

the Inside Dirt

Henderson County Master Gardener Association



President's Message

As we close out 2014, I want to thank the HCMG members for a great year. You have accomplished a lot and Henderson County is better because of your commitment to it. We had a total of 6,492 reported hours, with 5,634 from Certified Master Gardeners and 846 hours from the 2014 Intern class. According to the Texas Master Gardener Management Guide, as Master Gardeners and Interns we are "corps of volunteers with extraordinary talents and abilities" whose objective is to expand the capabilities of the Henderson County AgriLife Extension Service by disseminating horticultural information to the citizens of Henderson County. We have done this through projects such as the DREAM Garden



and the South Athens Elementary School Garden. Through our Spring Conference, Plant Sale, Summer Series Workshops, Fall Intern Workshop, newsletter, newspaper articles, and various educational programs, we have continued the tradition of using our talents to teach our communities about best horticultural practices. I look forward to working with you in 2015 as we expand our service and education commitment to Henderson County.

HCMG Monthly Meetings:

Meetings are held at noon on the third Wednesday of the month at the East Texas Arboretum; 1601 Patterson Rd., Athens, TX.

Meeting Dates:

January 21, 2015

February 11, 2015

March 18, 2015

Save the Date for 2015 Spring Conference

TOPIC: SMARTER GARDENING
THE EASY WAY!

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Skip Richter,
Harris County AgriLife Extension
Agent

DATE: Thursday, March 19, 2015

LOCATION: First United Methodist
Church
225 Lover's Lane, Athens, TX

TIME: 5:00 pm

COST: TBA

More information in Jan/Feb [Inside Dirt](#)

OFFICERS

President:	Judy Haldeman
Vice President of Program & Administration:	Sherry Bitz
Vice President of Member & Community Education:	Cherie Tannenberger
Secretary:	Marylee Haldeman
Treasurer:	LaTrecia Jeffcott
Historian:	Bob Erickson
Advisor:	Rick Hirsch Texas AgriLife Extension Service Agent
Editor:	Yvonne Sparks

Upcoming Meeting Programs

TBA

2015 Henderson County Master Gardener Interns



Joan Foster



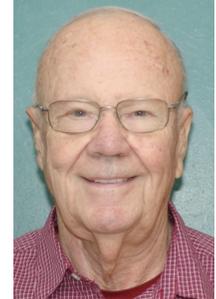
Ted Haldeman



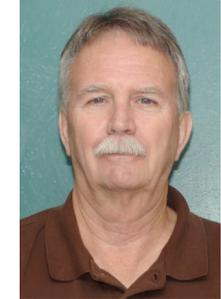
Guy Hargrove



Matthew Lockaby



Jock Miller



Lyndon Patrick



Barbara Penner



Betty Pose



Sandra Ward

The individuals pictured above have completed their Master Gardener Training Course under the direction of Rick Hirsch, Henderson County AgriLife Extension Agent. During 2015, they will be eligible to work toward the 50 hours of volunteer service which will qualify them to be certified as Master Gardeners. During the class, these students received training in a variety of garden related topics as well as participated in field trips to several locations in Henderson County. At the 2104 Holiday Party on December 11th, they were introduced and welcomed to the Master Gardener program by President, Judy Haldeman. Congratulations to all!

HCMGA 2014 Holiday Party & Awards Banquet

HCMGA held its Holiday Party and Awards Banquet at the East Texas Arboretum on December 11, 2014. The annual event brought together current certified Master Gardeners, the 2013 Intern Class and the 2014 Trainee Class.

President, Judy Haldeman, thanked all the board members for their many hours of service to Master Gardeners. She acknowledged the many hours these officers have devoted to Master Gardeners. Judy gave a special thanks to outgoing officers Vice President, Nancy Martin; Secretary, Marie Hancock; and Treasurer, Patsy Miller for a job well done.

Rick Hirsch, Texas AgriLife Extension Service Agent, introduced the 2015 HCMGA Board of Directors. They are President, Judy Haldeman; Vice President Program and Administration, Sherry Bitz; Vice President Community Education, Cherie Tanneburger; Secretary, Marylee Haldeman; Treasurer, LaTrecia Jeffcott; Historian, Bob Erickson. Judy presented Rick with a gift certificate as a thank you for all his support during the past year. She also presented Wayne Stafford with a gift certificate for his many years as the "go-to" photographer of HCMG>

Each year HCMG members are recognized for their years of service. This year Margaret Rands and Lois Mallett received 5 year pins, Nina Ellis received a 10 year pin and Deanna Benson received a 20 year pin. Congratulations, ladies!

