seen any around my own home in Texas for years. Where had they gone?

The light bulb came on with a glare in the early spring when our pesticide company called for a routine spray around the outside parameter of our home. "No! No more poison! Let's see if we are overtaken with giant man-eating bugs if we don't spray on the outside!"

One hot summer morning as I watered the potted ferns on either side of the stairway leading to our upper yard, a tiny green head peered out at me from beneath a frond. From that morning on, we set about establishing a growing relationship. Typical woman - I would talk - and he would listen, turning his head from side to side and always keeping eye contact like an effective listener.

My little green friend lived in the fern all summer. It is fall now and sadly, he is gone.

What joy he brought to my morning waterings. Winter will soon be approaching and plants will be cut back and brought in. I will do my best to keep the ferns alive in hopes that next spring my little green friend and I can resume our friendship. Maybe, with a little bit of luck, I'll even be introduced to some of his kin.

Two-striped walkingstick—Scientific name:

Anisomorpha buprestoides (Phasmatodea:

Pseudophasmatidae) **Facts:** Walkingsticks are well known for their slow-moving behavior and camouflage. Their long bodies, legs, antennae, and color make them appear to be sticks. They feed on plants and sometimes defoliate trees. The longest insect in the United States is a walkingstick, *Megaphasma dentricus* (Stal), which reaches a length of about 7 inches.



INTERN SCOOP

The Spring 2005 class has completed most of its classroom hours, but still has several intern field trips ahead. These are, for many, one of the most enjoyable parts of the intern experience. All MGs are also welcome to join the fun.

We will meet at the Botanic Garden parking lot for all of these intern field trips. Plan to be there at **8:45 am**, as we will leave promptly at 9 am.

So, mark your calendars for Thursday mornings as follows and we'll see you there!

March 10 - Brewer Middle School and FW Nature Center

April 14 - Willow Park Demonstration Garden and Ester Proctor's

May 12 - Thistle Hill, Alice Carlson Outdoor Learning Environment, Hulen Library, Granbury Road Sub-Courthouse

June 9 - Teen Challenge, Union Gospel Mission, Veterans Park Wildscape

Berry Bock for the Intern Advisors

TCMGA 2005 ACTIVITIES

Your Activities Committee has been hard at work lining up some great trips for 2005! Please be sure to add these dates to your calendar.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Activity</u>
March 30	Bus tour to Tyler: Azalea Trail, IDEA & Heritage Gardens, Chamblee Nursery
April 28	Clark Gardens
May	Tour of Member Gardens: East Ft. Worth
August	Tour of Member Gardens: Northeast Tarrant County
September	Tour of Chandor Gardens and Proctor Nursery
October	Tour of Member Gardens: Southwest Tarrant County

The Activities Committee is chaired by **Joy Lease**; committee members are **Judy Butler**, **Joyce Colegrove**, **Barbara Durnan**, **Carla Pickens**, and **Susan Stanek**.

Come Tour with Us March 30th – Tyler Azalea Trail and more!

Date	Activity
8:00 AM	Bus leaves FW Botanic Garden
1st Stop	Azalea Trail
2nd Stop	Lunch at Potpourri House
3rd Stop	IDEA Garden & Heritage Gardens at the Municipal Rose Garden
4th Stop	Chamblee Nursery Tour and Shop the Nursery
7:00 PM	Bus arrives FW Botanic Garden

Park at the FW Botanic Garden and ride the bus. Sign up & pay at March 3 MG meeting. Option to drive your own vehicle. Detail maps and schedules will be provided at the March 3rd MG Meeting and on the website by March 3rd. Questions? Contact **Joy Lease**, **Susan Stanek** or **Joyce Colegrove**.

MG DIRECTORY UPDATE

We are hoping to have the directory for the March meeting, **however**, due to increasing circumstances, it's not looking too promising. In the meantime, hang on to your old directory and please be sure and let the Extension Office or **Pat Lovejoy** know about any changes in your address, telephone number or e-mail. Thanks,

Membership Committee

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.

Rockport Herb Festival - April 2nd
Contact ltcollins_1@charter.net
Or Pam Herl 361-729-5046

Hood County MG Garden Tour - May 14-15
Contact Marty Vahlenkamp, 817-579-3280

Gardening, reading about gardening, and writing about gardening are all one; no one can garden alone. Elizabeth Lawrence, 1957

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!

1-Susan Haynes, Betsy Norman;
4-Robbie Crawford; 5-Charlotte Krystinik;
9-Linda Williams; 10-Kay Lewis;
11-Samantha Hosti; 12-Bob Ross, Emily Ward;
13-Pat Oliver; 14- Mary Fuller;
15-Millie Ruby;
17-Judy Melton, Susanne Mills;
26-Sharon Nice, Marshall Harris;
29-Susan Stanek;
30-Bernice Ramsbottom, Dawn Hancock;
31-Kim Freeman, Jo Poppelreiter

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

March 3	TCMGA Monthly Meeting at Resource Connection
March 5	Texas Smartscape Seminar (see pg 3)
March 5	First Time Home Buyers Show at FW Convention Center
March 10	Intern Field Trip: Brewer Middle School, FW Nature Center
March 11-13	Fort Worth Home Show Will Rogers Coliseum
March 19	Yard Smart Seminar (see pg 3)
March 30	Field Trip to Tyler Azalea Trail (see pg 8)
April 2	Herb Festival - Rockport
April 7	TCMGA Monthly Meeting at Resource Connection
April 14	Intern Field Trip: Willow Park Garden/ Ester Proctor's Nursery
April 16	Earth-Kind Rose Seminar (see pg 3)
April 23	Community Garden Field Trip (details coming soon)
April 28	Clark Garden Field Trip (details coming soon)
May 5	State Convention - Denton
May 12	Intern Field Trip: Thistle Hill, Alice Carlson, Hulen Library, Granbury Road Sub-Courthouse
May 28	Texas Smartscape
June 9	Intern Field Trip: Teen Challenge, Union Gospel Mission, Veterans Park Wildscape

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