

Denton County Master Gardener Association

THE ROOT

Grow With Us

*Photo Courtesy Canva*

Buds From The Board

BY KATHRYN WELLS, PRESIDENT

The first two months of 2020 have been rich and full, and the rest of the year is shaping up to be the same, especially after the wonderful services opportunities presented at February's Volunteer Opportunity Fair (VOF).

VP-Projects Joanne Spurgin and her team created a wonderful showcase for our DCMGA projects and committees at this year's VOF, and the larger space in Global Spheres' Multi-Purpose Room was a wonderful upgrade. The creativity and excellence of our project displays is always a delight, and the heart of our project managers to lead their respective projects so faithfully and diligently is truly inspiring.

Of course, our volunteers are the hands and feet of our mission, and it's a joy to see Class of 2020 interns mixing and mingling with veteran members ... all working together for the common good of educating and engaging our community. I appreciate you all so very much!

Among our numerous year-round projects and committees, work has commenced for our "Big Four" events (Plant Sale; Garden Tour; Vegetable, Fruit, Flower, and Herb Show; and Fall Garden Fest). First

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Buds From The Board (Cont.)

up on May 2nd is our Plant Sale, quickly followed by our Garden Tour on May 9th. Please check out the "Upcoming Events" section on our website's home page for detailed information on these eagerly anticipated annual events.

Our first regular general meeting of 2020 is March 11th. Program Co-Chairs Gay Campbell and Beverly Duncan have scheduled Dell Perry of Seandel Iris Gardens in Plano for our continuing education (CE, formerly known as AT) program. Dell, a self-described "small" commercial iris grower, has over 1500 iris varieties on her corner city lot. As always, our general meetings are free and open to the public, and details are available on our facebook page and website.

Presidential Service pins will also be awarded at March's general meeting to honor and recognize our members who completed 100 or more hours of service in 2019. Ninety members earned the award for last year's service; that's nearly one-third of our membership! Seven of the 90 completed more than 500 hours of service in the twelve-month period. What an achievement!

Denton County Master Gardeners and Denton County residents—you're the very best. Spring is on the horizon, y'all. Let's greet it together; ready, set, March!

Kathryn

TOP GARDENING TIPS

March

Plant cool season vegetables.
Plant cool season flowering annuals.
Prune winter damage from perennials & shrubs.
Allow spring bulb foliage to die & dry before removal.
Protect tender plants from late freezes.

#DCMGA #GROWWITHUS

DENTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION

Fair Oaks Senior Independent Living Center

BY KATHY RAINEY

This month we're spotlighting one of the longest running projects led by Denton County Master Gardener Association (DCMGA), the Fair Oaks Senior Independent Living Center gardens. Barbara Burgin initiated this project in her intern year (2007), at which time there were no gardens at Fair Oaks. Dale Powell took over the leadership of Fair Oaks in 2012, giving Barbara and her husband the opportunity to travel more. The project has expanded tremendously since that time, and Dale proudly reports 225 volunteer days from 2012 through 2014 and an impressive 450 volunteer days from 2015 to 2019. Along with Dale, Pat Moyer (tree expert), Katherine Woodward (plant expert), and Mike Crawford (vegetable expert) co-lead the project.

There are over fifty gardens covering 2.5 acres; most of the gardens are planted with ornamentals in front of the residents' porches. There are also common gardens

for residents to enjoy that consist of a rose

garden and vegetable gardens, including a keyhole garden. The Fair Oaks team invited the Children's Garden Master Gardener Project to use the Fair Oaks Children's Garden and that garden has expanded twice. The original vegetable garden was 4 foot by 50 foot and there are now four vegetable gardens covering an area three times larger than the original garden. One of the new veggie gardens was formerly a compost heap. Last year the team began converting it to a raised bed that they plan to complete this year. Last year the team decided to try growing a winter cover crop in the vegetable gardens to help manage soil erosion and soil fertility, and to also help prevent weeds, pests, and diseases. They planted Austrian Winter Peas, which are now thick with green growth.

