

# Tarrant County Master Gardeners



TEXAS A & M AGRILIFE EXTENSION SERVICE

Volume 5 Issue 3

March 2021

## MG Greenhouses vs Freezing Weather

By Wanda Stutsman

The third week of February 2021 is certainly imprinted in our gardening brains. As much as we would like to forget about the endless worrying and sleepless nights we cannot because we are finding ourselves cleaning up and clearing out our gardens.

Many Master Gardeners (MGs) have hobby greenhouses in their backyards. Some are more sophisticated than others but all are supposed to be safe havens for our plant friends during the mild Texas winters. In a normal year, they all perform well. So how did they perform during this polar vortex? The lucky MGs that did the normal prep and those that did not lose power have favorable results. Others of us who cringed every time the power went out, our stories differ dramatically.

There are several in our association that had to shift from fretting over their greenhouses to self-preservation. That is not to say that their hearts were not broken to find that all their loves in their greenhouses were lost. My own garden house probably came within hours of a total loss when the power failed to come back on the 25th time. If you were subjected to rolling blackouts you definitely know the emotional roller coaster I was on. Then in the ninth hour (literally) power was restored.

Early in the power outages, Sue Kelly visited the Greenworks (GWs) greenhouse and declared it to be a total loss. The outside damage to the rainwater collection system and the first flush diverter probably made her think the situation was worse than it was. (continued on next page)



Left: Damaged first drain diverter.

# Tarrant County Master Gardeners

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## MG Greenhouses vs Freezing Weather

Pat Higgins and her crew had moved many plants from the MG greenhouse to GWs to take advantage of the heater. No one ever anticipated the power would be turned off. The propane gas heater was of no use without electricity for its starter and blower. After closer review and a complete inventory, the loss of plants in GWs turned out to be about 50%. Many established perennials fared well. Succulents and seedlings took the biggest hit. There were many surprise survivors like Angelita Daisies in gallon pots, and dianthus seedlings in 4" pots. A few rosette succulents survived next to others that look like melted candle wax. (photos below)



Dotty Woodson said that although there was no heat the greenhouse still provided the “greenhouse effect”. The sun wasn’t out often but when it was the greenhouse could gain ground on the freezing temps to ward off below zero readings. Additionally, she said that cold air sinks to the ground and the plants on tables were in the best position to benefit from the “greenhouse effect”.

In the MG hoop house columbine in gallon pots under the tables looked as if there had never been a freeze. In that environment the heat from the dark greenhouse covering and the ground benefitted the plants. Micro climates exist everywhere and can be an advantage as MGs have learned in their own gardens.

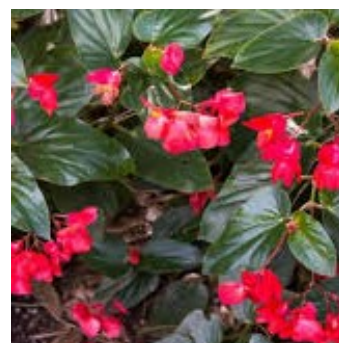
Dotti shared that her home greenhouse and her commercial greenhouses fared well. The power was never out and her backup generators never had to click on. Dotti did take many steps to prepare for the upcoming freeze. She watered plants very well then drained the water lines (she did have a line bust 100 feet away from heat source). Then she made sure her backup generators were operational and she even had back up kerosene heaters ready in case she needed them. Dotti and her husband have a very valuable orchid inventory in their greenhouses thus they spend more on backup systems than a typical homeowner would spend. The cost for these infrequently used systems can easily be more than the cost of what is growing in the greenhouse. She shared a prepping idea for future reference. Wet large bubble wrap and adhere it to the vertical greenhouse walls below the table height to add extra nonpermanent insulation.

If you are like me you have assessed your damage and pondered upgrades to your greenhouses or hobby houses. Maybe that tarped lean-to on your back patio needs to be rethought for next year. I am thinking my bathroom would make a good winter hideout for my plants next year. Those thoughts will quickly fade as our gardens surprise us in a few weeks with green sprouts on plants we thought we had lost. The deep freeze and power losses will become a distant memory.

