

Tarrant County Master Gardener



TEXAS A & M AGRILIFE EXTENSION AGENCY

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DEBBIE BOYLE RECEIVES GRAPEVINE PARKS & REC HELPING HAND AWARD

By Pam Braak

Master Gardener **Debbie Boyle** was recognized as the very talented and extremely dependable lead of the new GO Wild Propagation Team at a recent Grapevine Parks & Rec volunteer appreciation brunch.

The Propagation Team works at the greenhouse in the Botanical Gardens and grows native Texas plants for habitat restoration efforts at Grapevine Parks and school outdoor learning centers. Debbie began volunteering with the Propagation Team in early 2018 and quickly stepped up to help and became the project lead. The volunteer group is made up of Tarrant County Master Gardeners and Grapevine Garden Club members. Debbie coordinates with Betsy Marsh, Environmental Education Coordinator, communicates with the volunteers, collects data and checks plants weekly or more often to make sure they are growing and thriving. There were some hiccups encountered in the beginning and she made sure that everyone learned from these challenges and developed new plans and procedures to improve the propagation work and strengthen the team.

And the team has been busy! In 2018 they propagated 3,000 native Texas plants! Many hundreds have already been planted at habitat restoration sites at Grapevine Middle School and Meadowmere Park and the rest will be planted this year at sites throughout Grapevine.



Be sure to congratulate Debbie when you see her and ask how you can become involved with the Propagation Team at the Grapevine Botanical Gardens.

Members of the Propagation Team pose with Debbie Boyle at the appreciation brunch.

Tarrant County Master Gardener

Propagation Team in Grapevine Hard at Work



Left: Front row left to right, Donna Bufton, Coral Gates.

Back row left to right, Donna Findley, Debbie Boyle, Monty Anderson, Wanda Stutsman, Dick Pafford.



Above: Behind table left to right, Mary Lou Brieger, Donna Bufton.

Front of table, Dick Pafford.

Seedball Making Success

By Laura Penn

Making seedballs is the bomb! On January 26, 2019 volunteers came together from many different organizations: Native Prairies Association of Texas - Fort Worth chapter, TCC NW Campus Horticulture Club, TCC South Campus Biology students, Cross Timbers Master Naturalists, Native Plant Society of Texas - North Central chapter, and the general public. Led by Jarratt Willis of The Great SeedBomb, approximately 70 people joined together and made an estimated 4,000+ seedballs. Thank you to everyone who participated

Seeds were collected locally (with permission) from Stella Rowan Prairie, a native remnant prairie, by volunteers Barbara Fleischman, Jan Miller, Suzanne Tuttle, Bill Freiheit and Laura Penn. They focused collecting native grass and wildflower species growing in seeps and creek banks, in conditions similar to where the seed balls will be dispersed. The seed balls are part of a multi phase project to help a portion of Stella Rowan Prairie recover after being stripped of vegetation. We call this area "the disturbance zone".

We hope that the stewards who live upstream from us are conscientious in the treatment of fresh water we share, so as to not pollute what we drink. Thus the City of Fort Worth needed to do maintenance work on the City's sewer pipeline located in their easement that runs along side one of the creeks running through Stella Rowan Prairie. This waterway feeds into Sycamore Creek, which feeds into the Trinity River, a source of drinking water. To gain access to the pipeline, a lot of woody plants needed to be removed. Much of the shrubby growth was invasive Privet species. So while the disturbance zone looks bare now, a lot of what was removed was undesirable. We are thankful for the Privet being dug out. Now we can actually see the creek that was previously hidden and enjoy watching the water trickle over limestone rock.

This seed ball project can kick start actions to restore the site to improved native plant conditions, perhaps eventually, even better than they were before. By distributing locally collected native seeds and seed balls, we hope to promote the disturbance zone eventually returning to a native grassland community. With native grasses deep roots, the goal is to stabilize the creek banks without bringing in non native species like bermuda grass. We know native grasses take time to germinate, grow initial roots, begin more visible top growth and then growth larger. In all honesty, the area will take years to recover. In the mean time, willing volunteers can contribute to restoring the site to promote it once again becoming native habitat. By helping in future projects like out planting native wildflowers or installing measures to limit soil erosion, we can make a difference. We look forward to your participation."



Article & photo courtesy of the
NC-NSPOT Newsletter.



Tarrant County Master Gardener

The President's Corner

A great time was had at the February Meeting. Applause to every single person that made the Meeting happen. Awesome job!