Dales says that over the years hardscape has been added, along with picnic tables for the children and residents. Each year the team adds at least one tree and new Texas native or adapted plants. Also, irrigation throughout the project has changed over the years, converting traditional sprinkler irrigation to drip irrigation in common areas and adding drip irrigation to previously hand-watered beds to help those residents who were physically unable to hand water. One vegetable garden's irrigation has been converted to micro-sprays to provide better coverage than drip lines, and in another vegetable garden the team pulled out a large drip grid and replaced it with pop-up sprinkler heads on a timer.

In 2015, the Fair Oaks Team began holding MGer classes, scheduling four per year. They have included Rose Care, Tree Care, Drip Irrigation, Propagation, Succulents, and Cooking with Herbs, to



Photo Courtesy DCMGA Member Dale Powell

Raised Bed Vegetable Garden,
one of several that have been built at
Fair Oaks over the years.

Fair Oaks Sr. Independent Living Center (Cont.)

name a few. The classes are taught by Mgers and usually include hands-on demonstrations and training at the Fair Oaks Campus.

Fair Oaks is a senior low-income housing apartment subsidized by the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The DCMGA team works toward making residents' lives more pleasant by giving them rewarding gardening activities that result in something beautiful to look at.

Most of the thirty-nine residents work in their gardens and engage with the Master Gardener volunteers. One resident has her own 4 foot by 50 foot raised vegetable bed. The Children's Garden has successfully encouraged vegetable gardening among the residents, and with the one-on-one Master

Gardener engagement with residents, some have learned to identify plants, how to take care of plants, and to make plant choices based on the different soils, angle of the sun, and watering requirements. Residents have favorite Master Gardeners they like to work with and all know exactly when the Master Gardeners are coming out each week. Work days are from mid-February through mid-October, with an average of twelve volunteers per workday and around twenty volunteers during spring until the hot weather arrives.

The team's project goals for 2020 include completing the conversion of one vegetable garden to a raised bed. They will plow under the winter cover crop in the vegetable gardens and build another picnic table. Next they will get the gardens mulched and the Children's Garden beds ready for their first workday. The team plans four to five classes for 2020: *Rose Care* with Pat and Don Edwards, *Tree Care* with Pat Moyer, *Drip Irrigation* with Dale Powell, *Succulents* with Carolyn Tinner, and *Tool Care* with Nick Barrows. These classes are always well attended and folks come back year after year. There is always something new to learn for veteran Master Gardeners and interns alike, and the ability to learn from each other is invaluable. Dale describes the group of volunteers and residents as a fun-loving group of friends who enjoy spending time with each other. The goals of Fair Oaks and the Children's Gardens resonate with many, and the result of their work is quickly visible and long lasting.

With so much progress made since 2007, and looking back on all the accomplishments, Dale is most proud of building and maintaining the Children's Garden raised vegetable beds and providing picnic tables for the classes. The aesthetic appearance of the campus has improved over time by converting many of the garden plants to Texas natives/adapted, and all the activities performed by Master Gardeners have increased the number of residents that are engaged in gardening. Congratulations, Fair Oaks Team! Your work definitely shows a commitment to our DCMGA mission.



Photo Courtesy DCMGA Member Dale Powell

Rose Care Hands-On Learning,
one of several classes held at Fair Oaks
each year to provide MGer training.

Welcome To The 2020 Intern Class

BY BARBARA BEANE, SONNY SMITH, & KIM WOOTTON

On January 28, DCMGA welcomed the 2020 Intern Class. The training classes continue to be held on Tuesdays at Global Spheres. Reporting on the first day were forty-four enthusiastic interns and more than sixty veterans who supported them as mentors and presenters for the day.

