



April 2014

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Hale County

Master Gardeners

More New Master Gardener Members:

Micah and Ashley Venhaus

Micah was born and raised in Tulia, Texas; he received his education in Horticulture and Greenhouse production from Texas Tech University. Micah's passion is in plants and vegetable production. Ashley was born and raised in Lubbock, Texas; she received her degree in Business Management from Texas Tech University. One of Ashley's passions is people and how she can positively impact their life. They are starting their own business by merging their passions and allowing themselves to share their local produce with the surrounding communities.

Nancy Corbett

My name is Nancy Corbett and I just moved to Plainview from Tacoma, WA. A BIG, BIG change!! I miss my trees, mountains, and RAIN!! Anyhow, I have always enjoyed working in the garden and have always kept my outdoors looking beautiful. Most of my gardening endeavors have been hit-and-miss things and it was nice to learn about this Master Gardening class to help learn more about gardening. Being new here I am not sure of what plants are worthy of growing here and those that are not. Hopefully, as I plan my new home gardens, I will have a better feel of what is necessary to be a successful gardener here. I was born in Miami and was uprooted to Southern California where I grew up, did all my schooling, and all my working years. In 2003 I decided to leave So Cal and move to Washington to be closer to family. After the passing of my mom this past September, it was time for a change so I visited friends, bought a home, and am now a Plainview resident. It is very different and I am looking forward to the changes my new life course will bring me.



*Russ Wallace
speaking to MG
Class about
Vegetables.*

Making Olla's



The Frugal Gardener

by Dr. William C. Welch, Professor & Landscape Horticulturist

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service



As Spring turns into Summer new opportunities arise for color in our gardens. Let's look at some of the plants you can purchase and increase, providing a bonanza of extra plants for filling in open spaces where cool season annuals, bulbs and perennials have completed their cycles. Below are some tips about propagating them from cuttings, seeds or division.

By now, pansies, violas, snapdragons and stock are finishing up, because they resent the approaching heat. We can remove spent flowers, cut them back a bit and prolong the season a few weeks but it will soon be time to pull them up and replace with more heat tolerant choices. Begin by working in several inches of compost, pine bark or similar organics to aerate the soil and add water holding capacity for the dry times ahead. Addition of five pounds of alfalfa or cotton seed meal or a time release commercial fertilizer will also pay big dividends.

Shady or partially shaded sites are ideal for fibrous rooted begonias, fancy leaf caladiums, impatiens and coleus. Last summer I found some really beautiful coleus and planted them in drifts of single colors. I was so pleased with them that I added additional plantings by direct sticking cuttings from the first set. With careful monitoring of irrigation I got an almost 100% take. One was a dark red, almost maroon color lined with a bright green edge. I combined that with the golden sweet potato vine that also roots almost overnight. I purchased one large hanging basket of the sweet potatoes and took a couple dozen 3'4" cuttings. This was not only easy and successful but also a very economical way to provide lots of color. I also added pots of setcreasea (Wandering Jew) and masses of it within the broad sweeps of sweet potato vine. The plantings continued till the first hard frost last fall.



Other possibilities for easy summer color include zinnias. The 'Profusion' series are compact single flowers in a rainbow of beautiful of beautiful colors. I also like the large, double flowering types like 'Cut and Come Again'. They are a joy as cut flowers and attract hordes of butterflies. Gomphrena is another heirloom choice that seems to get better and better. Our grandparents knew them as "bachelor's buttons" and dried the flowers in bouquets each fall. The next spring they shredded the flowers and planted them for the "new crop".

Look for them in dark purple, pink, white and orange. The new 'Fireworks' series are as easy as the originals and have a slightly different look.

Celosias are available in spike and crested forms. The old red/purple form is hard to beat but they are now available in pinks, yellows and whites. Our grandparents called the crested forms "cockscombs" and competed with neighbors and friends to see just how big they could grow them. Dwarf forms are now available in the spike or crested forms. They all thrive in the summer heat but do appreciate occasional watering. Shake a few mature flowers over an open paper envelope and you will collect enough hard, shiny small seeds to create next year's flower bed.

Torenia or wish bone flowers are another old fashion favorite. They appreciate a little afternoon shade and come in a variety of pleasing colors. Angelonias are enjoying a wave of interest. First thought to be a little heat sensitive newer ones are proving very useful. One common name is "summer snapdragons" because they do resemble snaps. Purslane and portulaca are old standbys for heat tolerant, sunny areas. If you find a color you are pleased with, take 3-4" cuttings and stick them in pots or beds. They will quickly spread and bloom till frost.

Succulents are becoming increasingly popular because of their low water requirement and interesting foliage. They are especially nice in containers. Look for tried-and-true varieties of some of the unusual and common types at your local garden center that are easy to propagate and require little management. Mixtures of succulents with rain lilies, purslane and portulacas can be easy.

Beautiful pottery makes these combinations valuable as accessories in the garden. It's easy to propagate succulents, as usually a gardener can snap off "heads" that have grown too long, and simply poke them into newly prepared containers of good potting soil mixed with sand. They will be rooted in no time.



Monarchs nectar on many flowers but will only lay eggs on milk-

Texas has been called the “most important state” to the Monarch butterfly migration because of its strategic location between the roosting grounds and the milkweed beds and nectar prairies that serve as host and fuel sources for the famous insects. Millions of Monarchs pass through Texas each spring and fall as they make their multi-generation migratory flight from the Mexican mountains to Canada and back. Spring in Texas is a critical time for the Monarchs, as they seek out milkweed plants—their host and the only plant on which they will lay eggs and reproduce.

Interesting reading: <http://texasbutterflyranch.com/2013/04/25/got-milkweed-updated-plant-guide-for-central-and-south-texas/>

BUTTERFLY GARDEN

Get Master Gardener credit by starting a butterfly garden at your home.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

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Master Gardener Agenda—2014

April 22	Insects – Blayne Reed
April 24	Bees and/or Diseases
April 29	Tour - Maria Vasquez
May 1	Cathy Jacobs - Composting
May 6	Disease
May 8	Birkenfeld Tour
May 22	Woody Ornamentals



Texas Master GardenerSM



April 26 Downtown Cleanup 8:00 a.m.

Please bring equipment such as: hoes rakes, shovels, weed eaters.

Educational programs of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, genetic information or veteran status.

The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating