

# THROUGH THE GRAPEVINE

Volume 10, Issue 3

July 2009

## Concho Valley Master Gardeners



### President's Message

By Carolyn Mason



On Saturday May 30, we had excellent weather for the dedication of the scenic overlook with bench at the Old City Park in honor

of John Begnaud for his nurturing of the Concho Valley Master Gardeners and his years of service to the Concho Valley. The sun was shining brightly. Lots of Master Gardeners, pecan growers, county and city employees came out to the event. John had family attending from as far away as Africa. Thank you to all who worked to make the bench possible, planned the day, spearheaded the refreshments, and the myriad of tasks that needed to occur for the event to roll out so smoothly. John extended his thanks in his newspaper column on Saturday, June 20.

The next major event planned by the Concho Valley Master Gardeners was the Rain Water Harvesting Seminar held at the 4-H Building on July 18. The speakers were Billy Kniffen, Water Resource Specialist, The Texas A&M System and Allison Watkins, Tom Green County Horticulture Agent. I thank everyone that was lined up as volunteers and greeters to provide attendees with locations of information and registering. There were over 130 participants who gathered at this event to



learn new information and receive door prizes. There are plans underway to continue with Rainwater Harvesting materials toward the end of September. Come to our business meetings or watch your e-mail for more information.

The Concho Valley Master Gardeners will be holding a business meeting each month with next scheduled meeting on Tuesday, August 11 beginning at 5:45 pm at the 4-H Building. Several items of interest discussed in the past have been membership criteria. Everyone should have received a copy of those changes in the last mailing sent with minutes and a financial update. The changes have also been reprinted in this issue of the newsletter for your benefit.

Another decision made by the Executive Committee was to limit emails from the CVMG to the first and third Tuesday of the month. Messages to be sent out in the email burst should be sent to Janice ([JKAlexander@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:JKAlexander@ag.tamu.edu)) with a cc to Allison ([AEWatkins@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:AEWatkins@ag.tamu.edu)) by the end of the workday on Monday prior to the first and third Tuesday. The goals of this decision are to make better use of Janice's time and to avoid filling up our mailboxes with a steady dribble of messages. Very critical communication may be sent out whenever necessary.

I received an email about the Master Gardener 2011 International MG Conf., Charleston, WV. The website for this event is <http://imgc.ext.wvu.edu/>. Planning is in the early stages so information

will be added as the planning progresses. Mentioning websites, I mentioned to some Master Gardeners that

Lowe's had information on making your own rain chains. She asked for the link. Here it is: [http://www.lowescreativeideas.com/idea-library/articles/rain\\_chain.aspx](http://www.lowescreativeideas.com/idea-library/articles/rain_chain.aspx) They also have information on Rain Barrels that links to barrels together and the making of hypertufa pots. I think we are to have a hypertufa container casting workshop in the fall. Here are the links if you are interested:

[http://www.lowescreativeideas.com/idea-library/projects/Home-made\\_Hypertufa\\_Planter\\_0609.aspx](http://www.lowescreativeideas.com/idea-library/projects/Home-made_Hypertufa_Planter_0609.aspx)

[http://www.lowescreativeideas.com/idea-library/videos/Rain\\_Barrels\\_0408.aspx](http://www.lowescreativeideas.com/idea-library/videos/Rain_Barrels_0408.aspx)

Hope to see many of you at the myriad of volunteer events. Happy planting,  
*Carolyn Mason*  
*President*



The philosopher who said that work well done never needs doing over never weeded a garden.  
Ray D. Everson

## Criteria for Concho Valley Master Gardeners – July, 2009

Membership Criteria for Concho Valley Master Gardeners presented and passed by majority of membership present at stated meeting on July 14, 2009:

