

Henderson County Master Gardeners (HCMG) Newsletter



Inside Dirt

President's Message

Yvonne Sparks, President HCMG



Welcome 2018!

My wish is that you enjoyed the Holiday Season with many blessings and very few issues. In December the HCMG welcomed nine new garden enthusiasts to become part of the 2018 Intern Class. This class has many enthusiastic students who honestly seem very interested in becoming involved in our organization. Welcome to each of you! To the 2017 Intern Class that recently received their certifications, congratulations upon completing your year of discovery. So many of you have already taken important committee assignments for the upcoming year. Thank you!

January means most of us make "resolutions" for the New Year. Here are a few suggestions:

- ◆ Time to clean up your garden of wilted or dead stems and leaves; chop up the debris and add to your compost pile.
- ◆ Refresh the mulch around your perennials and shrubs and run your mower over any lawn you have to chop up the fallen leaves; use this material to cover bare ground in the yard or mulch in the flowerbeds.
- ◆ Extend the life and beauty of your poinsettias by choosing healthy plants with mostly closed flowers in the center of the bracts and dark green leaves; water when the soil feels dry and remove from the decorative foil when watering and return to foil once water is drained.
- ◆ Examine and evaluate your landscape and view the "bones" of your design; plan now for any changes.
- ◆ Prepare soil for spring planting; loosen compacted soil, incorporate lots of compost and cover with mulch (chopped leaves) to keep weeds from showing up.
- ◆ Sow wildflowers now; it allows them to settle into the soil and germinate before going dormant in cooler temperatures.
- ◆ Hold off on pruning until after the spring blossoms have shown; prune roses on Valentine's Day and remember no "Crape Myrtle murder".

Enjoy the winter weather we all think about in August and September. The Library Series will continue in 2018 offered on the third Tuesday of each month. Refer to our website and page two of [Inside Dirt](#) for dates and topics.

Yvonne

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April 4-6, 2018
40th Anniversary – the Unveiling of The Gardens
www.2018tmgaconference.com



Honoring the Past
Celebrating the Present Embracing the Future

TMGA Conference

The Texas Master Gardener Association, together with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Services is hosting the 2018 Annual Conference on April 4-6 in College Station,

With the dual-celebration of the fortieth anniversary of the Master Gardener program in Texas and the opening of the Earth-Kind® Gardens that we, as Texas Master Gardeners donated significant funds to, this is going to be AN AWESOME CONFERENCE! Don't miss this GRAND event! You must be a Master Gardener to attend the conference.

Visit the conference site for more details: www.2018tmgaconference.com

Texas.

It will be a FULL three days, beginning first thing on the 4th and going until the end of the day on the 6th!

“Honoring the Past, Celebrating the Present, Embracing the Future”

Calendar of Events

- 1/16—*Library Series, Where did our food come from?
- 1/17—HCMG Monthly Meeting
- 2/8,9 Specialist Training—Plant Health & Diagnostics—Gonzales
- 2/20—*Library Series, Growing a cutting garden
- 2/21—HCMG Monthly Meeting
- 3/11—Daylight Savings begins
- 3/11—Average day of last freeze
- 3/21—HCMG Monthly Meeting
- 4/4-6—Texas Master Gardener Annual Conference

* indicates events that are open to the public

Henderson County Master Gardeners monthly meetings (begin at noon) are held at:

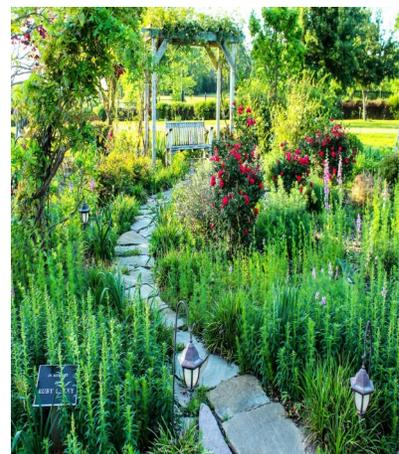
Richard M. Hart and Johnny Morris Conservation Center 5601 County Road 4812 Athens, TX

HCMG DREAM Garden

The Henderson County Master Gardeners started a trial garden for “EarthKind Roses” at the East Texas Arboretum. At the end of the trial garden period it was converted to a cottage garden called "Texas Cottage Garden."

