

October 2019

Big Country Master Gardener
Association Newsletter
Bcmgtx.org



The Garden

UPCOMING EVENTS

- October 7-11 TBD
Fall Plant Sale Setup, Modern Living Mall
- October 8 6:00 pm
Executive Committee Meeting, Taylor County Extension Office
- October 12 9:00-12:00
Fall Plant Sale, Modern Living Mall
- October 13 TBD
Leftover Plant Sale and final Cleaning of Modern Living Mall
- October 15 6:15
Social Time and October Business Meeting, Taylor County Extension Office
- October 19 9:00-12:00
Pollinator Event at Lake Kirby Park
- October 25 6:00-10:00
Haunted Abilene Event, Swenson House
- October 26 6:00-10:00
Haunted Abilene Event, Swenson House
- October 28 5:00-7:00
Swenson House Workday

Watch emails and the calendar for additions and corrections such as Plant Sale, workdays for the Demo Gardens, Meditation Garden, McMurry Greenhouse and Swenson House.

2019 BCMG Officers

- President - Gene Shelhamer
- Vice President- Cheri Drysdale
- President Elect - Sandy Shaw
- Treasurer - Sandy Dugger
- Rec Sec - Ann Clark
- Cor Sec - Misty Hayward

GENE SHELFHAMER, 2019 BCMGA
PRESIDENT

The Fall Plant sale is October 12th.

That is right around the corner.

There have already been hours and hours of planning and preparation in anticipation of a successful Fall Plant Sale. All that's left is for us (and hopefully almost all of our Master Gardeners and Interns) is to step up and get the Modern Living Mall ready for the sale.

Some of us will need to pick up plants from vendors.

Others to unload, water, clean, label, categorize, and organize the plants on tables. Everyone needs to be available to help the public find those just right plants that they are looking for during the sale.

And of course please consider staying to help with the little bit of time that it takes for the clean up. There will be many opportunities for hours during the whole week, day or evening, to fit most anyone's schedule.

Let's all hope that October will be cooler and wetter .

Great sources for Native Seeds:
<https://www.seedsource.com/>
<https://www.wildseedfarms.com/>

Swenson House - Haunted Abilene

Boo!

The Board of Directors at Swenson House has asked the BCMGA to partner with them for this years' HAUNTED ABILENE at the property. They loved the interaction we had with the children during our Pollinator Grant event at Swenson this past May, so asked if we would be in charge of the children's activities for this spooky event! The dates are Friday, October 25th and Saturday, October 26th. Hours are 6pm-10pm both nights.



Molly Lorch and Juanita Campos have cheerfully volunteered to co-chair the happening, with games on the patio and grassy area such as Cornhole Toss and Basketball Toss for older children and games in the adjoining sunroom for the younger ghosts and goblins. Carol and Ron Waters will sponsor a "Bat Station"!to share bat lore and to be our education opportunity for these two eerie evenings! Dianne Bennett will be face painting as will fellow master gardener, Grace Broyles.

The gardens at Swenson will be fun this Halloween-lighting has been added to the garden beds and the staff at Swenson will be in Wizard and Witch costume and you are absolutely encouraged to dress up as you wish! Several of you signed up at our September meeting- and if you did not have that opportunity, please email me or text me and give me the hours you would like to work. You are welcome to do one or several, either night or both.

Come have some Halloween fun!

Sandy Shaw (sandyshaw@ctesc.net)

What To Do in October

Jackie Sledge



- * Plant cool season grasses from seed.



- * Plant trees and shrubs so they have time to develop strong roots before summer. You might limit the numbers you plant so an extremely severe winter won't ruin your landscape.

- * Dig and divide violets, phlox, iris, daylilies, Shasta daisies, coneflowers gloriosa daisies, hostas, peonies, and other spring perennials early in the month.



- * Plant daffodil, summer snowflake, and grape hyacinth bulbs as soon as you buy them. Tulip and Dutch hyacinth bulbs should be chilled at 45 degrees for a minimum of 45 days in the refrigerator. Plant chilled bulbs in mid-December.

- * Plant winter annuals such as pansies, snapdragons, pinks, and ornamental cabbage and kale.

- * Removed damaged and dead branches from trees.

- * Remove surface roots that could cause damage to slabs, driveways, sidewalks, or patios.