### Plant Sale Information

The 2021 Annual Tarrant County Master Gardeners Plant Sale looks a bit different this year. Debra Rosenthal has been hard at work with the help of Kelly Perry and her husband, Kendale, to create an online “Store”, where we will be able to purchase plants, logo wear and other goods through our website.

This year we will have a wide variety of perennials for sale, as well as more unique annuals. Debra will let everyone know via Eblast when the store is up and running and ready to do business. You will have ample time to shop and place your order. You may either pay online or mail a check to Debra. The plan now is for pick up to be April 30<sup>th</sup> at the Demo Garden. More details to follow.



# Tarrant County Master Gardeners

## Trees and Tree Care Advanced Training

By Patsy Miller

Sixty-three Master Gardeners from 21 Texas counties are on their way to becoming tree nerds after completing Tarrant County Master Gardeners' first Trees and Tree Care Advanced Training. Tarrant County had 12 participants.

It was held virtually over three Fridays and by all accounts it was a success. At the end of the last day – March 5 -- one participant paid the greatest compliment by asking, “When is the next class Tarrant County MGs are putting on?” (Yes, we do have more in the works. More about that later).

It took lots of people working behind the scenes to create the positive experiences expressed by the participants.

Dick Pafford was the training class MC creating the friendly vibe, providing timely information, introducing the speakers, keeping the schedule, watching the chat box to answer and get answers to questions.

On their PCs, laptops, phones and IPads, participants saw before and after the presentations tree-themed slides with notice of upcoming talks, breaks, important information and “fun facts” about trees. It provided continuity and a professional-looking presentation. The slides were produced by Loretta Bailey and her team of John Cheney, Betty Starnes and Laura Allen.

Nancy Curl was zoom master, tag-teaming with Claire Alford and Theresa Thomas, to make sure videos were ready to go, speakers were online, sight and sound were perfect – or close to it – and monitoring the chat box. She also sent the weekly reminders to speakers and participants of the upcoming training session.

While we couldn't go outside for up-close observation, a variety of speakers shared their knowledge and enthusiasm for their subjects. By being virtual, it allowed more participants. The classes were both pre-recorded and presented live. Many of the presenters came online after their pre-recorded talks for a live Q & A session. Or during their recorded presentations would be in the chat box answering questions.

The speakers represented many professional entities. Steve Houser and Dr. Greg Church were from Arboril-ogical Services. Steve, owner of the company, is a certified arborist and Master Gardener. In addition to talks on tree biology, tree benefits and protecting trees during construction, he shared his passion for Texas Heritage Trees and Indian Tree Markers.



Dr.

Greg



From left: Monte Nesbitt, Sam Kieschnick, Cortney Blevins.

### Trees and Tree Care Advanced Training

Church is a plant pathologist, certified arborist, and a former Collin County AgriLife Extension Service horticultural agent. He not only presented information on Recommended Trees of Texas and When to Call the Experts, he called on his Extension background to discuss Partnering with Cities and Community Groups.

Gareth Harrier with Bartlett Tree Services demonstrated some of latest techniques in treating tree problems. AgriLife Extension, Texas Forest Service and Texas Parks and Wildlife brought expertise on tree identification, fruit and nut trees, tree selection and planting, tree pruning, tree diseases and insects, good reference books and apps.

Our own county agent Laura Miller spoke on landscape tree production and Tarrant County Master Gardener Hester Schwarzer raised our consciousness on trees as micro-environments and shared tips on teaching children about trees.

Since we couldn't go on live tours, Mercy Kettler shot videos at three area tree farms. She was assisted by Theresa Thomas and Margaret Shuping with technical expertise from Lance Heiskell. Featured were commercial businesses The Tree Place and Metro Maples and Fort Worth's municipal tree farm, Rolling Hills. The videos were not advertisements, but more information on tree selection, correcting tree girdling before planting, grafting Japanese maples, balled and burlapped trees versus container-grown and much more.

While the participants were not together physically, the chat room became the break room where they answered each other's questions, shared experiences and tips and told us how we were doing.