1. To become a certified Concho Valley Master Gardeners, the person must complete the 50 hours of instruction offered by the County Horticulturist through the County Extension office plus 50 hours of volunteer service in the 12 months following the completion of the course. Volunteer service may begin prior to the completion of the course work.
2. To maintain certification, the Master Gardener must pay the annual dues, provide 12 hours of volunteer service and participate in a minimum of 6 hours of continuing education by December 31 of the preceding year. At present dues are \$2.00 for the state and \$3.00 for the Concho Valley for a total of \$5.00. Dues may be paid in cash or check to the CVMG Treasurer at a regularly scheduled meeting or by sending a check to the CVMG at the County Extension Office. Alternatively, the Master Gardener may visit the Extension office in person to pay the dues. If the criteria of dues, service and continuing education are not met by the end of the calendar year, Master Gardener certification may be terminated.
3. Should a situation arise that makes it impossible or very difficult to fulfill the volunteer service and/or the continuing education hours, the certified Master Gardener may request to be placed on the inactive roll for up to 2 years by sending a letter to the County Extension agent requesting inactive status with a very brief explanation why it is justified. The letter is due by December 31 of the year preceding the year inactive status is to begin. Payment of dues is still required.
4. Should a person whose certification was terminated secondary to failure to pay dues in a timely manner, provision of the volunteer hours, and/or participation in continuing education hours, the previously certified Master Gardener by regain certification by attending 15 hours of class plus pay an reactivation fee of \$20 plus dues \$5.00. If the termination period was greater than one year, back dues may be requested.

## TRAINING IN RAINWATER CAPTURE SUCCESS

By Doreen Grimes



Good publicity really pays off! There were 128 people in attendance for the program sponsored by Master Gardeners and the Tom Green County Extension office.

The goal of the session was to educate the public on the need to capture our rainfall and to demonstrate how simple the process actually is. The feedback from those in attendance indicated that the goals were met. And, from all observations, a lot of interest in the project was sparked.

We all will have to re-vamp our vo-

cabulary to conform to the new name for Xeriscape. It's now called Earthkind™, a term that A&M has actually copyrighted to describe our gardening efforts using land and water wisely.

A special 'Thank you' to Kay Thompson and Allison Watkins for all the organization in getting this event scheduled. Billy Kniffen and Allison both brought very informative materials and information. It was a great benefit to the area constituents and everyone reported in learning lots of new info. Area vendors who also were present reported that this was a good venue to learn about the advantages of rainwater harvesting.

An event to teach the community, rain

barrel construction and assembly will be held at the 4-H Building on September 26. Specialist training in rainwater harvesting sponsored by the Master Gardeners of Tom Green County is scheduled in November. Stay tuned for further details.



## Spotlight on Gardeners: Master Gardeners with a Mission



Enthusiasm and creativity were the hallmarks of my interview with Janie and Bob Houck. Bob has utilized his engineering expertise and his high tech skills to create some unique things on his ranch in Coke County, but more about that later.

Both have interesting backgrounds. Bob is a native of Oregon where he graduated from public schools as well as college. His college major was political science and he says the most valuable thing he learned in college, and something he has used over and over again since graduating, is critical thinking.

Jobs were scarce when he entered the “real world” and he realized right away that he needed to move. A friend convinced him that computers were here to stay, like it or not. He moved to the Rio Grande Valley and attended Texas State Technical Institute and studied electronics in 1981. He worked for several small companies and then, in 1981, he moved to Austin and began working for Dell, first in electronics and eventually in a management position.

In 1997, he

bought a ranch in Coke County. When he speaks of “ranch”, he means a fairly large piece of land – two sections which is large even in Texas. One section is under a grass lease and the other is under wildlife management. Among his several hobbies is woodworking which he has found useful as well as enjoyable. Both Janie and Bob took early retirement and moved to the ranch in 2007.

Janie is a native of Sterling City where she graduated from high school. She is a graduate of Angelo State University with a major in special education. She moved to Austin where she taught special education, education and eventually went into administration. While serving as assistant principle at one of the schools in Austin, the special education teacher approached her about utilizing gardening on the school grounds as therapy for some of the students, especially those who were emotionally disturbed.



At the school, they created a garden, built a small greenhouse and developed a successful program using garden as

behavior modification in the students. While living in the Austin area, the two of them decided to learn more about the Master Garden program. This led to their taking the training in Travis County. When they moved to Coke County, they transferred their training and became a part of our group.

Janie and Bob are taking a very active role in Master Garden activities. Immediately upon becoming Tom Green County Master Gardeners they helped with the new class (class of 2008). They sat in on all the sessions which refreshed the knowledge they had gained in their original classes. Both are tireless workers in our organization.

Janie is especially interested in vegetable gardening as well as herbal gardening. At the present time she has 18 tomato plants – Celebrity, Porters, Juliette, and Roma. She also has a variety of different peppers including banana peppers and bell peppers. She grows Malabar spinach which she says is especially well-adapted to the hot, dry climate of West Central Texas. Her herbs include dill, oregano, basil and many others.