This 2020 Class represents the greatest diversity from Denton County to date, including eleven men, the largest male contingency we've ever had. Moreover, we have one of the widest geographic representations, extending from Cooke to Tarrant Counties, with all of these interns pledging their volunteer time to Denton County Master Gardener projects. A wide range of age groups also makes up the class, from college students, to working folks, to retirees. These individuals run the gamut in skills, including novice gardeners who happen to be fantastic at technology skills, experienced landscapers, people who want to restore the native plant ecology, and some who want to help solve the urban food crisis.

Such diversity will make our organization even stronger and help us to better achieve our Mission Statement. The Class Administrators, Barbara Beane, Sonny Smith, and Kim Wootton, as well as the more than fifty members of the Class Planning Team, are proud of the goals the interns are already setting and excited to see the positive influence they will have to the future of the Denton County Master Gardener Association. So, when you see interns at the upcoming projects and meetings, please say a friendly, "Howdy!"



Welcome 2020 DCMGA Intern Class!

Meet Kathryn Wells

BY GAY CAMPBELL

Who was crowned the 1987 South Carolina Watermelon Queen? If you guessed Kathryn Bowers (Wells), you are correct!

While studying at Columbia College, Kathryn decided to enter the statewide pageant on a whim after a friend's dare. She ended the competition's multiple phases of judging in a borrowed sequined gown that was six inches too long, hemmed with safety pins and tape. Much to her surprise, Kathryn won! Ironically, the role required her to act as a public relations ambassador for the Department of Agriculture in her home state of South Carolina. Kathryn also worked as a Presidential Aide in college, accompanying the President of the university, and frequently his wife, to various speaking events. In addition, she served as Class President all four years of college.

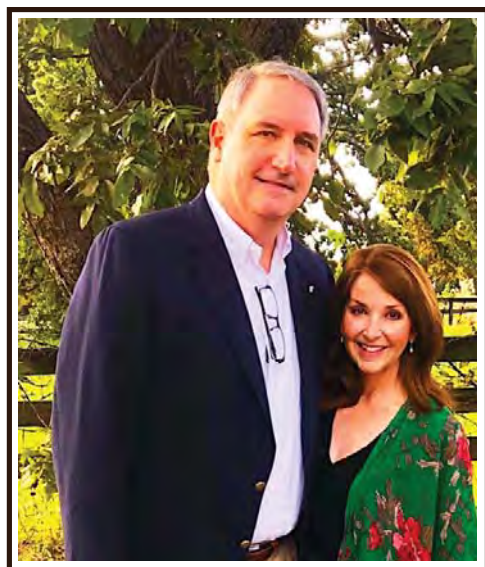
Growing up in the small South Carolina town of Hartsville, Kathryn wanted to be a high school cheerleader, but after deciding that she lacked the necessary gymnastic skills, she turned her attention to student government. At age sixteen, Kathryn secured her first paying job as a disc jockey and radio personality on the local AM radio station. As the only employee working on the weekend, she chose and played music, read the AP news, reported the weather, played commercials and public service announcements, answered phones, inspected the



Kathryn Wells

the 1987 South Carolina
Watermelon Queen

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Chris & Kathryn Wells

Chris' Retirement Party

October 2018

equipment, and hosted several shows. One of the shows she hosted was *Trading Post*. Farmers called in and spoke to Kathryn live on the air, sharing the fruits and vegetables they had for sale, as well as the price, availability, and location.

After college, Kathryn worked as a Regional Training Executive for Estée Lauder. One fall weekend she accepted an invitation to a University of South Carolina tailgate party. It was there that she met two male friends and casually began dating one of them. Soon afterwards, Kathryn introduced her sister to both men. Celeste informed Kathryn that she was dating the wrong man. According to Celeste, Chris Wells was the one that Kathryn should be dating. Eventually, Chris asked out Kathryn. Kathryn laughingly recalls that Chris forgot his wallet on their first date and she had to pay for dinner. Obviously, he redeemed himself as the couple celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary last August.

Kathryn Wells (Cont.)

