

Fruit Orchard and Garden Tour Offered on Saturday, May 17

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service — Galveston County Office



PHOTO BY William M. Johnson

The 2014 Fruit Orchard and Garden Tour will be open to the public from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 Noon on Saturday, May 17. Three sites are on this year's tour route.

The Extension Fruit & Pecan Committee, Master Gardener volunteers and Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office will co-sponsor a Fruit Orchard and Garden Tour on Saturday, May 17, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. The program is open to the public and free-of-charge. Three fruit orchards are on this year's tour route. Each location will be open during the 9:00 a.m. to

12:00 Noon time period. You will have the option of touring all three or any single site. This year's tour sites contain a wide variety of fruit trees ranging from an impressive fruit tree orchard (Fruits 'n Such Orchard located at 6309 Avenue U - Bowerman Drive in Dickinson) and the Master Gardener Demonstration Orchard (located in Carbide Park

in La Marque). Citrus, figs, apples and other fruit trees can be seen also. All sites contain a wide variety of vegetables also. Vegetables are grown in dozens of raised beds at Carbide Park whereas vegetables are grown in the ground at Fruits 'n Such Orchard. Visitors may also tour an impressive herb garden next to the Fruits



May 14, 2014



Dr. William Johnson is a horticulturist with the Galveston County Office of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. Visit his website at <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston>.

News column printed in the Galveston Daily News, The Post, and other Galveston County Newspapers.



'n Such Orchard. If you're looking for the freshest produce to purchase, you can pick it yourself at the Fruits 'n Such Orchard.

If you are interested in seeing the amazing diversity of fruit trees that can be grown in a backyard, be sure to include a tour of Master Gardener Bill Verm's home orchard in Santa Fe.

If you have an interest in roses, be sure to visit the display beds of Earth-Kind roses located at the Carbide Park site. Homeowners love their magnificent blooms and fragrance.

Roses have had a centuries-long reputation of being the most neurotic members of the plant world. Consequently, gardeners spend considerable cash buying fertilizers, pesticides, and fungicides to sustain their roses, and much time pruning, deadheading, and watering them to keep them blooming. Roses that qualify for the Earth-Kind designation are very low-maintenance and perform very well under a variety of growing conditions.

To obtain a map with directions to the tour sites, visit the Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office located at 4102-B Main in La Marque (281-534-3413, Ext. 2-1). A printable copy of the tour map and additional details are available on my website provided with this column (click on the "Extension Educational Programs" link).

Area homeowners who grow—or plan to grow—fruit or vegetables for home use will find the tour sites to be of considerable benefit.

Gardeners Q&A

Q: My bougainvillea is several years old. I fertilize it regularly yet it blooms sparsely. What does it need?

A: The most likely problem is that the plant is not getting enough sunlight. Bougainvilleas need at least 8-10 hours of direct sunlight every day. Excessive soil moisture will also reduce flower production. Be aware that some types of bougainvilleas bloom mostly in the fall in response to short days.

Q: How often should I fertilize my tomatoes?

A: It is necessary to fertilize the garden before planting tomatoes. Apply the fertilizer again when flowers start to set. From that point on, an additional fertilization (known as sidedressing) every week to 10 days is recommended. Plants grown on sandy soils should be fertilized more frequently than those grown on heavy, clay soils. A general sidedress fertilizer recommendation is one to two tablespoons of a complete fertilizer scattered around the base of each plant and worked into the soil.

Q. Why are some types of beans able to climb and others are not?

A. Pole beans are characterized by an indeterminate or vining

growth habit, while bush bean varieties are determinate. In the vining type, flowers form in the axils of the leaves and stem, allowing the stem to grow indefinitely. In the determinate-type growth, the main growing point ends in a flower cluster, preventing stem elongation. Beans climb because of the twining growth habit of the stems.

Q: Do tomatoes require insect pollinators to set fruit?

A: Tomatoes do not require insect pollinators to set fruit. Tomatoes are wind pollinated in a gardening setting. Bumblebees may aid in pollination by shaking the flowers upon landing (a process is called buzz or sonic pollination). If you're growing tomatoes in a greenhouse, you would need to give flowering stems a shake whenever you walk past to increase fruit set or run a small fan during morning hours to achieve adequate wind pollination.