### Comments by Allison

What an incredible first six months this has been! I have so enjoyed getting to know all of you Master Gardeners, learning from you and working with you. It's hard to believe that we are already getting near the end of summer. There have been a lot of wonderful programs and projects going on recently, and more are on the way. The rainwater harvesting workshop held in July was a huge success, with great attendance and good responses from the community. Educational presentations like this are a big part of what the Master Gardener organization is all about, and really help make

a difference in people's lives! As soon as it was over, the planning kept rolling and wheels turning, so there are more fun projects coming up this fall!

One is the new Master Gardener class - if you know of anyone who is interested in becoming a Master Gardener, be sure to spread the word and get people on the waiting list. We will soon need to get registration forms going, and classes will likely start this September or October.

I would also like to thank everyone for being so agreeable with the background checks issue. I don't like hav-

ing to ask you to do it, but it's a state-wide rule that must be followed - so again, thank you!

I am truly overwhelmed by the ability, willingness and desire that all of the Concho Valley Master Gardeners have to educate, serve, and enrich the lives of others. It has been an honor to work with you these first six months, and I know the next six will be even better.

*Allison*



## Message from the Retired Side

By John Begnaud



You Concho Valley Master Gardeners are truly the gift to the community that keeps on giving. My family and I want to say thanks again for the thought and hard work to all involved in the bench and sitting area in City Park. I know some of you put many long and stressful hours into the project like you do so many. Thanks to all.

As you have noticed, I am trying to remain helpful but out of Allison's way so she can do her job and learn with us all. I hope to be helpful in completion of the greenhouse (soon) and the

things I enjoy such as propagation and an occasional lecture for future classes or continuing education, where you and your county agents deem useful.

I know some of you have been collecting plants for possible propagation for the spring plant sale. This is your biggest fundraiser and for many of us the most fun learning. We could easily fill two greenhouses with plants to sell and that would be great. I noticed a shortage in the early season this year of hardy hibiscus, henry duelberg salvia, and santolina and Colchester white dusty miller. Some of your



2008 plants such as the old fashioned petunias, black pearl pepper and African rose mallow are outstanding now. Keep in touch with your project leaders for coordination and timing.

Thanks again to you all for your continued educational efforts in our area!

*John Begnaud*

## Texas Master Gardener License Plates

Support the Texas Master Gardeners by displaying specialty license plates on your vehicle. More than 70 percent of the specialty plate fee is dedicated toward a scholarship fund for future Master Gardener Coordinators. The specialty plate fee (\$30 or \$40, depending on the plate) is collected in addition to the regular registration fee and any other applicable fees. Place your order online at

<http://rts.texasonline.state.tx.us/Form>



## 2010 Texas Master Gardener State Conference

Hosted by Dallas County Master Gardeners

April 8 - 10, 2010

<http://www.2010tmgconference.org>



## Growing Pumpkins

By Allison Watkins



Pumpkins are a big icon for fall and Halloween. They are also a lot of fun to grow (especially with kids) because the seeds are large, they germinate fast, and quickly produce a plant with big leaves.

Some good small pumpkin varie-

ties to try are 'Jack B Little' and 'Munchkin,' while 'Small Sugar' is a good small pumpkin for making pies. 'Autumn Gold' and 'Jack-o-Lantern' are nice medium sized varieties to choose. Depending on the type of pumpkin, it can take from 2 to 4 months from planting to harvest, so it's probably too late for large pumpkins.

Pumpkin plants are very large and need plenty of room to spread out, so select a sunny spot that is about 10' x 10'.

Pumpkins will need to be kept moist when germinating and establishing; once established, the plants will need a deep thorough watering every week or two, depending on the weather.

If you're looking for some inexpensive, festive fall decorations or want to make fresh homemade pumpkin pies, get those pumpkins planted soon!



# Tom Green County 4-H Photography Winners April & June 2009



← *Nathan Rogers*-Animals:Color division; Jr Age Category, 'Butterfly in Wild Flowers', 1st -County; Red Ribbon- District.

