

Seminars on Home Composting & Growing Plumeria

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service — Galveston County Office



PHOTO CREDIT: Dr. William M. Johnson

Composting helps keep lawn clippings, landscape trimmings, tree leaves and other types of yard waste out of landfills. Compost is the single most important supplement you can give your garden soil. Finished compost is called "black gold" by gardeners.



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

The Master Gardener volunteers have planned two informative seminars on Saturday, September 22, that should be of interest to many area gardeners.

The first seminar is entitled "Home Composting Made Easy." It will be conducted from 9:00 - 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, September 22, at the Galveston County AgriLife Extension

Office located in Carbide Park at 4102-B Main in La Marque.

Composting is the controlled decomposition of organic materials (stuff that use to be alive) using not only aerobic bacteria (ones that need oxygen, not the smelly anaerobic kind) and fungi, but also protozoans

and worms.

As gardeners we can speed up the composting process and have the finished compost retain the most nutrients for plant use.

Now you may be wondering if you have to go out and buy a bag of "starter compost" for your compost pile. Com-



post piles are kind of a "field of dreams" proposition - build it and they will come. Commercial additives are not necessary and there are no magic enzymes or elixirs.

Garden soil or finished compost has all the necessary microbes and creatures in it. How convenient! Managing a compost pile is just helping these organisms to do their job by providing the food, moisture and oxygen they need.

Magazine articles sometimes make it sound like you need a degree in biochemistry before you can compost anything. Once you understand the basic principles, the methods and containers for composting can be quite diverse.

Most of the ingredients for the compost pile will be lawn clippings and plants from the garden. Now that fall is approaching, tree leaves will become an additional ingredient for compost piles. Bags of leaves can be saved to add to the pile.

A report issued by the U.S. Composting Council stated that leaves, grass and other yard trimmings and food residuals (including fruits and leafy vegetables) collectively constitute 24 percent of the U.S. municipal solid waste stream. Composting offers the obvious benefits of resource efficiency and creating a useful product.

Compost is a most useful product indeed. Finished compost is "black gold" to gardeners. Forget buying peat moss to add to soils. Use

compost instead. It acts as a great soil conditioner by loosening heavy clay soils, improving water-holding capacity of sandy soils, and adding all the wonderful microbes, fungi and important plant nutrients back into the soil.

If you want to learn the basics of home composting, be sure to reserve a seat for the upcoming seminar on the "Home Composting Made Easy" by Master Gardener Jim Gilliam to be held on Saturday, September 22, from 9:00 - 11:00 a.m. at the Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office located in Carbide Park (4102-B Main St. in La Marque). Pre-register by e-mail (galvcountymgs@gmail.com) or phone (281-309-5065).

The next seminar is entitled "A Passion for Plumeria" and will be conducted from 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. on Saturday, September 22, at the Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office located in Carbide Park at 4102-B Main in La Marque.

Plumeria is also known as the Hawaiian lei flower. Plumerias are undoubtedly some of the most beautiful and delightful plants grown in our subtropical growing environment.

Do you already grow or have an interest in plumeria? Then plan to attend this program to be presented by Master Gardener Loretta Osteen who is also a long-time member of the Plumeria Society of America. Topics to be discussed

include proven varieties, proper fertilization, soil and light requirements, pruning, propagation methods, and methods of overwintering.

The program is free-of-charge but pre-registration is required. Pre-register by e-mail (galvcountymgs@gmail.com) or phone (281-309-5065). Program participants who pre-register will also be eligible to receive a variety of door prize drawings including potted juvenile plumeria, seedling plumeria and other plants.

There is absolutely nothing like the sweet fragrance of a plumeria in flower, with fragrances reminiscent of jasmine, citrus, spices, gardenia, and other delightful scents. These flowers are treasured for their durability, fragrances and colors of whites, yellows, pinks, reds, and multiple pastels.

The enchanting plumeria can provide a tropical addition to almost any landscape and deserve wider use.