During their first nine years of marriage, Chris and Kathryn moved fourteen times. They lived in Miami for five years. Chris, an army veteran who worked with Homeland Security (US Customs), had an exciting career similar to the TV show "Miami Vice," Kathryn recalls. He worked undercover drug operations along the Miami River, thwarting illegal narcotics from coming in through the US borders. After Miami, the family lived in Virginia, where Kathryn worked as a realtor. Ten years ago, they moved to Flower Mound. In 2018, Chris retired from Homeland Security as an Assistant Special Agent in Charge. Their twenty-three-year-old daughter Kathryn Caroline (Katy) is a registered nurse and engaged to be married this fall.

In typical Kathryn fashion, she has "bloomed where she has been planted." A member of the 2017 Denton County Master Gardener Association (DCMGA) intern class, she quickly immersed herself in the organization. In 2018, Kathryn was DCMGA Communications Director, in 2019, she was Vice President, and in 2020, she became President of the organization. She currently holds the position of Secretary in the Elm Fork Master Naturalist Chapter and is a Commissioner on the Town of Flower Mound's Environmental Conservation Commission. To invest in local government, she also completed Flower Mound's Citizens Academy. Kathryn is a member of the Native Plant Society of Texas and has completed Levels I, II, and III in the NPSOT Native Landscape Certification Program, in addition to the Landscaping for Birds Class.

Kathryn sees her love of gardening as a tribute to her late mother. She regrets not taking much of an interest in gardening while her mom was alive, but she's certain that Priscilla would be "very delighted" with her interest in gardening during the past several years. Her South Carolina mom especially loved roses, azaleas, camellias, and gardenias. Last year, Kathryn bought a desert rose that reminds her of Priscilla's favorite dish pattern. She also has a potted gardenia – the only plant she babies in honor of her mom. Priscilla's favorite flowers were saturated with color, while Kathryn has an affinity for purely white blooms.

Otherwise, Kathryn largely prefers Texas native plants and the symbiotic relationship they have with indigenous wildlife. Photographing both is a favorite pastime.



Kathryn aptly sums up her philosophy: "There are so many things I love and so many ways I want to contribute. There are only so many hours in the day and I just can't get around to everything and everybody, but there's such joy in what I'm doing. I think when you really love something and have passion for it, you just want to keep going from one thing to the next. It makes me wake up every morning with a smile on my face." Well spoken, Kathryn. I couldn't have worded it any better.

2020 Garden Tour Sneak Peak

Rockin' B's Creekside Wilderness

BY GAY CAMPBELL

*Editor's Note: For the next few months, we will share a sneak peak of this year's Garden Tour locations.
Be prepared to see some colorful and creative gardens.*

For those interested in water conservation (and what Texan isn't!), Rockin' B's Creekside Wilderness is a must see. The homeowners' 750-gallon rain barrel collection system is sure to educate and inspire.

This large property includes a workshop and tractor shed, native bee and bluebird houses, raised vegetable beds, and at least thirteen rose bushes. In addition to the native trees original to the property, you will also find Japanese maples, red oak, white oak, bald cypress, a candlestick tree, and a redbud. Even more interesting are the peach, fig, sugar apple, and ice cream banana trees. Just reading about them is certain to make your mouth water!



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The homeowners' favorite feature is a raised bed that does double-duty as a pollinator garden and a drainage-control berm. This area features blackberries, blueberries, vitex, butterfly nectar and caterpillar host plants, as well as many other pollinator-friendly varieties.

Plan to spend some time at the Rockin' B, where you're sure to find something to peak your interest, or your appetite!



Plant of the Month - Mexican Buckeye

BY LEE ANN YATES

Spring is fast approaching and so is the DCMGA Plant Sale (May 2!). Do you have your list ready? You simply must make an amendment because I've got a fiesta of a shrubby tree this month you will want to add – Mexican Buckeye (*Ungnadia speciosa*). This shrub was named after Baron Ferdinand von Ugnad, the Austrian ambassador to Constantinople in the 14th century.

