

Tarrant County Master Gardeners



TEXAS A & M AGRILIFE EXTENSION SERVICE

Volume 4 Issue 2

March 2020

HERITAGE ELEMENTARY VOLUNTEERS MAKE A MARK

On President's Day fifty volunteers from the Heritage Elementary Project traveled to the Demonstration Garden where they spent four hours accomplishing a tremendous amount of work. Demo Garden Chair Randy Walker reports that these volunteers rebuilt the enabling bed, mulched the Native Grasses area, replaced and painted rotten wood on the red barn, pruned the grape vines and cleared the grape arbor, and manicured the container garden and native plants around the Red Barn. In addition to this, they worked on the cedar arbor in the Herb Garden. Proof positive that many hands make light work.



Tarrant County Master Gardeners

The Spice Team Adds Herb Bed at Union Gospel Mission

Mod Squad Interns Team Spice selected the Union Gospel Mission as the location for their Intern Project. The created herb beds at the Vineyard Apartments and the area behind the Walker Building.



Team Spice members are: Donna Arceneaux, Kate Bailey, Noa Baron, Chris Bramich, Eva Grando, Gail Gravitt, Brian Hall, Lance Heiskell, Susannah Light, Jane Stittmatter, and Sylvia Tucker.

Photos by Gay Larson.

The Association would love to see more photos of Intern Projects! Please email Lorie Grandclair-Diaz at lgrandclair@gmail.com

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Paint your Barrel Contest 2020

Announcing the Tarrant County Master Gardeners 2nd Annual “Paint Your Rain Barrel Contest” for MG artists to beautify a rain barrel to be judged at the April 2 TCMGA monthly meeting. Enter with a chance to win a cash prize; 1st place \$100, 2nd place \$75, 3rd place \$50.

The painted barrels will be offered for sale through a silent auction during the April 2 meeting, with starting bids at \$60. Barrels not sold at the meeting will be offered for sale at the TCMGA April Plant Sale, April 25.

The goal of the contest is to help the environment by promoting rainwater harvesting and saving water. By engaging Master Gardeners, our goal is to bring more attention to the importance of water conservation while showing off local talent. The barrels will make their way to neighborhoods that may not have been exposed to the benefits of rainwater harvesting.

To reserve a barrel and set up a pick up date, contact Claire Alford mgclaire.alford@gmail.com 817.528.6195 ,or Claudia Teague cteague@flash.net 817.925.1889

Reservations for a barrel are on a first come, first served basis. A maximum of 12 barrels are available for this contest. Barrels must be painted by a TCMGA member. Barrels can be picked up at the TCMGA Demo Garden beginning Monday, Feb. 17 until Sat., March 14.

One barrel per member.

A reimbursement of up to \$10 for paint and supplies per barrel is available.

Barrels must be returned April 2 at the TCMGA monthly meeting.

Please no political, sexual, or religious themes.

Artist will relinquish all rights to art work by entering.

Back in Time—TCMGA History the Move to the Resource Center The Sharecropper – March, 2009

In 2000 our Master Gardener program was reaching approximately 134 members. We met at the Botanic Gardens but were running out of room. We outgrew two rooms that were opened and needed more space. My daughter is Community Development Director for the County, so I called her. She gave me the number of Resource Connection and at that time Carlilla was director. She received permission from the County to let us meet there for free, as we were Master Gardeners. Judy Ketchum became the new director and has continued to make us very comfortable. The County has saved us hundreds of dollars in the past 9 years.

— Emily Ward

Tarrant County Master Gardeners

Plant of the Month

Wood Fern, *Thelypteris kunthii*

Information from Lady Bird Wildflower Center

This gracefully arching fronds of this fern are lime to medium-green and grow 1 ½-3 ft high by 8-12 in. wide. The fronds reach in all directions from clusters of stalks occurring at intervals along the rhizome. The foliage is almost twice cut, and the pinnae taper to a point. This perennial groundcover for shade. They need to be cut back before new growth appears in the spring.

Water requirements vary with the amount of sun it receives. More sun more water. Needs water during a drought season.

They do not flower or seed. Reproduces by the spores that are under their leaves.

The wood fern can add texture to a shade garden throughout the year. It is found in woodlands, wetlands, stream banks and near seeps in Texas.

