

Tarrant County Master Gardeners



TEXAS A & M AGRILIFE EXTENSION SERVICE

Volume 2, Issue 9

September 2018

The Great Brick Project

By Sue Kelley

Tarrant County Master Gardeners are eager to “show off” the brick pathway at the Resource Connection Demonstration Garden. For several years engraved bricks have been added to the pathway. These have expressed lots of different sentiments, for example; honoring or memorializing a special person, commemorating a special occasion, providing peaceful proverbs, etc. Inscriptions on bricks are only limited by one’s imagination.

The sale and placement of bricks on the pathway began several years ago at the suggestion of a committee chaired by our agent, Steve Chaney. The group envisioned this project as an opportunity for gardeners to be a permanent part of the garden. Steve believed strongly that this project would personalize the garden with the names and events. It has proved to be a very popular addition to the garden and is now a permanent Ways and Means fund raising project.

Sandra and Tom Hightower have recently coordinated the installation of bricks on the pathway which now total over 175. Mary and Fred Reagor have compiled a book with photographs and an index showing the placement of each brick.

So - we have designated the September meeting as “find your” brick day. We will assist you in locating the brick or bricks that you have purchased. Claudia Teague and Linda Campbell have been responsible for the sale of bricks. You may also purchase an engraved to be installed in your own garden or as a gift. See one of them to order your brick – only \$35!

Pictured from left to right are Sandra and Tom Hightower, Robert Lundin, Joel Bailey, Sue Kelley and Margaret Shuping. This team worked hard on our brick laying!



Tarrant County Master Gardeners

The President's Corner

Well here it is September, still hot, but some much appreciated rain in August. Every time I heard thunder, I moved the chair cushions off the deck and no rain. I left them out and it came. My husband laughed, but I literally stood in the rain and gave thanks. Like a child playing in the water, well, an old child! .

In April I challenged you to come out to the demonstration garden and work with me. I had planned to commit myself to 3 hrs after the Monthly Meeting and after the Board meeting for at least 44 hours. Sounds like a lot, well there is much to do and yes I knew there would be times I would need to miss. WELL, I need to get on the stick. I have no real hours that can be credited in the Demo Garden. Robert and Harold still need folks to help. I have four months to meet my promise to you and log my demo garden hours. That's 11 hours a month, 4 per week That's doable. I'm shooting for the 2nd Tuesday before the Education Meeting.
Hope see you in the garden

You know our MG Members Garden Tour is coming up, and as with all our events, many people, work many hours is preparation for the event. There are always some glitches that happen and a time of frenzy before the calm. This is the norm, but sometimes the norm becomes chaos. So it was with the online tickets and the website. I want to share with you the folks and the letter that made this work. From Starr to Mercy Kettler, Theresa Thomas, Pam Braak, Deborah Stevenson, Rene Muhl, Wanda Stutsman and myself.

" Isn't it amazing what women can do! There are three in particular in this case who have worked their fingers to the bone--and they weren't even digging in the soil--but the managed to correct issues with form-stack and make it work well enough that we can return to our original plan of offering online sales! Think of all the people who won't know how hard Wanda, Theresa and Jackie Heidinger (a former member who had nothing to gain by helping us out, but did anyway) worked to straighten out the mess! Followed by many "thank yous" from Starr."

Well Ladies, they know now!!! Thanks to Laurin, too. And thanks to all the committee for making this happen, I do appreciate each and everyone of you.

If you have ever served on a committee for an event you can relate. Folks, your committees and leaders

Important September Dates

Monday, September 3 office closed for Labor Day

Thursday, September 6 Master Gardener Monthly meeting—Picnic at the Pavilion

Thursday, September 20 Advisory Board Meeting

The President's Corner continued

who serve your association put in a lot of hours and many a sleepless night. When you're greeting folks at the monthly meeting, give them a handshake or a hug.

And speaking of Mercy and Rene, thank you so much. Peter Rabbit Players articles and photos were in the Suburban newspapers. These articles were in the White Settlement, River Oaks and Benbrook newspapers. These ladies are working hard to let people know what we are doing. If you have a contact, with a newspaper, let them know.

The Picnic is soon, some hats are ready and I bought the gift cards....hope you will wear your hats.

There are many other events as well as speakers presentations throughout the month. Read your Newsletter and thank our editors Lorie Grandclair-Diaz and Theresa Thomas for a job well done. Don't forget the E-blast and thank Margaret Shuping for keeping us well informed.

Enjoy the month, get busy in the garden. Until next month...