"Good session" "Thank you very much for all the tree information," "The tours were amazing," "Thank you – very practical."

Now armed with this information, the participants are required to do at least 20 education hours to earn the tree advanced training designation. They will receive a flash drive with all the speakers' presentations and handouts and a digital notebook with additional handouts and resources that Debbie Stevenson is assembling. They can use this in preparation for talks and demonstrations to their local MG association, garden clubs, community events, libraries, wherever they want to hear about trees.

Now with this class and two previous virtual training classes last October, TCMGA is gaining more expertise in providing informative and useful advanced training sessions for Master Gardeners all over Texas. Next up is Rain-water Harvesting scheduled for April.



From left: Steve Houser, Greg Church, Laura Miller and Hester Schwarzer.

# Tarrant County Master Gardeners

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## HISTORY OF THE TEXAS MASTER GARDENER

By Eleanor Tuck for the 2021 Handbook

When the term “Master Gardener” was first coined in the early 1970s to describe a new Extension program in Washington State, few could have predicted it would spread into Texas and blossom into one of the most effective volunteer organizations in the State.

The Texas Master Gardener program had its beginnings in 1978 in Extension horticulture training at A&M University when Dr. Sam Cotner (Extension vegetable specialist) described the success of the movement in Washington state. At that time, county agents in the Texas Cooperative Extension, now Texas AgriLife Extension, were experiencing overwhelming demands for horticulture information, much like their colleagues in the Pacific Northwest.

The first Master Gardener class was held in 1979 in Montgomery County and drew about 25 people. The 50-hour course was held in the evenings and taught by Extension agents and specialists from Texas A&M using a manual compiled from Extension publications and news articles. Volunteer service was optional, but class members were encouraged to work on Extension projects.

Two more counties, Galveston and El Paso, started programs in 1981. By the end of the decade, five more counties have Master Gardener programs: Harris (1986), Dallas (1986), Tarrant (1987), Bexar (1989) and Denton (1989).

The Texas Cooperative Extension made an official commitment to a Texas Master Gardener Program in 1987 with the hiring of a statewide coordinator. At that time, guidelines were developed for the program, including a minimum of 50 hours of formal training and 50 hours of volunteer service to become a certified Texas Master Gardener. The 500-page training handbook also was completed then.

In the 1990s, the Texas Master Gardener movement exploded, fueled by the program’s success and visibility. In 1991, a statewide, non-profit organization was formed and called the Texas Master Gardener Association. As of January 2020, there were 86 county Master Gardener programs with 6,881 certified Master Gardeners statewide. In 2020, they contributed over 500,000 hours and 600,000 hours.

Some projects are common to all Master Gardener programs. Answering homeowner’s questions by phone is at the heart of most Texas programs. Classroom gardening is another popular project. Some programs add different twists such as cylinder gardening (Harris, El Paso, Galveston), vermicomposting (Smith), or butterfly gardens (Denton). Other common projects are speakers’ bureaus, community gardens, and information booths at local events.

Many projects that Master Gardeners are involved in directly reflect their communities. Examples are the Big Tree Contest (Orange), Wetlands Reclamation (Galveston), state historical park landscaping (Paris, Grayson), State Capitol landscaping (Travis).

A love of gardening and search for knowledge is central to why Master Gardeners join the program. They remain Master Gardeners to enjoy the camaraderie and friendship of others who share their interests, to gain and share horticulture knowledge, and to give back to the community.

On the other hand, the 86 Master Gardener programs in Texas are as individual as the gardeners who inhabit

### HISTORY OF THE TEXAS MASTER GARDENER

them. Size of overall programs varies from six Master Gardeners in Kleberg-Kennedy County to 364 in Montgomery and 344 Master Gardeners in Tarrant. But we contributed 32,688 hours, drove 211,479 miles and acquired 4,766.6 CEU hours! Regardless of the program size, there is always a waiting list of individuals wanting to enter the Master Gardener program.