Companion plants can be the Fall Obedient Plant (*Thelypteris palustris*), Spring Obedient Plant (*P. intermedia* & *P. pulchella*), Spiderwort (*Tradscantia virginiana* L) and Cardinal Flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*)

T. kunthii is named in honor of Carl Sigismund Kunth, a German botanist who studied American plants in the early 1800s.



Content provided
by Theresa Thomas

President's Message

Okay, just saying right off the bat, it has been a cold month, but I have to say our TCMGA Master Gardeners have been working hard during this cold, windy, raining weather. Thank you! Thank you!

Don't forget Daylight Saving Time for 2020 begins Sunday March 8 (in 10 days) and ends Sunday November 1, 2020. Yippee.

On a very sad note. Penny Sambell, Class of 2008, and former Master Gardener Vera Ellen Carr, Class of 2015, passed away early this month. They will be missed by all of us that knew them. My Thoughts and prayers for their families.

Did you notice you didn't get an Eblast this week????? At the moment the program Margaret has been using is not working. Margaret Shuping and Laurin McLaurin are working together to come up with a solution.

We had a great February Meeting. It was nice to see all the 2020 Interns and 2019 MOD Squad Interns. Those Hot Dogs and side dishes were outstanding. Thank you, Steve Purdy, Mary Lou and Team, for a great meal and for all the hard work. Bob Byers from the Fort Worth Botanical Garden presented a great program. A lot of new information.

At the Advisory Meeting we were joined the 2020 Interns. It was fun meeting. Lots of input and lots of talent among the class as always.

The 2019 yearly pins are available. Stop by the membership table and pick yours up.

We are having the 2nd Rain Barrel Contest again this year at the April Meeting. There are 12 rain barrels available to paint by TCMGA members only. Contact Claire Alford or Claudia Teague to get the details.

Laura Madsen is setting up a Library at 1801 so if there is a book you would like to review and check out get in touch with Laura.

The Plant Sale Team is putting all the details together for the April 25 sale. It will be at the Boys Ranch in Bedford. The location is 2801 Forest Ridge Drive in Bedford. It is a lovely 68-acre park located at 2801 Forest Ridge Drive, Bedford (between Hwy 121 and Boulevard 26) in Northeast Tarrant County. As the date gets closer there will be more news on how you can get involved.

We are having a "Welcome, Meet and Greet" on Saturday February 28, for the 2019 and 2020 Transfers, MOD Squad and Interns. Look forward to meeting them. Thank you, Randy Walker and Eleanor Tuck, for putting this together.

Thank you for Patsy Miller and all the Master Gardeners that worked the early events and Home and Garden Show this month.

There are tons of Educational Programs and Events coming up to get your CEUs and volunteer hours.

There is a new Pergola in the Herb Garden at our Demonstration Garden. New enabling beds installed at the Garden by our Master Gardeners. Check them out when you are volunteering.

The 2019 MOD Squad Interns and 2020 are busy putting together their projects for 2020.

All of our Project Leads and Committee Leads are hard at work organizing and planning for 2020. We have already had one fun field trip to Womack Nursery. Thanks, Gay Larson and Betty Story. Twenty plus members went.

Did I say lots of work and happenings and this is only February! WOW.

Thanks to each member.

Theresa

Where flowers bloom so does hope. Ladybird Johnson

Ho, Ho, The Mistletoe-- Beloved symbol of Christmas, floral emblem of Oklahoma, or nasty parasite? It's all of the above, and as deciduous trees shed their leaves, leafy mistletoe stands out on otherwise good looking trees.

Mistletoe, a common name used to describe several species of *Rhododendron*, is widely distributed and lives on a variety of woody hosts. The scientific name comes from the Greek to Latin 'phor' which means to carry or carry off (like a thief) and 'Dendron' which refers to trees. Mistletoe extracts water and nutrients from the tree.

At the 2008 Southern Nursery Association Research Conference, Dr. Raul Cabrera, Associate Professor and Project Leader in Woody Ornamental Horticulture at the Texas AgriLife Research and Extension Urban Solutions Center in Dallas, told the story of how he decided to start studying the thief of trees. During his usual lunch break, he noticed that the mistletoe was much greener than the leaves of the trees themselves. He wondered if the mistletoe was somehow using proportionally more water and nutrients than the tree. Could controlling mistletoe be a water conservation tool?