These cold hardy and heat-tolerant, drought-resistant plants have something beautiful and interesting going on in all seasons. From March to June, Mexican Buckeyes produce the cutest clusters of pink, highly fragrant flowers at the same time light bronze leaflets begin to show; in summer, they are covered in lush, dark green, glossy leaves that look similar to but are smaller than a pecan leaf. They turn bright golden yellow in the fall, just glowing in your landscape. Come winter, the tri-valve seedpods, which kind of look like figs, hang on branches giving the tree interest. The seeds and their capsules are why this plant is called a buckeye, even though genetically it is not a true Buckeye (*Aesculus glabra*), as anyone from the Buckeye State can attest. Mexican Buckeye is the lone member of its genus, so plant a few to keep them from being lonely!



Photo Courtesy Carole Rey,
Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

Mexican Buckeye Blossoms

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Photo Courtesy Joseph A Marcus,
Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

Mexican Buckeye

Plant Placement

This large multi-trunked shrub (15 foot tall by 8 foot wide) can be trained into a small to medium tree (up to 30 foot by 12 foot) by choosing a central trunk to keep and pruning all others off at the base. In your landscape, use Mexican Buckeyes as an eye-catching focal point or specimen plant. They make a good screening plant also if planted in drifts or along a fence or wall. It is deciduous, so keep that in mind if using as a screen or background shrub. They like to spread outward over time, so they are not good to plant near a street, sidewalk, or curb and be aware how close to a building you place it.

Mexican Buckeye will grow taller in full Texas sun with more water, but will stay smaller in a shadier, slightly drier spot. Native to Texas from west of the Brazos River to as far east as Denton and Dallas counties,

Mexican Buckeye (Cont.)

Mexican Buckeye will grow in all soil types – rocky, sandy, loamy, to clay and limestone caliche. It is resistant to Cotton Root Rot, which is good news in areas where that can be a serious problem. Several websites claim there are no pest or disease problems at all with Mexican Buckeye. Isn't this a great plant?!

Poisonous Seeds

The seeds are large, shiny, and black, about half an inch in diameter, but they are poisonous to people and pets. Livestock and deer generally leave it alone because of leaf toxicity. Bees, on the other hand, love the flower clusters and produce a fragrant honey from the nectar. Butterflies and moths love the nectar as well, and Mexican Buckeye is a larval host for Henrys Elfin butterflies! Some birds and small mammals can eat the seeds.

Those big shiny seeds are pretty easy to propagate, so you can spread the beauty around! Gather them from August through October when the capsules turn dark reddish brown, begin to open on their own, and the seeds are black and hard. Remove the seeds from the capsules, air dry for a few days, then plant in warm soil directly in the ground or tall pots as they have a long initial root. They will take about three weeks to germinate. If you cannot plant soon after gathering, store them in a paper bag at room temperature for a few weeks. For longer storage, refrigerate the seeds in the paper bags, but they won't keep for long periods of time.

Start the fiesta – plant some Mexican Buckeyes and bring color and interest to your landscape. Then propagate some of those beautiful seeds and spread the party around! The Plant Sale is imminent and there will be Mexican Buckeyes waiting for you to take them home. And the list goes on and on and on.... Happy Planning!!

Resources

Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

<https://www.wildflower.org/>

"Ungnadia speciosa"

https://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id_plant=unsp

TexasSmartScape

<http://www.txsmartscape.com/index.php>

"Buckeye, Mexican Details" – <http://www.txsmartscape.com/plant-search/plant-details.php?id=281>

Texas A&M AgriLife

Texas Native Plants Database – "Mexican Buckeye"

<https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/ornamentals/nativeshrubs/ungnadiaspecio.htm>

Texas A&M Forest Service

"Trees of Texas" – <http://texastreeid.tamu.edu/content/TreeDetails/?id=129>



Photo Courtesy Bruce Leander,
Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

Tri-Valve Seedpods

Lifetime Member Award



Photo Courtesy DCMGA Media Team

Our thanks and congratulations to Janie Farley as she received her Lifetime Member badge from CEA-Horticulture Janet Laminack and Past-President Pat Moyer.