What a great response from everyone that attended the meeting! Folks shopped at the different Ways and Means tables, then stopped by the garden resource table, and then checked out the books/magazine table. We signed up for different educational classes and events. And of course the hot dog lunch! What can you say about those hot dogs and the wonderful side dishes brought the Master Gardeners for us to sample and enjoy at the luncheon after the meeting?

If you haven't heard about our program for March, it will be by our own "The Peter Rabbit Players". Since this program was started in 2018, they have been written up in 4 newspapers, 1 state magazine and have exposed their Vegu-cation to over 2300 folks. They are booked for the rest of this school year and already have one booking in the fall.

Our special guests for the March meeting will be: Jayla Fry, State Coordinator, Lisa Whittlesey, National JMG Coordinator, and Tracy Lynn Wooten, the Suffolk County Delaware Agent who created the program and has guided Henry through the adaption of the program here in Texas. Additional special guests invited are Nicky Maddams, Past TMGA President, and several of the sponsors who donated funds to buy sound equipment. ***So if you see anyone that does not have on a badge that says Tarrant County Master Gardeners stop and welcome them.***

Contact your fellow members and bring them along to enjoy the performance of the "The Peter Rabbit Players". We had approx. 205 members at the January Meeting, so let's try for 250 members this time. The performance will start at 10:00 am.

A few notes:

- Please remember to put the first Tuesday of every month on your calendar so you will not miss the Monthly meetings. You never know what is in store for the morning.
- At the March Meeting - You may still pre-order Cookbooks for \$20.00 and Caladiums and Elephant Ears Bulbs. Fertilizer and Pre-Emergent will need to be picked up at the meeting.
- Per our Membership Chairs, Steve Purdy and Valarie Stowe. we now have 390 members as of 2/21/19.
- If you have not signed up for the TMGA State Meeting, April 25-27 you still have time. Check out their website for more information, www.2019tmgaconference.com.
- The International Master Gardener Meeting is June 17 - 21, 2019 in Valley Forge, PA. It would be great trip for the summer time.
- TCMGA Plant Sale is in just couple months April 26-27.

Theresa Thomas

Did you know ????

In 2019 spring starts on Wednesday, March 20 (26 days away) ends Friday, June 21. The exact time of Spring is at 21:58 UCT (Coordinated Universal Time). On the day of the equinoxes, the Sun shines directly on the equator and the length of day and night is nearly equal but not quite.

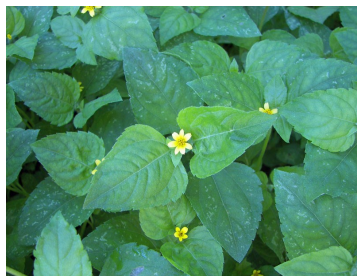
Horseherb

Calyptracarpus vialis

Information from Labybird Wildflower Center

Horseherb is an evergreen (in this part of the state) low growing ground cover that does well in sun, part sun, or shade. It can also take some foot traffic. It has a small yellow flower for most of the warm season. Blooms from March to November. It attracts small butterflies. It is easy to propagate. It may need supplemental water in the hot, full sun to look its best in the hot summer months

Depending on your point of view, Straggler Daisy or Horseherb is a pest or a welcome, low growing shade-tolerant ground cover. If you have a shady lawn anywhere within its range, you probably already have it. It gained in popularity during the growth in interest in **native** plants and is now occasionally available for sale at **native** plant nurseries (though it is so easy to propagate that you can easily grow it on your own). Thriving in sun or shade, its tiny, yellow daisy flowers add a minute touch of color to shady areas and attract small butterflies like sulfurs and skippers. It does well in sun, part sun or shade. It can even be mowed. Some people use the horseherb as a substitute of turf grass.



Content provided by Theresa Thomas

A note from the Editor: I am indeed thankful to those of you who think of contributing stories and photos regarding the gardening projects that you are involved with. If you haven't yet participated in our Newsletter, please feel free to email me at lgrandclair@gmail.com with ideas, thoughts and photos. Thank you!

Lorie Grandclair-Diaz

from the March 2005 TCMGA Newsletter "The Sharecropper"

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.

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 additional 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 years 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 in Marcy 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 website, <http://tarrantmg.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 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 centers, feed stores and 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 increased the water absorbing and holding capacity of the soil. A heavy mulch layer smother existing weeds and makes pulling weeds germinating easier.

What's in Your Garden?



Wanda Stutsman declared that not much was happening in her garden right now...except for the lovely camellias, top left, and prickly pear, top right. Hellebores are in bloom, bottom left, and daffodils, bottom right.

Feel free to send one or more photos of the good, the bad and the ugly in your garden to Lorie, at lgrandclair@gmail.com.