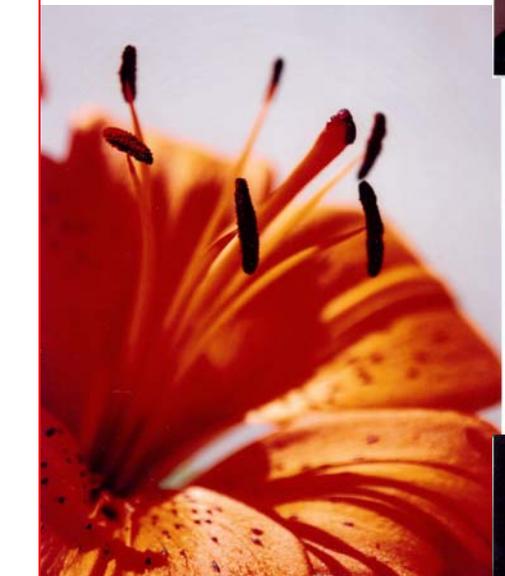
*Alex Swize*—Natural Landscape:Color → division, Senior Age Category; 'Footprints in the Sand'; 1st-County; Blue Ribbon-State



*Claire Gilbert*—Still Life: Color → division; Jr. Age Category; "Scale & Feet": 1st— County; Blue Ribbon—District



← 🏆 — BEST OF CLASS—  
Still Life: Color  
District 7 Contest



← *Kendra Guerrero*—Plants/Flora: Color Division, Senior Age Category, "Lily"; 1st—County; Blue Ribbon—State Contest

*Kendra Guerrero*—Plants/Flora: → Blk&White division; Senior Age Category, "Rose"; 1st—County; Blue Ribbon-State Contest



← *Luis Castillo*—Plant/Flora: Color division; Jr. Age category; "New Beginning": 1st—County; Blue Ribbon—District Contest



← *Carolyn Swize*— Plant/Flora: Color; Jr. Age Category; "Lily Closeup" ; 2nd—County; Red Ribbon—District Contest

*Nathan Rogers*—Natural Landscape: → Color division; Jr. Age Category; "Warbler at Stock Tank"; 1st—County, Blue Ribbon - District Contest



## Volunteer Opportunities

 **Civic League Park**—working in conjunctions with City Parks Department on necessary improvements; contact Carl White or Carolyn Mason for more info.

 **Wall School Garden Workday**—Aug 8 at 8:30 AM; update & clean-up prior to school beginning. Contact Kay Thompson for more info.

 **CVMG Business Meeting**—Sept. 8 at TGC 4-H Building, 5:45 PM. Contact Carolyn Mason for more details.

 **Community Earthkind™ Training**—new workshops related to Earth-kind plants & resources; Open to public; Sept 21 & 24 to conclude with 26th-rainwater workshop. Contact Allison Watkins for more info or to volunteer as hostesses.

 **New MG Class**—New classroom instruction for new students to begin Sept. 24 thru 12-17; 12 noon to 4 PM every Thursday; volun-

teers needed for hosts and provide refreshments.

 **4-H Greenhouse** —needed help on completion of Greenhouse work and getting ready for plant propagation. Contact Allison or Ferd Koehn or Loretta Burgess of scheduled workdays.

 **4-H Demonstration Beds & Gardens**— work continues as needed to lay out beds and arrange borders for beds and readying beds for plantings. Contact Debbie V for info.

 **Correction Facilities' Horticulture Programs**—programming to both men and women's facilities each Tuesday & Wednesday evening to provide training and working directions for their plantings & greenhouse. Contact Allison, Susan Stanfield or Linda Rowe to volunteer or for more info.

 **Rainwater Harvesting Workshop & fundraiser**—Sept 26; workshop at 4-H Bldg. to provide materi-

als and opportunity to build rainwater capture systems for public; possible fundraiser for CVMGs. Contact Kay Thompson or Carolyn Mason for more info .

 **Trees of West Texas & CVMG Biz mtg**—October 13, program & business meeting with guest speaker John Begnaud on area trees of west Texas; to be open & a joint class with new MG students.



Info from Gardens Around the World:

Lady beetles (ladybugs or coccinellids), are the most commonly known of all beneficial insects. Ohio residents like lady beetles so much that the Convergent Lady Beetle became the official state insect in 1975.

CONCHO VALLEY MASTER GARDENERS

*Doreen Grimes, Editor*



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**\*\***  Please keep the Extension office informed of any changes of your mailing address or of your e-mail address. If you change or obtain a new electronic mailing, the office would appreciate notification so that we can keep an up-to-date list for emergency notification mailings. All postal mailings are being kept to a minimum due to costs so we would appreciate any updates for electronic & regular mail.