It used to be that people had gardens and traded vegetables for eggs. Neighbors knew that the beef they had for dinner ate the grass from that pasture “right over there.” Today, many kids think food comes from the grocery store, period. Some kids know more than that. Adults aren’t always much better. Something as necessary and precious as food is worth knowing about. Perhaps you are interested in learning more about the path of your food from farm to table. Or are you interested in trying your hand at growing or raising your own food? Maybe you’ve even thought about starting an agricultural enterprise. Texas A & M AgriLife Extension Horticulture Team has created a new educational program “Taste 360° – Freshness Meets Table” to answer these questions. This inaugural conference will be held March 20-21, 2020 in College Station, TX



Go to: <https://taste360.tamu.edu/> for details!
Taste 360 - Freshness Meets Table, March 20 - 21

Spring Vegetable Gardening

BY BARBARA BROWN

Gardeners can feel the excitement in the air as the days begin to gradually lengthen and warm. They know that it is almost time to plant their vegetable garden—lettuce, spinach, tomatoes, peppers, beans, eggplant and more. Is there a way to improve your chances of having a delicious garden harvest? Yes! The keys to gardening success are taking care of the soil first and then choosing the most-likely-to-succeed cultivars and planting at the right time.

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Photo Courtesy DCMGA Member Barbara Brown

Early Spring Cool-Weather Vegetables

including potatoes, onions, cabbage, radishes, beets, and lettuce.

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Getting Ready

Before you plant, make sure your soil provides essential plant nutrients. Vegetable garden soil should be a rich brown color and easy to work even with your hands. To learn if your soil needs amendments, have it tested. The AgriLife Soil, Water and Forage Testing Laboratory offers a comprehensive soil evaluation service (see Resources) or you can choose an independent laboratory or self-testing tool. Then, follow the report's recommendations for amending your soil.

Early March is a good time to remove weeds from your garden area and to integrate organic compost materials into the soil. Adding composted material improves moisture retention and provides vital plant nutrients. If using drip irrigation or soaker hoses, set those up and for large gardening areas, place walking paths to minimize soil compression near plant roots.

When To Plant

Cool-weather crops such as salad greens, onions, broccoli, and cauliflower can still be planted in early March, while warm weather vegetables do best when planted in mid-to-late March. Selecting the right time to plant warm-weather crops often requires playing dodge ball with the fickle Texas weather. Too early and there is a good chance of a frost or freeze that will kill small seedlings. Too late and

Spring Vegetable Gardening (Cont.)

there is not enough time for produce to ripen before the onslaught of summer heat. Although garden centers may be offering warm-weather vegetable transplants as soon as March 1, that is too early to put warm-weather seedlings in the garden unless you have season extenders like frost cloth or a hoop house to protect them from cold temperatures. For the record, March 18 is the average frost-free date for North Texas. That means there is still a 50% chance of having a cold weather event. By April 6, there is a 90% chance of no more frost or freezing temperatures.

Measuring soil temperature is one way to help decide if it is okay to plant warm-season vegetables. Warm-season vegetable transplants prefer a soil temperature of around 60 degrees Fahrenheit taken over several days. Beans and squash, when planted from seed, prefer soil temperatures closer to 70 degrees.

An alternative to soil temperature testing relies on plant-by-dates such as outlined in the "Recommended Planting Dates for North Texas" document available online (see Resources).

What Variety To Plant

Although it is wise to grow vegetables your family will eat, experimenting with a few new vegetables can be fun. Local nurseries and garden centers usually offer several options for each type of vegetable. Using the county-specific varietal selector from AgriLife helps make likely-to-succeed choices (see Resources).

The favorite home garden vegetable of North Texas gardeners is tomatoes. Because there are so many tomato cultivars available, choosing the best two or three varieties can be daunting. In general, it is better to select tomatoes whose mature size is small to medium rather than choosing very large slicer tomatoes, such as Beefsteak.

