

*Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service — Galveston County Office*



PHOTO BY William M. Johnson

**Even though it's still winter, now is the time to starting planning for the spring fruit tree production season. Galveston County Master Gardeners will provide nine gardening seminars in January, including "Growing Peaches in Galveston County" on Tuesday, January 7.**

The New Year has arrived! Here's wishing that all your gardening efforts will be fruitful and enjoyable and that we have favorable weather conditions for our gardening pursuits. Over the next several months the days will be getting slightly longer until the first day of summer.

The pace of things tends to slow down a bit this time of year in the garden. Although we may continue to plant, prepare beds, harvest winter vegetables and

enjoy cool-season flowers, most gardeners find this a more relaxed time of year.

The month of January is an ideal time to carry out many needed activities that will help ensure healthy and vigorous growing plants when the growing season starts this spring. Review the following checklist for activities that need to be done around the home site.

- To start the New Year

out, Master Gardeners have planned several educational programs that will be of benefit to area gardeners (see shaded inset). Texas Master Gardeners are volunteers who have completed an intensive training on a variety of horticultural topics and who provide valuable assistance to the County Extension Office.

- Many gardeners have inquired about the status of our annual Fruit Tree



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Sale. It will be conducted on Saturday, February 4, at Carbide Park's Wayne Johnson Community Center, located at 4102 Main Street in La Marque. The sale is from 9:00 a.m. -1:00 p.m. Additional information will be provided in later columns.

- Continue to select and plant ornamental trees and shrubs to fill landscape needs. Always plan ahead before planting. Remember that like little puppies, plants grow up. In the case of some trees, they can get large so be prudent about what you plant below electrical and telephone lines. The tree—and the homeowner—will ultimately lose in such standoffs.

Apply dormant oil sprays to control scale and other hard-to-manage insect pests on landscape trees and shrubs. Read and follow all directions provided by the manufacturer.

All programs conducted at the Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office located at 4102-B Main Street (Carbide Park) in La Marque. No fee but pre-registration requested (phone: 281-534-3413, ext. 1-2; e-mail GALV3@wt.net).

**Growing Avocados & Papayas:** 9:00 - 11:00 a.m., Saturday, January 5. Presented by Jerry Hurlbert, Coordinator of Texas Rare Fruit Growers Association. Jerry has 35 years of experience growing avocados. Learn the best varieties for the Gulf Coast, how to start plants from seeds, as well as tips on tree planting and cultivation methods for growing avocados. There will also be information on growing papaya but not as much in-depth.

**How to Graft Your Own Fruit Trees:** 1:00 - 4:00 p.m., Saturday, January 5. Master Gardener Herman Auer will present a program and a hands-on workshop on grafting. Attendees will leave the class ready to begin their own grafting projects with confidence. The two grafting methods presented will be T-bud grafting and wedge grafting. Additional grafting specialists will be on hand to provide one-on-one assistance. NOTE: Class is limited to 32 persons participating. You must pre-register in order to attend. Other persons may attend for observation only.

**Growing Peaches in Galveston County:** 6:30 - 8:00 p.m., Tuesday, January 7. PowerPoint presentation provided by Master Gardener Herman Auer on variety selection, establishment, insect pest and disease control, and general care of peaches and plums.

**Successful Spring Vegetable Gardening:** 9:00 -11:30 a.m., Saturday, January 11. Master Gardener Luke Stripling will present a PowerPoint presentation on proven techniques for a productive spring vegetable garden in our growing area.

**How to Plant Your Fruit Tree:** 9:00 - 11:00 a.m., Saturday, January 18. PowerPoint presentation by Master Gardener Herman Auer on properly planting container-grown and bare root trees, including root trimming, pruning, and depth at planting of fruit and nut trees to anchor them for longevity.

**Anyone Can Grow Roses:** 6:30 -

8:00 p.m., Tuesday, January 21, 2014. A PowerPoint presented by Master Gardener John Jons covering the basics of growing hybrid tea roses, including variety selection, bed preparation, planting and culture, and insect and disease control.

**Grow Great Tomatoes:** 9:00 - 11:30 a.m., Saturday, January 25. Master Gardener Ira Gervais, our tomato guru, reveals his secrets to growing great tomatoes in the garden.

**Homegrown Blueberries:** 1:00 - 4:00 p.m., Saturday, January 25. Presented by Dr. David Cohen, an accomplished home grower of blueberries by avocation and a practicing physician by trade. Dr. Cohen has an impressive "blueberry patch" as part of his home landscape and has gained considerable hands-on experience with successfully growing blueberries under our growing conditions.

**Growing Citrus in Your Own Backyard:** 6:30 - 8:00 p.m., Tuesday, January 28. Master Gardener Herman Auer will provide a PowerPoint presentation on how to grow citrus in the home landscape.