Though Texas Master Gardeners are united in name, the program's strength lies in its ability to meet the diverse needs of the individual communities it serves. By coming statewide guidelines with local direction and administration, the program offers the flexibility necessary to keep it a vital and responsive organization that serves all of Texas.



#### **Back in Time—TCMGA History the Move to the Resource Center Sharecropper March 2009**

**By Emily Ward**

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 Carmilla 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.

# Tarrant County Master Gardeners

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## EAT BAIT

By Derald Freeman

Sharecropper 2008

What is the worst thing that you could encounter, the most dreaded event you can imagine? Possibly losing your balance and staggering down the steps at a ball stadium with a hotdog in one hand, a cold drink in the other and eventually going "splat" on the steps while the entire event is shown on the big stadium screen. Oh, how about a door closing on your fingertips and it hurts until you turn sick while looking at those flattened digits. The one I dread the most is walking accidentally into a fire ant mound. Ah yes, don't you know that hurts. Fire ants are nearly a year-round problem, from March through October. So, what can you do about the problem? I treated individual mounds for years with various chemicals only to see a new mound appear about six feet away within a few days. There are some truths about dealing with fire ants.

1. No matter how much pesticide or bait you use you NEVER kill all of them.
2. One treatment a year is not enough.
3. Using "Killall" pesticides is not the best solution.

Fire ants normally live in raised mounds of clay soil without holes. In sandy areas they will nest in the ground. When the colony is disturbed, they rush out by the thousands and sting anything they can find that appears to be a threat. That's you.

The granddaddy of all questions is "How do we deal with them?" In early spring when I see the first mound I say, "Let's Dance!" and I do the Texas Two-step.

Heaviest concentrations of fire ants are in Texas, Florida, and Louisiana, but these have spread into Alabama and Mississippi. A queen can result in the production of thousands of offspring and until every mound, everywhere is treated at the same time they will continue to exist.

STEP 1: I use a broadcast fire ant bait and spread it around the entire yard, lawn and in the landscaping as well. Amdro works best for me. Everything gets a treatment. The soil temperature should be between 70-90 degrees when fire ants are foraging. These baits appear to be food to the ants and are taken into the colony.

Baits work more slowly than Insect Mound Treatment (IMT) chemicals and will take 2 to 6 weeks to provide colony control. The baits kill the queen, and the mound cannot continue to reproduce. Broadcast the bait on the landscape and lawn. Spectracide and Amdaro are reasonably safe for use around pets, kids, and other animals. Others are Eliminator, Extinguish, Award and Logic. You can expect 80-95 percent control.

STEP 2: The second step is to treat the mounds with an IMT application, but I recommend waiting a few days after the bait treatment. Why? You want to give the fire ants time to bring the bait into the colony. Apply IMT quick knockdown products on and around the mound for a 3-foot radius. Most mound treatments are granular or powder and kill within hours to a few days. The best for me is Sevendust. Other products are Bayer Advanced, Orthene, and Spectracide.

Note: Dursban and Diazinon products are no longer sold but are listed in some publications. Remember, IMT applications do not eliminate the colony, but can knock it down fast.

### EAT BAIT

You should use the following safety precautions:

- Wear long-sleeved shirt and long pants. Wear nonabsorbent disposable gloves.
- Wear a protective dust mask or respirator.
- Wear boots with pant cuffs outside.
- Wear safety goggles or glasses.
- Wash off skin with soap if bait contacts your skin. Wash clothing separately. Keep bait away from vegetable gardens, orchards, and food producing areas. Store baits in a cool, dry place. Always read labels and follow directions.



# Tarrant County Master Gardeners

## Short Trees and Tall Shrubs

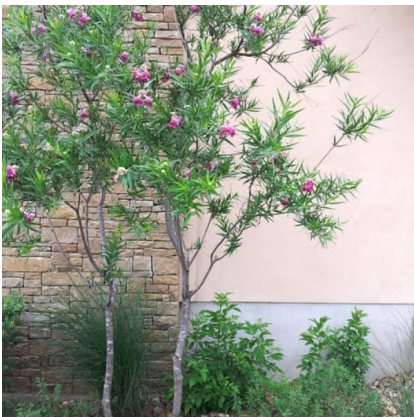
By Steve Chaney, Sharecropper March 2010