Vice President, Nancy Martin, announced the winner of the Table Decorations Contest. Cecelia Bowles beat out the competition with a beautiful arrangement of Christmas

greenery and red berries encircled by red votive candles. Thank you to all the contestants who made the room very festive.

Judy introduced the 2014 Intern Class who just completed the Master Gardener Course. New interns are Joan Foster, Ted Haldeman, Guy Hargrove, Matthew Lockaby, Jock Miller, Lyndon Patrick, Barbara Penner, Betty Pose and Sandra Ward. These interns will be working toward certification as Master Gardener in 2015.

Judy introduced the new class of certified Master Gardeners. They are Delois Bomberg, Gail Chock, Lydia Holley, Bonnie Rivera, Linda Schaffer, Yvonne Sparks, Susan Stokes and Yvonne Varley. These Master Gardeners have completed the requirements for certification as Master Gardeners.

The evening concluded with the announcement of Outstanding Volunteer and Outstanding Intern Volunteer. The Outstanding Intern Volunteers were Lydia Holley and Yvonne Sparks. Lydia coordinated publicity for HCMGA and the Fall Conference as well as volunteering in the Dream Garden. Yvonne assumed the job of editor of The Inside Dirt in February and with Lydia Holley and Yvonne Varley, coordinated the Fall Conference. The Outstanding Volunteers were Bill and Marie Hancock. Bill and Maria have devoted a massive amount of hours to the Children's Garden at South Athens Elementary and also assisted the project in receiving a \$10,000 grant to make improvements to the garden site. Their dedication was recognized at the State Master Gardener Conference in September.

It was a wonderful evening of fellowship, laughs and food.



2014 Certified Master Gardeners



2015 Board of Directors

2015 Intern Class



Thanks Wayne for those wonderful pictures in 2014!



2014 Holiday Party



Thanks Rick for all your help and support in 2014!

Congratulations Bill and Marie Hancock! HCMG Volunteers of 2014



Contratulations Yvonne Sparks & Lydia Holley HCMGA Intern Volunteers of 2014!



Congratulations Cecelia Bowles! Table Centerpiece Winner





Save the Date!

Henderson County Master Gardner Association

2015 Spring Conference

Featuring

Robert “Skip” Richter

HCMGA announces preliminary plans for the 2015 Spring Conference. The keynote speaker is Richard “Skip” Richter. His topic is: Lazy Gardening: Garden Smarter for Better Results with Less Work. The conference will be held on March 19, 2015 at First United Methodist Church located at 225 Lover’s Lane in Athens, Texas. It will begin at 5 pm and conclude at 9 pm.

The conference will feature dinner, a silent auction of many garden related items and door prizes. Attendees will have the opportunity to ask local Master Gardeners about the program and gardening questions. Henderson County Texas AgriLife Extension Agent, Rick Hirsch will be available as well.

Skip has been with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service for 24 years serving in Montgomery, Travis and Harris County, where he currently serves as a Texas AgriLife Extension Agent in Horticulture.

He is an enthusiastic student and teacher of natural gardening techniques. He helped develop the Extension’s “Don’t Bag It” yard waste recycling programs, the “Composting for Kids” educational web page, and the Grow Green environmental education program, which educated Austin

residents on landscaping practices that protect water quality.

Skip has gardened in the brush country of south Texas, the rocky hills of the Missouri Ozarks, the acid sands of the East Texas piney woods, the semi-arid climate and high pH soils of central Texas, and the humid, hot climate and black clays of southeast Texas.

He writes a bi-weekly Internet column for the National Gardening Association, numerous newspaper and magazine articles on gardening. His “Gardening with Skip” YouTube channel features over 120 brief gardening videos. Skip has served as the National Gardening Association’s regional horticulturist for the southeastern U.S. and is a contributing editor to Texas Gardener magazine.

Skip is a weekly guest on “Your Livable Garden” radio show, the nation’s longest running landscape architecture radio show.

Do not miss this dynamic speaker! You will have fun learning new, easier and better ways to garden.

Tickets will be available for purchase in February from any Master Gardener.



Being an avid golfer means commitment to play and practice, which does not leave a lot of time for gardening. The following are some tips from Randy Lemon, the co-host of GardenLine on KTRH radio.