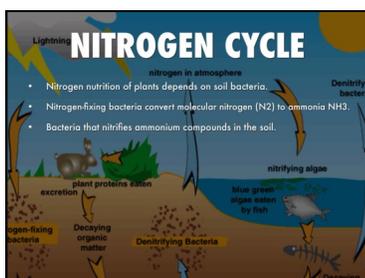


- * Remove dead leaves and stem stubble from perennials.

- * Continue mowing until the first frost stops growth.

- * Bag and collect grass clippings and fallen leaves to use in compost or as mulch.

- * Apply quality turf fertilizer to warm-season grasses early in the month.



- * Apply water-soluble high nitrogen food to help pansies, snapdragons, pinks, and ornamental cabbage and kale get established quickly.

- * Apply high nitrogen lawn and landscape fertilizer at half the recommended rate after digging and replanting spring-flowering perennials. Water thoroughly after applying fertilizer.

- * Be sure to check all potted plants that will be brought indoors for the winter for insects and other pests.

- * Plan changes you want to make in your landscape next spring. Apply glyphosate herbicide to kill existing vegetation without contaminating the soil.

CULTURAL PRACTICE OF POT WASHING

By Molly Lorch

You might wonder why pot washing is important. First you need to understand that growing in a greenhouse environment is different from growing plants outside. Good cultural practices (e.g., cleanliness) are important in both environments, but more important in a greenhouse. Having clean pots is part of greenhouse cleanliness and promotes healthier plants. It is a general practice in production greenhouses to thoroughly clean greenhouses between crop cycles. Cleanliness promotes healthy plants by killing harmful pathogens, algae, and harmful pests. Algae can be a breeding ground for fungus gnats and shore flies.

According to the University of Massachusetts Extension Service: *Containers to be reused should be washed thoroughly to remove soil particles and plant debris before being treated with a disinfectant, even if there is no evidence of disease in the crop. Debris and organic matter can protect pathogens from coming in contact with the disinfectant solution. Pots, flats and trays should be new or disinfected.*

In other words, all visible signs of soil and organic matter should be removed from a pot before it is disinfected in order to destroy dangerous plant pathogens.

At the McMurry Greenhouse Project, this is how we currently tackle the job of cleaning used pots for reuse:



- 1st: Remove loose soil and debris with a stiff brush.
- 2nd: Dunk the pot in soapy water quickly.
- 3rd: Soak in vinegar and water for 2 hours to two days.
- 4th: Scrub all remaining mineral debris and dirt off pot in soapy water.
- 5th: Soak for 30 minutes in bleach water.
- 6th: Allow to air dry.



We have found that the key to getting pots the cleanest with the least effort is by soaking in vinegar water. We wash 4" pots in batches of 25. The sink holds 25 4" pots.

The large soaking tubs hold 50 4" pots. In September, we washed over 1500 4" pots. We now need to wash larger pots and numerous trays. If you want to help wash pots and clean the greenhouse, contact Molly Lorch at 630-797-9745 or mlorch3315@gmail.com.



Tribute to a Master Gardener - Fred Perkins



I have many wonderful memories of Mr Fred Perkins. He taught me so many things over the years. I used to tell him that I would like to squeeze the knowledge out of him, like he was a sponge. Does anyone know what happened to his filing cabinet full of research materials & articles?

When I was a young new Master Gardener, Fred & Bruce hosted a Tomato Workshop. I think they called it "Tomatathon" & I got the t-shirt to prove that I attended. I still smile thinking about Fred saying that you should "Garden by the seat of your pants". He said, "If you can sit on the soil & it is a comfortable temperature that it is a good time to plant."

He also talked about doing the "Hula Dance" through your tomato plants to help pollinate the blooms. I can still see long, lanky Fred doing the hula. :)

He was so proud of his special Puck Tomatoes. I hope they live on in his memory. I think he shared a few seeds over the years. If I am remembering correctly, he sent some to The Seed Bank? I think he also developed a rose that he named after his daughter, Karen.

Fred was a gem & he will be missed. It warms my heart to know that he has been reunited with Ruth & their daughter.