When you are planting trees and shrubs, do not forget the tall shrubs and small trees. We always remember the shade trees (live oaks, Texas red oak, cedar elm, bur oak, chinquapin oak, and Chinese Pistachio). Foundation shrubs such as dwarf yaupon holly, compact nandina, and dwarf Burford holly are very popular for the area directly in front of the house. It is the vertical space in between the two extremes that is often neglected. The mid-level plants join the small and large plants into a unified landscape. They are especially important for wildlife if that is one of your interests. The majority of birds need small trees and large shrubs for nesting cover and sources of food.

For full sun, vitex and desert willow are the most drought resistant selections. Vitex blooms with lilac-like flowers all summer as a single or multi-stem tree 20 feet tall. Desert willow reaches about the same height to form an airy tree with orchid-like blooms all summer. The selection "Bubba," discovered by Paul Cox, has superior purple blooms. Both trees attract butterflies and hummingbirds.

Yaupon holly can also tolerate some shade. It can be pruned to form a single-trunk tree to 25 feet tall or a multi-stemmed hedge plant or espalier tree 8 feet tall. Fit the standard yaupon into whatever space is available. The off-white blooms in spring are attractive but the red winter berries are the major attraction of the standard yaupon. The mockingbirds, waxwings, and other songbirds eat them by early spring. Yaupon is evergreen.

Mexican Plum is another great tree as well for planting at the edge of large trees or in the full blazing sun. It is another of the 20–25-foot trees that can tolerate some shade. The dark green leaves are deciduous and early in the season the tree is covered in beautiful white blossoms that are truly fragrant. The bark is dark, almost purple with small ornamental plums that are edible. Redbud is another good tree for planting at the edge of large shade trees. It is another 25-foot tree that can tolerate some shade. The heart-shaped leaves are deciduous. In early spring, before the leaves are back, its pink blooms cover the stems. Plant the Texas, Oklahoma, or Mexican selections for best drought tolerance.



Desert Willow



Yaupon Holly



Mexican Plum

### Short Trees and Tall Shrubs

There are a number of large shrubs from which to choose. Avoid the red-tipped photinia. It is becoming short-lived in the DFW metro area because of chlorosis and an untreatable fungal leaf spot.

Hollies and nandinas are good choices. They are good xeriscape plants, are evergreen, tolerate sun or shade, and produce berries that are eaten by songbirds. The standard nandina produces colorful winter foliage if it is grown in the sun. The standard Burford holly is probably the best of the large hollies for DFW. The nandina reaches 7 feet tall, and the Burford holly reaches about 8 feet tall. These viburnums generally do well in the shade. One species, rusty Blackhawk, prefers full sun where it has good fall color.

Of the trees and shrubs listed in this article, vitex, desert willow, yaupon holly, nandina, and wax myrtle do not seem to be eaten much by the deer. In some neighborhoods they also pass up pittosporum.

Take a few moments as you drive through your neighborhood to observe what plants are doing well in your area. Take the time to talk to some of your local nurseries about plants that do well in your area. Visit your local Botanic Garden or Arboretum to find the plants that have tested well in your area. These steps will greatly enhance your landscape if taken before planting, rather than after. Enjoy the Garden and enjoy life, it's always best if you enjoy life in the garden!



Burford Holly



Nandina above

Wax Myrtle right.



# Tarrant County Master Gardeners

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## **'Texas Gold' Columbine: *Spectacular Shade-Blooming Perennial For Texas***

From Texas Superstar Website <http://www.texassuperstars.com>

Too much shade plagues tens of thousands of home landscapes all across Texas. Why? Because the vast majority of plants known for their striking blossoms prefer sunny locations, and they flower poorly, if at all, in shady areas. Horticultural help is on the way however, for after many years of testing and development, a new "Queen of the Shade-dappled Garden" is about to ascend her Texas throne.