Checklist for January

- Plant a tree on Arbor Day, the third Friday in January
- Plant any unplanted bulbs, especially Tulips
- Prune established trees while in the dormancy state
- Prepare soil areas for vegetable and flower gardens in later Spring
- Keep potted Christmas plants, Poinsettia, looking beautiful longer by keeping the soil moist and away from warm air; 60-65° is best
- Feed cool-season annuals a light application of blooming plant food
- Fertilize established trees and shrubs with a balanced, slow-release fertilizer
- Control scale insects biologically during the winter months with a dormant oil spray
- Prune fruit and nut trees, removing all dead and damaged limbs
- Take in lawn equipment, mowers, trimmers, and blowers for maintenance or needed repairs

Tip of the Month: Plant Tulip bulbs or any other unplanted bulbs.

Checklist for February

- Apply pre-emergent herbicides for grassy weeds NOW; repeat the application 90 days later
- Apply broadleaf week killer on warm days for early control
- Prune back roses no shorter than 18"; DO NOT PRUNE climbing roses
- Trim groundcover now so they will spread faster through the rest of spring
- Feed pecan trees NOW
- Use a soil activator on your lawn to enhance microbial activity in the soil
- DO NOT PRUNE blooming trees and shrubs or you will be cutting off the blooming wood
- Prune back lanky Nandinas by taking off the top third of the longest canes; they will fill in from below
- Fertilize trees and shrubs (except Azaleas, Camellias and Gardenias) with a balanced slow-release fertilizer
- Control scale insects biologically during winter months with a dormant oil spray

Tip of the Month: Prune back twiggy growth and shape your Crape Myrtle; make sure all expired seed pods are pruned to insure better bloom production; avoid "Crape Murder"; no ugly elbows



Rick Hirsch

Texas Agrilife Extension Agent

Visit our web page at <http://henderson.agrilife.org/>.

Since real plants are becoming increasingly popular and most people have enough space for at least a few specimens, container plants are becoming quite popular. Furthermore, they make excellent Christmas gifts that keep on giving pleasure and enjoyment throughout the year.

Container plants have several advantages for most households. Portability and their small space requirement are two major points.

When grown in containers, plants can be easily moved from one place to another. Thus when the flower is at its peak, it can be displayed in full view where the gardener wishes. Then, when it is not as attractive, the plant can be moved to another location. An added bonus for mobile home and apartment dwellers is that when they move, the plants can be taken with them and provide an “instant landscape” at the new location.

Another nice thing about container plants is that they do not require much space. Once again, this is a big “plus” for apartment and mobile home residents. Flowering plants as well as varieties producing fruits and vegetables may be used.

Since each container can have different soil conditions, a greater variety of species can be grown than in a garden that is limited to the areas existing soil plants with various requirements as far as soil, water, pH, light and other elements are concerned may be grown. As long as the plant’s cultural requirements are met, almost any plant can be used for a

container specimen. Before selecting a plant, the successful container gardener determines where the plant will usually be located and the amount of available sunlight, moisture and protection present.

Besides the well-known annual and perennial flowers, deciduous or evergreen trees, shrubs and vines may be used. Annuals usually prefer at least a half-day’s full sun, but most tropical evergreens do well with less.

The success or health of any plant depends directly on the soil in which the plant is growing. Basically, the soil holds the plant in place in an upright position and provides necessary moisture, oxygen and food. As simple as this may seem, many backyard soils do not supply these essentials for proper production.

The best method of assuring plants of adequate moisture is to incorporate generous amounts of humus or organic materials into the soil.

Organic materials such as peat moss, leaf mold, compost, processed bark and animal manure are a coarse texture which ensures good soil aeration or oxygen, proper drainage or water retention as well as prevention of soil compaction and oftentimes food for the plant.

Spade and work proposed planting areas well before adding organic or humus materials to remove undesirable weeds and grasses to work organic additives into the bed area. Spread organic materials evenly over the surface of the cultivated soil, and then turn into the soil. The amount of organic material required for a garden bed depends on existing soil conditions.

Heavy clay-type soils or very sand soils demand greater amounts of humus or organic materials to ensure proper aeration, drainage and water retention. The amount depends on the depth and size of the proposed planting area. With experience, the gardener can feel the soil and recognize the desired tilth and soil texture for plant growth. The soil should appear and feel “fluffed” and loose in texture.

Animal manures, compost and leaf mold not only provide organic matter but slowly add available food for the plant as well. Because these materials are not as coarse as peat, more is usually required for a good soil mix. Oftentimes, when available well-rotted manures, compost or leaf mold are added to a peat and soil mixture. Processed barks are available in a number of grades or sizes that are popular and useful as long-lasting soil conditioners and decorative mulches.

A couple of cold spells have taken their toll on many ornamental landscape plants throughout East Texas this winter and you can be sure that more are on the way.