The garden has now been named the “Dream Garden”. This stands for **D**emonstrate, **R**esearch, **E**ducate, **A**pply, and **M**aintain.

The garden currently is in hibernation, but will soon be in bloom!





Does Your Garden Have Osteoporosis?

Lydia Holley, Master Gardener



Winter is such a satisfying time to go outside and really evaluate the bones of your garden. Does your garden have a solid structure after annuals have died, perennials are hiding, bulbs are still waiting, and flowers have quit blooming?

What is under your garden’s cover of color and blooms? Does your garden have a pleasing backbone, or is it spotted with evergreens? In other words, does your garden have osteoporosis?

If your garden has been diagnosed with a case of osteoporosis, or even is on the brink of osteopenia, don’t worry about drinking more milk - instead, think about doing what we gardeners love to do most - go plant shopping! At the top of your list should be evergreens to fill in the pockets of bare patches.

Some evergreens you may wish to add to your garden include: boxwood, hollies, cast iron plants, mondo grass, liriopes, aucuba, and a whole host of other evergreen shrubs. It’s fun to find a variety of evergreens in different sizes to place throughout the garden.

You may also wish to consider plants such as rosemary, evergreen roses (Chinas, Antique Teas, and some moderns), dianthus, jasmine, crossvine, hellebores, abelias, hesperaloes, lavender, and camellias. These plants are some of my favorite to add structure to the garden, because they also add a season of bloom to the garden. If you start looking, you can find quite an extensive list of these types of plants.

Some plants can add interest and a bit of bone to your landscape even though they are not considered evergreen. These include ornamental grasses and the structure of bare trees or other plants that have a strong form in the winter.

Your garden’s bones may not be from plants. Hardscaping can also be added to give your garden its winter structure, such as concrete or brick edging, stone or gravel pathways, walls, structures, benches, and statues.

Just as you probably don’t want a garden that is only evergreens, you also don’t want a garden that is only fluffy flowers that disappear when winter finally arrives. Your garden should have just enough backbone to be able to stand up on its own in winter.

HCMG Projects

DREAM Garden- The Henderson County Master Gardener maintains a garden at the East Texas Arboretum (see page 2)

Children’s Garden- The Master Gardeners began a program to help educate the children at South Athens Elementary school about gardening and growing delicious and nutritious food. We are expanding this program to other schools within Henderson County.

Library Series- HCMGs host educational presentations open to the public on the 3rd Tuesday of each month at the Clint W. Murchison Memorial Library in Athens, TX.

Greenhouse- HCMGs maintain the greenhouse located at Trinity Valley Community College. This greenhouse allows us to propagate and grow plants that are sold at our plant sale.

Plant Sale- HCMGs host an annual plant sale in the spring which is open to the public. Master Gardeners propagate and grow different varieties and this event is a major fundraiser for the organization.

Summer Series- Workshops are provided in the summer months in an effort to share expertise and educate the public on various gardening topics.

Fall Conference- The largest fundraiser for the HCMGs, this conference includes guest speakers and a dinner which is open to the public.

Henderson County Texas Facts

The climate in Henderson County Texas is considered subtropical.

Temperature ranges:

- July and August—72° F to 96°
- January—34° to 56°
- Average annual temperature — 65°.

The average annual rainfall is forty inches, and the growing season extends to 260 days.