Rhonda Blanton

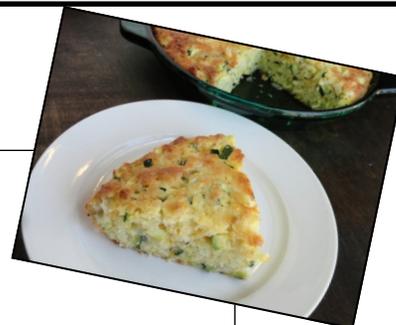


WHAT'S COOKING IN THE KITCHEN

Since we are talking about Fred Perkins in the newsletter this month, I thought a recipe from the original Master Gardener Cookbook would be a nice addition. Anyway, here is one from Ruth Perkins, Fred's wife.

Crustless Zucchini Pie

1 large onion, finely chopped	4 eggs, beaten
½ cup vegetable oil	3 cups grated zucchini
½ cup grated Parmesan cheese	1 cup biscuit/baking mix
1 tablespoon minced fresh parsley	1 cup (4 oz) shredded cheddar cheese



In a bowl, combine the first five ingredients. Stir in the zucchini, biscuit mix, and cheese. Pour into two greased 9-inch pie plates. Bake at 350 degrees for 35 minutes or until golden brown.

Yield: 2 pies, 6 servings each



Cook By Book

*Remember that children, marriages, and flower gardens
reflect the kind of care they get.*

- H. Jackson Brown, Jr.

Gardening is an instrument of grace.

- May Sarton

Gardening is all about optimism.

I put a seed in the ground.

I consistently tend it,

*confident I will see the results, in time,
of the nurture I have provided.*

- Mary Anne Radmacher

Gardening is all about optimism.

- Mary Anne Radmacher

*Yesterday is like a dung heap;
you can complain about the smell,
or you can use it to fertilize tomorrow's garden.*

- Jonathan Lockwood Huie



A Master Gardener's Passion.....This is a new series in our newsletter! We all have our favorite plant. We all love hearing about each others passions...

Growing Mums in the Big Country

By Anna-Karen Frost

I can hardly think of Fall without thinking of Chrysanthemums (Mums). They were abundant in my parents garden in rich wine and burnt orange colors flourishing in the Fall until first frost. They came back every year and were bright pockets of color sticking up through dried leaves. I still have a white variety in my garden which have been there at least for 30 or 40 years. Our Thanksgiving table was always blessed with a vase of these hardy cut flowers.



Chrysanthemum love a good spot in the sun to grow and because of shallow root systems need regular watering and good drainage. They grow well even in poor soil and only occasionally need a light fertilizing. I am told they grow well in pots and young plants should be started in the Spring to become established for fall blooming.

When planting directly into the garden you will need to start with a hole that is twice the size of the root ball. If they are planted where multiple can be positioned, the plants should be in the ground about 18 inches apart or more. For some varieties, a support structure may be required.

Pruning can be done to promote better growth. Some varieties can get rather tall and leggy. They can be pruned when the plant grows to be 6 inches to a foot tall, but it should not be done within 100 days of the average blooming time. After the plant is done blooming, some individuals will choose to cut back the plant to about 4 inches in height, but it is not a necessity. I have never pruned mine.

Propagating chrysanthemums can be done from cuttings, seeds, or even by dividing the plant. If you are using a cutting, you should start with a snipping that is about 4 to 5 inches in length. Make sure to remove the bottom leaves, and plant it under a bright light until it takes root. It can be dipped in rooting hormone for even better results and placed in a good rooting soil. If you propagate by dividing plants, the new bunch is going to grow better than the old one because it has more space to grow where newly transplanted.

Chrysanthemum is a very hardy plant that can have a few issues with pests and diseases. Some of the issues to look out for include: Botrytis (a kind of mold), Spider Mites, Root Rot, Powdery Mildew, Aphids and Leaf Minors. However, other than occasional Spider Mites, Mums are very hardy in my Texas garden. Mums are hardiest in zones 4 to 9.

Food and Fiber Day

The West Texas Fair and Rodeo brings cooler weather and some rain but for the Master Gardeners it brings another opportunity to help our youngest community members learn about crop, food and plants origins.

Below is a picture of the 2019 Master Gardener crew from Food and Fiber Day. We did 10 episodes of Ask the Expert. We try to teach 4th graders where their food comes from. The well planned lesson, describes how tomatoes are grown by farmers and wind up as ketchup in a bottle. Also where French Fries start out as potatoes growing underground. We also discuss the exponentially of seeds and how herbs give foods unique flavors. We even give the teacher's a tomato seed math sheet to take back to their home school.