It is often difficult to assess exactly how extensive winter damage is on a given plant. Leaves may brown and darken only to leaf anew in the springtime. It is virtually impossible to determine the extent of damage until the growing season arrives. In general, if roots and stems escape severe damage, the plant will regenerate new leaves and survive.

Time is the true test for evaluation of plant damage. I would recommend that homeowners not prune or remove seemingly damaged plants until they have had a chance to respond under good weather conditions. Only then should damaged plants be severely pruned or removed.

In some cases, branch or stem damage may occur until summer when heat stress may cause them to split and die. Pruning the plant just prior to spring growth will stimulate growth and stronger recovery. A severe pruning may

be necessary to remove all dead wood and to allow live root systems to sprout a new flush of growth. If the root system has been severely damaged there is little likelihood that the plant can be saved.

Cold damage is more prone to occur when excessive moisture is drawn from the plant tissue in freezing temperatures. Plants that are in dry soils consequently will suffer a greater degree of damage. Therefore, it is important to maintain adequate soil moisture even in the wintertime. Mulching shallow rooted plants such as Azaleas with 4-6 inches of mulch will also help protect the root systems.

IMPORTANT DATES:

- Half day Master Gardener turfgrass training at JANUARY 15, 1:00 – 5:00 p.m. Contact Keith Hansen at khansen@ag.tamu.edu to let him know you plan on attending the January 15 training.

Upcoming multicounty Master Gardener trainings at Overton are:

- January 27, 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. – Plant Diseases (Kevin Ong)
- February 10, 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. – Entomology (Mike Merchant)
- February 25, 1:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. – Vegetables (Joe Masabni)



Community Programs for 2015 Update
by Cherie Tanneberger, VP Member & Community Education

Watch this space, your local newspaper community bulletins and your own email for dates, times & locations of FREE horticulture programs presented by HCMG. Master Gardeners will answer your gardening questions at these free programs, via our email hendersoncmga@gmail.com or at the HCMG booth at local community festivals. HCMG looks forward to seeing you throughout Henderson County in the new year. Is there a horticulture topic or speaker you want to hear or have a local festival for HCMG to visit? Let us hear from you at our email hendersoncmga@gmail.com. Happy Gardening!

EASY GROUND BEEF STROGANOFF

INGREDIENTS:

2 lbs. Ground Chuck
1 pkg Lipton Onion Soup Mix
½ lb. mushrooms, sliced
1 lg. onion, chopped
½ cup water
1 can cream of mushroom soup
1 pt. sour cream
Wide noodles

DIRECTIONS:

- Brown ground chuck; drain
- Add mushrooms and onion; sauté for 2 minutes on medium/low heat
- Add water and soup mix; stir thoroughly and bring to a boil
- Add cream of mushroom soup; mix and simmer on low heat for 10 min
- Cook noodles as directed
- Before serving, stir in sour cream
- Pour over noodles

Variation: Substitute 1½ lb. tenderized round steak that has been cut into thin strips; brown steak in 2 tbs oil; add mushrooms and onion; continue cooking; increase water to 1 cup and sauté steak, mushrooms and onions in water and soup mix for 10 minutes on low heat; add mushroom soup and simmer for 10 more minutes; add sour cream before serving.

Are You TOO KIND to Your Garden?

by
Judy Haldeman

After taking the Master Gardener class in 2011, my husband “gifted” me several raised beds for Christmas that year. In an effort to use all the information gleaned during the class, we filled the raised beds with a mixture of compost and our own “sugar-sand” soil. The next year we had a bountiful harvest-enough for us and several neighbors. The next year we installed a soaker hose irrigation system with a timer. We fertilized and added mulch to protect the plants from both the summer heat and winter cold. When we expanded the garden to include several more raised beds, we added new compost to all the beds, again mixing well with the soil that was present. Each year, I dutifully rotated the plants, added fertilizer, additional compost, and mulch. This last year the harvest was marginal, at best, but I attributed the decline to an early infestation of grasshoppers and then leaf-cutter ants. The attached pictures show the garden the first year and a sad cauliflower plant after the grasshoppers decided they were hungry.



After four years, I realized that we had not repeated a soil sample test. What a

surprise when we opened the result. The phosphorus was very high-443 parts per million (ppm) rather than the critical level of 50 ppm. The calcium, magnesium, and sulfur were also high. The potassium level was low and the nitrogen level was extremely low. The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension recommendation: avoid phosphorus containing fertilizers and organics for the next 5 years. The Extension Service also included a two-page attachment on the effects of a buildup of phosphorus. Excessive soil phosphorus reduces the plant’s ability to take up required micronutrients, especially iron and zinc. This happens even if a soil test shows adequate amounts of those nutrients in the soil. The final part of the report indicates that extractable phosphorus levels between 150 and 200 ppm will have problems for three to five years. Soils with phosphorus levels above 330 ppm will require special treatment for much longer. The recommendations for correction were given in great detail.