The majority of Henderson County is in USDA zone 8a (10° to 15°) with a south eastern portion of the county in zone 8b (15° to 20°)

The average date of the last freeze is March 11, and the first freeze is around November 26



Gardening Tips

January

- ◆ Continue to plant new shade trees, fruit trees and evergreen shrubs. Mulch root areas
- ◆ Continue to transplant established trees and shrubs while they are dormant
- ◆ Finish planting pre-chilled tulip and hyacinth bulbs if you did not do so in December
- ◆ Plant any bare-root plants including fruit and nut trees as well as roses
- ◆ Continue planting pansies, snapdragons, kale, Swiss chard and other cool season annuals. Plant onion transplants anytime soil is ready. Plant spinach and snap peas mid to late month
- ◆ Sow seeds in flats or containers to get a jump on the season. Petunias, begonias and impatiens can be started now. Tomatoes, peppers and beans can be started in late January into mid February indoors, in a hot bed or heated greenhouse
- ◆ Prune with a purpose. Do not “top” any trees or shrubs including crape myrtles. Never leave stubs. Cut flush against remaining branches on shrubs and along the branch collar on trees. Peach and plum trees should be pruned to encourage horizontal branching, remove any strongly vertical shoots
- ◆ Continue to mulch leaves from the lawn and remove debris from turf areas to reduce disease and insect problems
- ◆ Water outdoor landscape plants, as needed, when the soil is dry. Water plants thoroughly before a hard freeze to reduce chances of freeze damage.



February

- ◆ Plant asparagus, beets, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, cilantro, collards, English peas, lettuce, kohlrabi, onion transplants, parsley, potatoes, radishes, spinach, Swiss chard, and turnips.
- ◆ Plant early spring-blooming annuals like dianthus, petunias and alyssum in late February
- ◆ Apply pre-emergent herbicides to established lawns to control warm season broadleaf and grassy weeds, such as dandelions and crabgrass no later than early March.
- ◆ Fertilize pansies and other winter annuals with your favorite fertilizer

Visit easttexasgardening.tamu.edu for a more complete list of monthly tips.

What's in a Name? Part 1

Bob Erickson, Master Gardener

As if English wasn't hard enough to comprehend in its own right, when different people in different regions call things by different names, confusion can reign. For most of us, the word choices available are fairly clear and understandable...but if you travel much, you quickly find out that our English lexicon is not universal.

I grew up in Dallas and knew that the road onto a freeway was an access road. That was true until I lived in Houston where this same batch of pavement is called a feeder road. Throw in a few others like, "Is it a tank or a pond?" You get the picture. But when it comes to plants and foods, we are all on the same page of the hymnal; right?

If you want to start a good-natured fight, ask what the difference between black-eyed peas, purple-hulled peas, field peas, Crowder peas, cow peas, and Southern peas are! The discussion will be lively but once they are cooked, very few people would know the difference. They are all legumes, grown in fields, fed to cattle and animals, can be prepared green or dried, and appear to virtually the same but people will argue over the merits of taste and texture of one over the other while generically dismissing all but their favorite with a generic name.

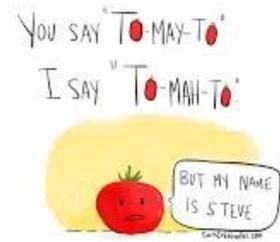
It doesn't stop there however. In Europe, don't order Eggplant Parmesan since they call eggplants, "aubergines." A number of years ago, I befriended a family of refugees from Kosovo who spoke very little English. They regularly asked for black tomatoes. I might have been aware of dark-skinned tomatoes but that wasn't what they were looking for. At the farmer's market, one of the women returned from looking around with an armful of eggplant and a huge smile. It actually makes perfect sense; our eggplant is very dark (black) and is in the same family as tomatoes. Who would have guessed that twist?

Likewise, in many places, Romaine lettuce is called Cos or Cos lettuce. Zucchini is called Courgette. Collard Greens are called Spring Greens. Endive is known in many places as Chicory and Escarole. Arugula is frequently called Rocket or Roquette. A beetroot is simply a beet. As one commenter says, Americans are too lazy to say two syllables." Green onions are also referred to spring onions, walking onions, Welsh onions, and scallions. The differences again, are very minor.

One of my favorite linguist twists is rutabaga because of my Swedish heritage. While rutabaga has been around for many years as a naturally-bred hybrid, it was known to have grown in Sweden and was a cross between cabbage and turnips of all things. As a result, it became known as Swedish Cabbage. Once again, a single word won out over multiple words and it became simple Swede. Oddly, the word rutabaga also comes from a Swedish word for "ram root."