Dr. Cabrera went back to the Urban Solutions Center, grabbed a ladder, and started measuring the stomatal conductance, a measure of water loss per unit of leaf area of tree leaves and mistletoe leaves. While he hasn't been able to quantify the actual water and nutrient use in leafy mistletoe yet, he has found that the stomatal conductance of mistletoe is higher than in the host tree leaves, and actually it loses water from both sides of its leaves (tree leaves lose water only or mostly from the lower side). This suggests that on a leaf area basis the mistletoe is using more water than its tree host. Dr. Cabrera's research continues. He's currently growing mistletoe on containerized plants so he won't have to spend so much time up on ladders.

While Dr. Cabrera is trying to quantify how much water mistletoe is stealing, weed scientist Dr. Mengmeng Gu of Mississippi State University, in the weed science way, is just trying to get rid of it. Unfortunately, the title of her presentation at the same conference pretty much says it all —Bark- penetrating Surfactant and Ethephon Did Not Control Leafy Mistletoe in Spring.

The plant growth regulator Ethephon is the only labeled chemical control for mistletoe. Ethephon ([2 - chloroethyl] phosphoric acid) is absorbed by plant tissues and releases ethylene which causes leaf abscission. It must be applied in the dormant season, and doesn't translocate so application in large trees can be challenging. Dr. Gu applied Ethephon on March 21 and April 3 and 4 of 2008. While her results were inconsistent, she does plan to try the product again this fall. She's also planning to avoid one unintended side effect—car paint damage.

Dr. Gu's inconsistent results were consistent with an experiment conducted in February 1988 by Randy Peterson of the Denton Parks and Recreation Department in cooperation with John Cooper, recently retired Denton County Extension Agent. They tested three rates of Ethephon, with and without surfactant on Cedar Elm trees. Mistletoe leaf abscission increased with increasing rates, but only reached 50%. They also found that spraying twice at a 15-minute interval increased abscission.

Other studies such as —New Methods for Control of Leafy Mistletoe (*Rhododendron* spp.) on Landscape Trees (John M. Leichter, Michael S. Reid and Alison M. Berry, *Journal of Arboriculture* 17(5): May 1991 pp. 127-130) tried treating cut mistletoe stubs with Ethephon and glyphosate (i.e. Round-up™) and compared those treatments to simply pruning out the mistletoe. Glyphosate results were extremely variable, but treatment of cut stubs with 10% Ethephon did reduce percent re-growth over pruning alone.

Thief of Trees continued

If Ethephon is not the solution, what 's the best way to get rid of mistletoe? Like many successful weeds, mistletoe is efficiently spread by birds. Many species of birds eat its lovely white berries and then excrete the seeds in unsuspecting trees. The sticky seeds germinate and grow root like structures called haustoria which extend up and down the tree branch in the tree 's vascular system. Pruning the mistletoe to a stub is like mowing to control weeds. Pruning will reduce the numbers of seeds spread, and it slows down the growth of the mistletoe. It's certainly better than doing nothing, but unless it's done repeatedly over time, the mistletoe will re-grow.

Pruning out the infected limb to at least a foot below the mistletoe attachment site should remove the haustoria and prevent re-growth. However, this is an expensive solution and not always appropriate.

The other commonly used control method is to cut the mistletoe back to a stub and prevent its regrowth by excluding light. This is traditionally done by wrap- ping the area with black plastic, aluminum foil or tar paper. The wrap needs to remain on the tree for a few years. As one might imagine, wrapping tree branches in black plastic is also time consuming and not especially attractive. It's also likely to create a microclimate which could cause heat damage to the bark and often attracts ants and other insects. Leichter, Reid and Berry (1991) substituted black pruning paint for the plastic wrap treatment with good results. The pruning paint is much more quickly ap- plied and not quite as ugly.

How about host resistance? There's both good and bad news here. Crape myrtle, Chinese pistache, Bradford pear, gingko, sweet gum and sycamore are never infested with mistletoe, meaning they are not suitable hosts. Unfortunately, many of our great native trees are quite susceptible including the oaks, the elms, bois d'Arc and mesquite. Other popular street trees afflicted by leafy mistletoe infections include walnut, poplar, beech and cherry.