Somehow, with all the workshops I’ve attended, I only heard “compost, mulch, fertilize, water,....”, but ignored the “get the soil tested” comments, even as I handed out bags for soil samples to people who attended workshops. No longer!

One last comment: When you fill out the soil sample, be specific about what you plan to do with the area in question. The Texas A&M Extension Service recommendations will differ depending on what you plan to plant: blueberries, peas, broccoli, etc. And, finally: **HAVE YOUR SOIL TESTED!**

Report Card
from the
Children's Garden
by
Bill & Marie Hancock

Wrapping Up the Year in the Garden!

The spring tomato, pepper, and green bean plants were killed by the below freezing temperatures in early November. The children enjoyed pulling up the plants and getting that part of the garden ready for the spring garden. However they were disappointed the harvesting of tomatoes and peppers had come to an end.

On the other side of the garden the children observed the broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, snow peas, kale, and Swiss chard plants growing. In December many have enjoyed eating the broccoli, kale, peas, and Swiss chard. The cauliflower will be ready to eat in January and then the cabbage will follow shortly after that.

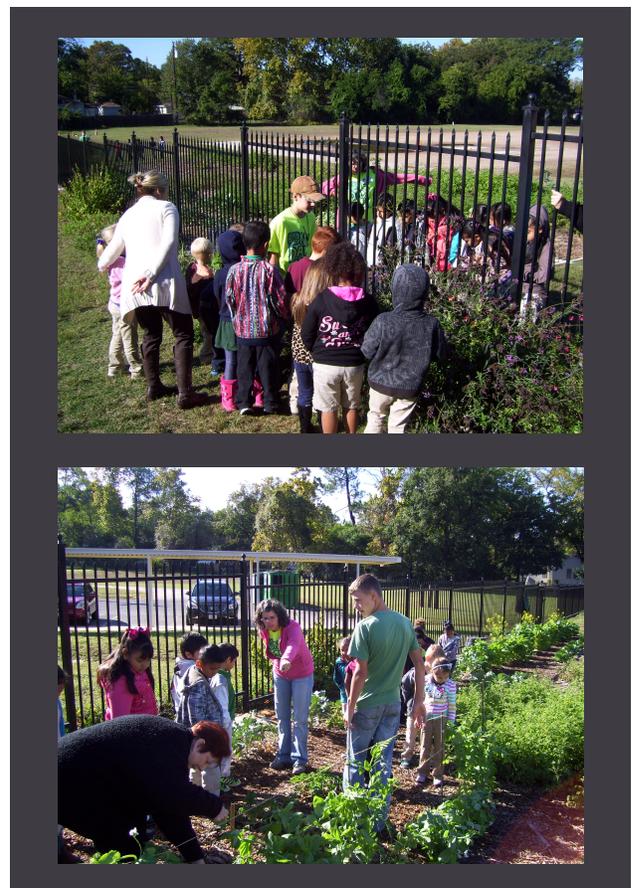
A month ago the classes were able to see the last Gulf Fritillary butterfly leave its chrysalis and fly up over the school building and away from the garden. We look forward to the return of the butterflies next spring.

Our garden spider died in early

December. She left us five egg sacs to check on during the winter and spring. We are hoping the little ones will decide to come out of the sacs on a Thursday morning so we can all watch. We are amazed that each sac could have up to 1000 babies!

At the November meeting the Henderson County Farm Bureau presented the Master Gardeners a check for \$500 to use for the South Elementary School Garden. We appreciate their continued support for this educational project. We also want to thank Wal-Mart for giving us some flowers for the children to plant and enjoy in the container garden.

Wrapping up the year in the garden is sad, but we know it will come alive again after planting new plants early next year.



INSIDE DIRT this month:

2015 HCMAA Interns	Page 3
HCMAA Holiday Party and Awards Banquet	Page 4
2015 Spring Conference Plans	Page 6
Easy Gardening for Golfers	Page 7
Report from Rick Hirsch, Texas AgriLife Extension Agent	Page 8
Community Programs for 2015 Update	Page 10
Are You TOO Kind to Your Garden?	Page 11
Report Card from Children's Garden	Page 12

Henderson County Master Gardener Association
100 East Tyler Street
Athens, TX 75751-2547