Garden Tip

When do I need to water during the winter? There are so many things to consider – plant species, temperature, rainfall, wind, soil type, drainage, etc. It's time to water when the soil begins to change to a lighter color or when it slightly pulls away from the house foundation or around tree trunks. You may also want to water if it hasn't rained or you haven't used your irrigation system in a couple of weeks. It's best to leave your irrigation system in the manual mode over the winter so you can control when and how much you water.



The Awards Committee consisting of Dorothy Kiser and Susan Trice awarded the following awards

You Rock!



Jean Seymore reported the most hours for August and won the Busy Bee Award. Remember to report your hours at the end of each month to Jackie Sledge.

H. D. Weaver was nominated for the You Rock Award for August. He cut the logs for the last Saturday seminar project. We appreciate what he and many others did to make the seminar informative and interactive. The owls were so cute.



Remember to send your nominations to dkiser44@gmail.com. You may even nominate yourself if you feel that you're deserving!

You Rock Award is an award given to the Association Member who has done something outstanding in the previous month.

The Busy Bee is the member who submitted the most hours the previous month.

Individuals can nominate themselves or other gardeners by completing a short form and submitting to the Awards Committee.

Advanced Training for MG

Advanced Training for MG (previously known as "specialist" training) has one more opportunity before the end of the year. Greenhouse Management will be held October 17-19 in Ft. Worth. See this website for more information:

<https://txmg.org/events/advanced-training-greenhouse-management>

Master Gardener Spotlight

My name is Shannon Abbott.

I grew up in Tye/Merkel but was born in Washington state. My only offspring is now in her sophomore year at UNT in Denton studying ecology. I take full credit for her interest in science, since I forced her to be a Zoo teen here one summer and she found out she likes taking care of birds. She likes the animal and conservation aspects but is afraid of bugs-Even ladybugs.

At the house it's just me, Hunny Bunny (Kevin) who works at the Coke plant where they make it, two cats, and three ferrets. I work from home for BCBS doing boring stuff. It's kind of hard for me to write about myself since it's a combination of not seeing myself as being that interesting and figuring if someone wants to know about me, they'll ask.

Mom brought me to Texas when I was a baby, so I didn't have a real opinion about it. The story still comes up about how I threw all my bottles out the car's open window when nobody was looking. This was in the 80's so people rolled down the car window for fresh air.

Didn't really have much interest in gardening till the last few years when I decided to be an adult and bought a house. It only had boring bushes in the front and scraggly looking trees in the back and I wasn't about to tolerate that. So, I tried out different plants and started to figure out which ones worked here, and which ones just die dramatically.

In 2019, I saw the MG program as a way to learn more from those that know the area and be around people that have the some of the same interests as I have. Kind of a typical answer but there's no big hidden reason for wanting to play in the dirt with others.

My favorite thing about gardening is getting stuff to grow and flourish. It's such a feeling of accomplishment to see something that I've had a hand in helping to do well. Getting outside is like a meditation for me, even weed pulling. I can just put in my headphones and focus on working with all the nature stuff and see the physical results of it. On the other hand, my least favorite thing about gardening is fire ants. They may not be a gardening specific thing but they're always there waiting. They serve no real purpose beyond making me dance around and say bad words. My yard dinosaur is carrying an axe to do battle with them.

I haven't really worked on any one big or small MG project yet because, well, it is too freaking hot. I did get to work the plant sale and it was fun to see people get into searching for just the right plant.

When thinking about my favorite plant, that varies on whatever has caught my attention. This summer I've been semi-focused on making little spots to help hummingbirds/butterflies/bees with plants they like and little happy watering stations. Right now, I've got too many baby succulents started because I find it fun to watch them grow.



October



Oct 4 Ann Clark

Oct 6 Katie Ralph

Oct 4 Cathy Gray

Oct 5 Cheri Hudson

Oct 7 Cassandra Lancaster

Oct 12 Cynthia Glass



Oct 12 Chris Qualizza

Oct 14 Ron Waters

Oct 17 Jo Rake

Oct 20 Juanita Campos

Oct 21 Cheri Drysdale

Oct 22 Dianne Bennett