In summary, you can try spraying, pruning, really pruning, pruning and wrapping, pruning and painting or giving up and planting a gingko, but the mistletoe battle is not easily won. It is however a worthy battle, especially when you consider that water conservation may soon be a quantifiable benefit. And while we may not always have snow for Christmas, there's always going to be plenty of mistletoe.



Winter is definitely over. March 16th marks the average last killing freeze date for our area. But note that word "average" -- killing freezes can occur after this date.

PREPARE BEDS: It's time to prepare beds for planting warm-season flowers and vegetables. After clearing winter plantings or lifting perennials for dividing, prepare the bare soil for new growth. Work in several inches of organic material such as compost, pine bark, or sphagnum peat moss.

ANNUALS: In Tarrant County there is still time to plant seeds of your favorite annuals in flats to be transplanted out-of-doors when danger of frost is past. Try some of the following annuals as transplants: ageratum, cockscombs, fibrous rooted begonias, coreopsis, cosmos, cleomes, marigolds, nasturtiums, petunias, phlox, portulacas, salvias, sweet alyssums, sunflowers, and zinnias.

PERENNIALS: Divide existing clumps of fall- blooming perennials, such as chrysanthemums, autumn asters, Mexican marigold mint, and obedient plant. Separate the clumps into individual plants and set them 8-10" apart in groupings of 5 or more. Be sure to prepare the bed area well by spading in 3-5" of organic material into the top 8-10" of soil. For long lasting fertility add 3-5 pounds of cotton- seed meal or slow release fertilizer per 100 square feet of bed area.

WEED KILLERS: Many trees and shrubs are damaged or killed each year by the careless application of weed killers, including those found in mixes of fertilizers and weed killers for lawns. Always read and follow label directions very carefully. Don't let your favorite flowering shrub be a victim of your war on dandelions.

GROUND COVERS: Beds of ground covers, such as Asiatic jasmine, can be mowed or sheared back just as it comes out of dormancy to encourage new growth from the base.

PRUNING: Pruning of evergreens and summer flowering shrubs should stop in early March. Spring-flowering shrubs bloom on last season's growth and should be pruned soon after they bloom. This allows for vigorous summertime growth and results in plenty of flower buds the following year. Some examples of shrubs that bloom on last season's growth are: Redbud, Japanese Quince, Fringe Tree, all Forsythia species, Honeysuckle, Indian Hawthorn, Rambling Rose species, early white Spirea species, Viburnum species.

Some shrubs that bloom after June usually do so from buds which are formed on shoots that grow the same spring. These shrubs should be pruned in late winter to promote vigorous shoot growth in spring. Examples of shrubs that bloom on current season's growth include: Abelia, Butterfly Bush, Shrub Althea, Saint-Johns-Wort, Crape Myrtle, Bush Rose, Chaste Tree.

For complete information on pruning shrubs, consult the website
<http://www.aggie.horticulture.tamu.edu>

Field Trip to Womack's Nursery

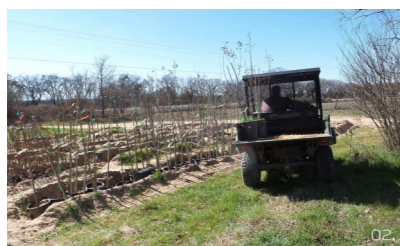


Our leader, Gay Larson, with Larry Don Womack.



Larry Don gives Master Gardeners a horticultural lesson.

On Monday, February 24, TCMG traveled to DeLeon, Texas to visit Womack's Nursery. They shopped, learned, and shopped some more! Thank you to Gay Larson for doing such a good job of organizing and taking pictures. The group is shown in the photo right.



Lunch at New York Hill Restaurant.

TARRANT COUNTY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION CERTIFIED PROJECTS

TCMGA Community and Demonstration Garden

Leads: Randy Walker

Harold Taylor

Workdays and times: Tuesday and 3rd Saturday 8:00 am to 12:00 noon

TBA - other workdays can be arranged - contact Randy Walker

Peter Rabbit Players

Leads: Henry Cole

Sian Rees

Workday and times: Contact Henry Cole - the time and day varies depending on bookings

STARs (Skills Training Achieves Results)

Leads: Claire Alford

Nancy Curl

Workdays and times: Every Wednesday - 8:30 am to 12:00 noon

ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS

Bob Jones Natural Center

Leads: Carol Dowd

Susie Emmons

Workdays and time: 3rd Wednesday - Winter 9:00 am to 12:00 noon, Summer 8:00 to 10:00 am