This delicate, bold and beautiful perennial has been christened the 'Texas Gold' Columbine. This plant, whose scientific name is *Aquilegia chrysantha 'Texas Gold,'* is heaven-sent for partially shady areas of Texas landscapes. A Texas native, this new plant is a cultivated selection from a rare perennial wildflower found in moist, shady areas only along a few remote streams and waterfalls in the Big Bend area of west Texas.

### **World-Class Advantages**

Years of field testing by horticulture specialists with the Texas Agricultural Extension Service have shown 'Texas Gold' to be a truly superior performer. Its advantages include:

- Being considered by many professionals to be our most spectacular shade-blooming perennial and one of the best new plants to be made available in years.
- Especially available columbines weaken or die the very first summer! 'Texas Gold,' however, has the native toughness and ability to tolerate the heat of Texas summers, thus it is truly perennial and will give you years of enjoyment without the expense and hassle of replanting. This is true Texas value from a true Texas native.
- Its elegant, stately beauty is truly something to behold. Butter yellow blossoms, high-lighted by graceful cups and long, dramatic spurs, are held well above the rest of the state, many commercial attractive foliage for maximum impact. Occurring on long, branching stems, these flowers also make good cut flower specimens. As an added bonus, the blossoms have a pleasing honeysuckle-like fragrance, and are attractive to hummingbirds.
- Long blooming for a perennial, 'Texas Gold' rewards the homeowner with bounteous blossoms from late March through early May. A grouping of several such plants can be breathtaking.
- Unlike some perennials which at times look rather weedy, the scalloped, bluish gray-green foliage and compact, rounded growth habit of 'Texas Gold' make it attractive year-round.

'Texas Gold' should give excellent performance in all areas of Texas with the possible exception of the Rio Grande Valley and the Panhandle. Even in these two areas, 'Texas Gold' is most worthy of trial planting (Lubbock and northward, plant in semi-shade along the south wall of a building for winter protection).

### **'Texas Gold' Columbine:** *Spectacular Shade-Blooming Perennial For Texas*

#### **"Earth-Kind" Growing Tips**

Proper site selection and soil preparation are crucial factors in making 'Texas Gold' plants happy in your landscape.

- Site selection in this case means partial shade. An ideal site would be under a canopy of a deciduous tree (i.e. drops its leaves in the fall) as the columbine would then receive what it truly loves: sun-dappled or partial shade in the summer for heat protection, more sunlight in the winter when the plant is actively growing. Avoid areas of dense, heavy, continual shade.
- Provide well drained soils high in organic matter. It will not tolerate wet feet or standing water! If your soil is a sticky, poorly drained clay, raised beds are highly recommended.
- Prior to planting, incorporate an "Earth-Kind"™ slow-release fertilizer, one in which at least 50% of the nitrogen is in the slowly available form, at the rate of 2 pounds per 100 square feet of planting area. Each year, reapply a slow-release fertilizer high in nitrogen at this same rate in October, December and February to help stimulate foliage production.

Space plants two feet apart at planting. At maturity, the foliar portion will reach a height of 18–24 inches. Also, 'Texas Gold' needs one inch of water every 7–10 days, either from a soaking rain or thorough irrigation.

If spider mites or leaf miners make the foliage unattractive by mid to late summer, use hedge shears or a string trimmer to completely remove all foliage down to a few inches above the crown of the plant. Gather and destroy this infested foliage to greatly reduce pest populations without having to resort to pesticides. When temperatures cool in the fall, new leaves should be produced and the plants will come on like gangbusters.

#### **Landscaping Pointers**

To maximize its landscape performance, arrange in easy, natural drifts, avoiding the regimentation of straight lines. Mass them in the perennial border, or tucked into unused corners of flower beds, or almost anywhere you need bold spring color.

Plants already blooming in one-gallon containers are great for instant beauty. If covering a large area, consider plants in 4-inch pots which, while they likely will not bloom until spring of 1994, are less expensive and represent excellent value.



# Tarrant County Master Gardeners

## Snowmageddon!

Lorie,

I covered so many plants in pots and others not in pots, like my aralia. Some survived but most succumbed! I threw a green blanket over my aralia and lo and behold, it was looking pretty good when I uncovered it! My lovely Lenten Rose had blooms through it all. And the cilantro, oregano, and Brussels sprouts were happy I covered them- surviving!

