

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service — Galveston County Office



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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>.

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PHOTO CREDIT: Charla Anthony

Succulents, such as hens and chicks (pictured) are undoubtedly one of the easiest, most carefree plants one can grow and they are back in fashion with gardeners. Master Gardeners will offer two educational programs on succulents on Saturday, May 4.

The cool front that arrived over the past weekend was refreshing. As May will soon be arriving, we should be prepared for warming temperatures and longer, sunnier days—a change of seasons.

We have had a few significant rainstorms occur in April; the weather station

in the Master Gardener Demonstration Garden in Carbide Park recorded a rainfall of 3.9 inches a few days ago. Here's hoping that the rainfall over the month of May occurs in evenly spaced installments over time and in amounts.

Busy days of gardening

are in store for the May gardener in completing spring chores and in preparing for summer. The following gardening educational programs and gardening checklists will be helpful:

HOME FRUIT GROWERS' TOUR ON MAY 18: A Home Fruit Growers' Tour



will be conducted on Saturday, May 18. Three fruit orchards are on this year's tour. Each location will be open from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon.

This year's tour sites contain a wide variety of fruit trees ranging from a peach orchard (Fruit 'n Such Orchard located at 6309 Avenue U in Dickinson), the Master Gardener Demonstration Orchard (located in Carbide Park in La Marque) and a sizeable home orchard in Santa Fe. Additional details may be downloaded from the Master Gardener website <https://aggiehorticulture.tamu.edu/galveston/> (click on the "Extension Educational Programs" link). Additional information will also be provided in next week's garden column.

PROPAGATING SUCCULENTS: Adapted to living in dry, desert-like conditions, succulents are easily-maintained choices for summer planting. Succulents are plants that store water in their leaves; all cacti are succulents, but not all succulents are cacti. Choose a few varieties of succulents and plant them in an area that receives plenty of sunlight. The differences in their shapes and colors make for interesting planter arrangements!

Want to learn how to expand your succulent collection? Paula Spletter and Marilyn Hill (Master Gardeners from Dallas County), will give a hands-on class that will provide you all the tools you'll need and class materials will be included. Paula is the Creative Director and Marilyn is the Container Specialist with the prestigious Northaven Gardens in Dallas. The seminar will be conduct-

ed at the Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office located in Carbide Park (4102-B Main Street in La Marque) on Saturday, May 4 (phone 281-309-5065 or e-mail galvcountymgs@gmail.com to pre-register).

MODERN SUCCULENTS WITH TILLANDSIAS: Paula Spletter and Marilyn Hill will provide a creative presentation on Saturday, May 4, at the Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office located in Carbide Park (4102-B Main Street in La Marque) about mixing succulents and tillandsias with a modern twist. A course fee of \$30 is required to cover materials and each participant will get to take their succulent creation home. Class size is limited to 40 participants, and pre-registration is required. Phone 281-309-5065 or e-mail galvcountymgs@gmail.com to pre-register.

FRUIT SET ON SQUASH: Don't be concerned if the first several squash fruit fall off the plant before they reach an edible stage. The first flowers to form in squash in early spring are the female flowers (with the miniature fruit located right under the yellow flowers).

With no male flowers being present, no pollination takes place. However, in a few days the male flowers will be formed, and normal fruit set should take place. Interestingly enough, it's the reverse in summer plantings—the male flowers tend to develop first so no fruit set occurs until the female flowers develop.

LEAF DROPPAGE OF EVERGREENS: Many gardeners take the descrip-

GARDENERS' ACTIVITIES FOR MAY

tion "evergreen" too literally and often are concerned when evergreens, such as magnolias, euonymus, live oak, gardenia, and some of the hollies, lose some of their old leaves during late spring and early summer. The flush of new growth on many evergreens will cause a yellowing of old leaves and leaf droppage. Nothing to be concerned about—just Mother Nature putting a new spring coat of green and discarding the old.

ANNUALS: Annuals for shade include: impatiens, coleus, caladiums (the tubers are just about out of stock, potted plants are still available), and bedding begonias. Caladiums will often produce a single flower stalk right after the first leaves are produced. Early removal of the flower stalk will encourage the plants to produce more lush leaf growth.

BLACKBERRIES: Blackberries will be coming into production in May. As canes which produced fruit this season finish bearing and start to die back, they should be removed at ground level. "Tip back" new canes to encourage branching; next year's blackberries will be produced on these canes.

FERTILIZE VEGETABLES: For best growth and yield of vegetables, apply small amounts of nitrogen fertilizer (called side dressing) every couple of weeks. This will keep vegetables growing vigorously so they reach their maximum yield potential.