Hugs and happiness,
Judy



**Tarrant Country Master Gardener Garden Tour Arlington, Texas October 7, 2018.
11:00am to 4:00pm**

Whatever your garden size or conditions, you will find ideas on how to make your own garden better by touring the six Arlington gardens that will be open for you on Sunday, October 7. Each garden is the result of a homeowner making the best of the conditions they found on their property. The gardens represent the love and hard work of the homeowners who have designed and created these gardens themselves. Tarrant County Master Gardeners will be on hand at each garden to answer questions, and there will be educational activities at selected gardens, including learning about backyard chickens! For more information on the gardens visit our website www.tarrantmg.org. Tickets will be available on our website beginning August 15, or at each garden on the day of the tour.

Flower of the Month

Flame Acanthus, Hummingbird Bush, *Anisacanthus quadrifidus var. wrightii*

Acanthaceae (Acanthus Family)

by Josephine Keeney (NPSOT-NorthCentral Chapter)

This is the plant for you, if you are looking for a beautiful plant that can take the Texas heat and survive with very little water and care. I have never seen it bothered by insects or disease in the fifteen years that I have been growing native plants, and that really means a lot and is something that can hardly be said about other hardy plants.

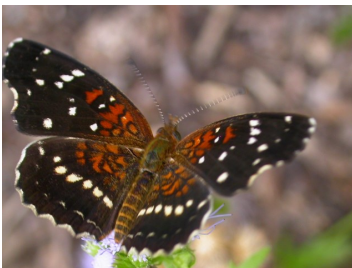
This shrub is deciduous and has light colored brittle wood, it is cold hardy in the DFW area and likes to wait for the weather to warm up before putting on new growth in the spring. The new stems are square and the leaves are small and light green, growing opposite to each other with no serration on the edges. The bloom period is from June to frost in this area of North Central Texas.

Flame Acanthus can be pruned or sheared to suit your desired size or shape, it bounces back quickly and rewards you with many bright tubular orange-red blooms that attract attention from far away. But if all these virtues weren't enough, the bright tubular flowers attract all the hummers and butterflies in the neighborhood, making it a delight to watch.

It also happens to be a host plant for the Crimson Patch, Texan Crescent and Cyna Blue butterflies.

Considering all these good points: Flame Acanthus should have a very special place in the yard and especially in the butterfly garden.

Content provided by
Theresa Thomas



Gardening Tips & Tidbits

Sharecropper Newsletter September, 2014

The Texas-sized Cicada Killer

From Insects in the City, posted by Jeremy Farmer.

One of the signs of summer in Texas, and through the eastern U. S., is the cicada killer. Over the past month or two may have noticed dime-sized holes appearing in your yard or garden. While many insects (beetles and ants, for example) dig holes, few are so conspicuous as the cicada killer wasp. *Sphecius speciosus*.

Cicada killer wasps are easy to spot due to their large size; they are typically 1-1/2 to tow inches in length. The female cicada killer his homes for her young in home lawns or in any sandy, bare, well-drained soil exposed to full sun.

Although female cicada killers can sting, they usually ignore people and rarely aggressive. On the other hand, males are often territorial and may act aggressively. Here's the deal though. Males don't possess stingers and are completely harmless. Like some "guard dogs", their bark is worse than their bite.

Why are they pests?

Even though they are a solitary species, females are known to nest in large numbers in sandy areas like embankments if the soil is dry and capable of holding a big enough population. The large number of nests and wasp activity can become a number of nests and wasp activity can become a nuisance. Also the adult wasps, especially the same defending their territory, can be scary to other children and adults.

Why are they good?

Although their name suggests otherwise, the adults of this species are peaceful nectar feeders and occasional pollinators. The females capture cicadas, helping keep the neighborhood a little quieter during the summer.

It is the immature, or larval, stage that feeds on the cicadas brought to the burrow by the adults female. After she finds and strings her cicada prey, she turns the victim on its back, straddles it, and drags it or glides with it to the burrow. One burrow may have several underground cells, each one provisioned with a paralyzed cicada (or two or three) and a sing egg is laid before the cell is sealed off. This cicada will serve as a food source for the young as it developed. The typical development for a cicada killer is 10-11 months, with the offspring emerging next year.

Should they be controlled?

Generally cicada killers should be considered harmless and don't need to be controlled. If the nests cannot be tolerated, a small amount of insecticide dust, such as is sol for control of ants or ground-nesting season, consider covering the site with landscape fabric and mulch. This should present emergence next year and discourage adults from using the site again.



Content provided by Theresa Thomas