The azalea bushes I covered with frost tents are still a big question mark. The top 6 inches look brownish but otherwise healthy. My long established azaleas are brown.



Robin eating her prized berry.  
Deep Freeze 2021

Danese Dunaway



### Snowmageddon!

When I was a child growing up in Michigan the winter storms and lake-effect weather gifted us with many, happy snow days spent exploring a white and icy wonderland which we wholeheartedly transformed into snow caves, circus animals fashioned out of snow colored with food dye, and endless hockey games! Our Snowmageddon experienced by an adult is much different. It is the worried anticipation of what will come next, as evergreens exhibit all of their rainbow colors of dead, and those plants of the deciduous ilk are prayed upon with a fervent hope that all was not lost.

Sandy Mellina



Too many to choose from, LOL!

Ended up going with this one of the creek out back.

Note: near the edge, the ice was ~1 inch thick, and despite the cold, the waterfall upstream never froze.

Christel Danning



# Newsletter Title

## Snowmageddon!

Lorie,

These are my survivors of the freeze:

(Photo 1) Winter Jasmine taken February 16

(Photo 2) Autumn Joy Sedum taken February 18

(Photo 3) Heirloom Daffodils, variety unknown, taken February 27, yes these were left unprotected in the freezing temps.

(Photo 4) Garden sedum, variety unknown

(Photo 5) Monarda, variety unknown

Photos 4&5 plants both pass along gifts from MG Marie José Smith and left unprotected in the freezing temps .

Nancy Taylor



### Snowmageddon!

From Lorie Grandclair-Diaz.

My husband and I started off planning for the freeze by preparing our plants and animals. Heaters were placed in the garage to protect the plants. We wrapped our chicken coop and added heaters for the chicks and for our feral cat who lives in the chicken yard. We had plenty of bird seed for all of our feeders to keep our visitors well fed.

And then the really cold stuff hit, and boy howdy was it miserable. There was a running text exchange between myself and five of my Master Gardener buddies as we all shared what was going on in our particular situations. (No water, frozen pool pumps, boil alerts, rolling blackouts.) Our power went out and we watched the temperature inside our house and garage drop lower and lower. When my garage temperature dropped well below freezing, Wanda advised me to put blankets over the plants, ASAP. The temperature in our house dropped to 34 degrees, so we closed the drapes and hung sheets over our living room doors. Since we have a fireplace we pretty much lived in the living room for 3 days with hourly forays outside to give fresh water and food to the chickens and birds. We didn't have power or internet, but I am so grateful that I had my phone to keep in contact with my friends. I feel lucky that our power was only out for 43 hours, and that we never lost water. I will never ever take warmth for granted.

I lost most of the plants in my garage except for my citrus trees and a few other tough guys. (thanks to Wanda's advice they made it) The loss that really hurt my heart was that of my kalanchoe paddle succulent. Also known as flapjack. I had had it for many years in a gorgeous talavera urn. (see the pictures below) Some little birdie, (also known as Nancy Taylor) told some other little birdie, (starts with Margaret and ends with Shuping) about my loss. Lo and behold, a new kalanchoe paddle succulent appeared on my front porch. (Thank you, Margaret!) A sign that our gardens shall continue and thrive!



Last summer.



After the freeze.



Margaret's gift.

The note below was sent to me the week before our “Winter Event”. I’m sure hoping that Teddi’s plants made it!

As always, thank you to Theresa Thomas for contributing content for the Newsletter. This Newsletter is not only to give cool information to us as Master Gardeners, but also for all Tarrant County Master Gardeners to share their gardening knowledge and experiences. Please remember to email me those pictures and stories.

Thank you! Lorie Grandclair-Diaz

I saw your note about including member home/garden pics when it works out.

Attached is a photo of what’s happening today in my Watauga/Fort Worth garden.

Hellebore, Flowering Quince and Camillia (along with Miss Frida/Irish Setter).

Happy February!

Teddi Zonker