Compost Outpost at FWBG

Leads: Bill Hall

Susan Houston

Workdays and times: Friday - Winter - 8:30 am to 12:30 pm, Summer 7:30 to 11:30 am

Veterans Park Wildscape

Leads: Ann Knudson

Hester Schwarzer

Workdays and times: Wednesday and the 1st Saturday of the month - 9:00 am to 12:00 noon

A mini class on Saturdays at 11:30 am

Tarrant County Southwest Sub Courthouse

Leads: Gailon Hardin

Dawn Hancock

Workdays and times: 2nd Tuesday & the last Saturday- Winter 9:00 am to 12:00 noon, Summer - 8:00 to 10:00 am.

Southwest Regional Library Native Demonstration Gardens

Leads: Char McMorro

Theresa Kay Thomas

Workdays and time: 2nd and 4th Thursday- 8:30 am to 12:00 noon

TBA - Saturdays

FORT WORTH BOTANICAL GARDEN PROJECTS

Botanical Research Institute of Texas (BRIT)

Lead: Kay Young [t](#)

Workdays and times: Contact Kay Young

Begonia Greenhouse

Leads: Taddie Hamilton

Judy Jackson

Workdays and times: Wednesday and Friday - 8:30 am to 12:00 noon

Trail Garden at the FWBG

Leads: Carol Vance

Rene Muhl

Workdays and times: Thursday - March to November 8:30 to 11:30 am, June to August 7:30 to 10:30 am

FWBG Japanese Garden and Docent Programs

Leads: Diane Jones

Marie-Jose Smith

Workdays and times: Wednesday - 9:00 am to 12:00 noon

Docent Tours - when scheduled, tours are given 7 days a week

Backyard Vegetable Garden at FWBG

Leads: Kim Corbo

Rachel Howe

Workdays and times: Friday starting at 9:00 am

Perennial Garden at FWBG

Leads: Valarie Soens

Mercy Kettler

Workdays and times: Wednesday - 9:00 am to 12:00 noon, Summer 8:00 to 11:00 am.

TBA - 1st Saturday - 8:30 am to 11:30 am

OTHER GARDENS**Common Ground NRH Community Gardens**

Leads: Dick Pafford

Ray Morrell

Workdays and times: Wednesday - 8:00 to 9:30 am

Saturday - 8:30 to 11:30 am

Grapevine Botanical Garden Greenhouse

Leads: Debbie Boyle

Coral Gates

Donna Bufton

Workdays and times: Wednesday 9:00 to 11:00 am September to June,

Every other Wednesday July & August 9:00 to 11:00 am

Samaritan House

Leads: Mary Brown

Janice Sims

Workdays and times: Tuesday - 9:00 am to 11:00 am, Summer start at 8:00 am

Thistle Hill

Leads: Keith Olmstead

Elizabeth Staples

Workdays and times: Wednesday - Winter - 8:00 am to 11: am, Summer & Fall - 9:00 am - 12:00 Noon

Teen Challenge

Leads: Ginger Bason

Mike Warren

Workdays and times: Contact: Ginger Bason

Union Gospel Mission

Leads: Gay Larson

Patti Maness

Workdays and times: Monday - 9:00 am to 12:00 noon

SCHOOL PROJECTS**Alice Carlson Elementary OLE**

Leads: Deborah Brown

Needs a co-lead - contact Deborah Brown

Workdays and times: Monday and Thursday - 9:00 to 11:00 am, Summer 8:30 to 11:00 am

Durham Intermediate

Leads: Sian Rees

Henry Cole

Workdays and times: Thursday except on MG Meeting day - 9:00 - 11:00 am

Fitzgerald Elementary OLE

Leads: Lee Ann Rosenthal

Patsy Miller

Workdays and times: Monday - 8:30 am to 12:00 noon

Heritage Elementary OLE

Leads: Pam Braak

Harold Annis

Dick Pafford

Workdays and times: Monday - 9:00 am to 11:00 am during school year, summer 8:00 to 10: am,
1st Monday is garden club, 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm

Meadowbrook Elementary School Vegetable Garden

Leads: Cathy Thomas

Mary Brown

Workdays and times: Thursday 1:30 to 3:00 pm. Garden Club meets from 2:00 - 2:55 pm.