In truth, the variations between different plants may exist but they are small. Language, cultural difference, and place of origin define people's defensive interest and taste in a certain food. Enjoy whatever you call it.

I hope that you enjoyed this foray into the common names for various plant but might wonder why it is called "Part 1." This is because "Part 2" will be in the next issue (assuming I am not stoned before then by purple-hulled pea people). It will briefly discuss everyone's bane: the scientific names of plants also know as Plant Taxonomy.



No one asked you Steve.
No one asked you.

Becoming a Master Gardener

Master Gardeners are members of the local community who take an active interest in their lawns, trees, shrubs, flowers and gardens. They are enthusiastic, willing to learn and to help others, and able to communicate with diverse groups of people.

What really sets Master Gardeners apart from other home gardeners is their special training in horticulture. In exchange for their training, persons who become Master Gardeners contribute time as volunteers, working through their Extension office to provide horticultural-related information to their communities.

- **2017 HCMG Certified Master Gardener Class:** David Bickerstaff, Jacob Cole, Shelly Fugitt, Claudia Durham, Loretta Humble, John Maloch, Peg Martinez, Elizabeth Murphy, Lora Tomlinson
- **2017-2018 HCMG Master Gardener Intern Class:** Paula Cottom, Shery Damuth, Christy Graham, Austin Mixon, Susan Skommessa, Cristy Stavely, Sherry Sorrell, Barbara Thompson and Roddy Waites



Texas A&M AgriLife Extension is pleased to offer the "Texas Master Gardener" license plate. The license plate is available for \$30.00 in addition to your vehicle registration fee (personalized plates have an additional fee). Of the \$30.00 plate fee, \$22.00 will be returned to the Texas Master Gardener Program for scholarships and associated activities.

Visit the Henderson County Agrilife Extension Service website for more gardening information
<https://henderson.agrilife.org>

Spencer's Talk

Spencer Perkins, County Extension Agent

Happy New Year!

I hope each of you had a Wonderful Christmas and ended 2017 on a happy note. I would like to thank each of you for putting together a great Christmas Meeting. It is always neat to look back at all the hard work and dedication that the Master Gardeners have put in throughout the year.



Moving forward to 2018 we have a lot to be excited for and have many opportunities coming to the Henderson County Master Gardeners. I have already met several people in Henderson County with a great deal of knowledge in certain areas of agriculture, gardening, and horticulture in general. It is always nice to know who you can call for help on the many topics that get brought to my office. If you would not mind me calling or emailing you for your guidance and knowledge on certain topics, please email me your contact information along with your areas of expertise, at spencer.perkins@ag.tamu.edu, it would be greatly appreciated!

Lastly, I would like to remind each of you to look back at page 2 in *Inside Dirt* and be sure to make as many of the meetings and events as you can! If your schedule allows I believe the TMGA Conference is going to be a unique experience this year, don't forget to register online at 2018tmgaconference.com.

Henderson County Master Gardeners

The Master Gardener program is a volunteer development program offered by Texas AgriLife Extension Service by disseminating horticultural information to individuals and groups in Henderson County and to develop and continue community projects related to horticulture. We are a group of volunteers who share a love of gardening and are eager to learn and share their knowledge.



Henderson County Master Gardeners

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Library Series

“Where did our food come from?”

Jan 16th—Master Gardener Bob Erickson will discuss how food has evolved through the years and why we have the foods that we now commonly find on our plates. If you eat, you will want to attend this fascinating presentation.



“Growing a Cutting Garden”

Feb 20th—Shirley Niswonger of Shirley Nice Flowers will teach you to put in your own cutting garden so beautiful bouquets are just steps away. If you are interested in growing your own flowers for arrangements, you will definitely want to hear this informative presentation



The Library Series is open to the public and is held from 5:30pm to 6:30pm at the Clint W. Murchison Memorial Library in Athens, TX.

2018 Officers:

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|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| President | Yvonne Sparks |
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| VP Member & Com. Edu | Lora Tomlinson |
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