Why is it so challenging to grow very large tomatoes in North Texas? The short answer is the potentially high temperatures in late May and June. The temperature affects a growth factor called days to maturity. Among tomato varieties, this factor varies from 60 to 90 days. According to the Cornell University Extension Service, "The optimum temperature for ripening tomatoes is 70 to 75F. When temperatures



Photo Courtesy DCMGA Member Barbara Brown

Young Tomato Plants

with their cages wrapped to protect them from spring winds until the plant's roots are firmly established

Spring Vegetable Gardening (Cont.)

exceed 85 to 90 degrees, the ripening process slows significantly or even stops." Because small- to medium-sized varieties usually mature more quickly than very large tomatoes, they are more likely to succeed in North Texas. If you want to grow a very large tomato variety, then try it. However, it is a good idea to include some smaller varieties to be sure you'll have good, ripe tomatoes.

Denton Master Gardeners provide more information to help you succeed in growing your vegetables on our website under "North Texas Gardening."

Grow It To Show It

Save the date: June 20, 2020. That is the date of the Denton County Master Gardener Association's annual Fruit, Vegetable, Herb and Flower Show. Each year, residents of Denton County are invited to bring their prized produce to compete for prizes in adult and children categories. More information about this event will be posted on the DCMGA website this spring. So, get ready, get set, and go! You can do this and you will be glad you did!

Recommended Resources:

Denton County Master Gardener Association (DCMGA)

<https://dcmga.com/>

North Texas Gardening

<https://dcmga.com/north-texas-gardening/>

Texas A&M AgriLife

"Vegetable Variety Selector"

https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/publications/veg_variety/

"Recommended Planting Dates for North Texas"

http://agrilifecd.n.tamu.edu/urbantarranthorticulture/files/2010/06/Recommended_Planting_Dates_for_North_Texas1.pdf

"AgriLife Extension Soil, Water and Forage Testing Laboratory"

<http://soiltesting.tamu.edu/>



DCMGA YouTube Channel

We need your help!

When we reach 100 subscribers to our new DCMGA YouTube Channel, we can apply for a "named" channel, rather than the current crazy long unreadable one.

So, go check it out and while there, please subscribe.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCtNGrhH1hopNTVcMNNuyi2A>

Garden Visits *A Peek into Paradise*

BY TREVA MCFADDEN

Editor's Note: When Master Gardeners travel, they like to visit other gardens. This new column gives you the opportunity to "visit" a garden you might not otherwise see. We hope you will enjoy this occasional column.

Fortune favored me and I was able to spend a month amid Paradise, a.k.a. Hawaii. Maui is my happy place. One of my favorite outings, other than the sunrise on Haleakala, was visiting the Upcountry and Ali'i Kula Lavender Farm. This lavender farm provides twenty varieties of lavender for wholesale and retail use. It also boasts one of the most beautiful organic fruit, flower, and succulent gardens I've ever seen. I missed the lavender as they had just harvested a few days before my arrival, but I toured the layout and saw how they used the slope of the volcano to set up a permaculture 'wave' to slow and sink rain.



Photos Courtesy DCMGA Member Treva McFadden

Top Left, Clockwise: Banksia, Aeonium "Black Rose," Rudbeckia hirta, Magnolia, and Protea.

The property has a gift shop with souvenirs and food items made from the lavender and fruit in the garden. The Lavender Lemonade is divine. A walk down a path flanked by citrus trees leads you to an intoxicating fragrance of magnolia from a Sweet Bay she purchased at a local box store. Annual and perennial flowers are planted amongst native tropical flora and the property even has a small apple grove. Soil improvement is minimal with compost, as the soil structure is fertile in the Upcountry region. It also receives more rain and cooling winds than the coastal areas, so it's a prime micro-climate for cultivation. This property is teeming with Aloha aina (love of the land) through all who tend it. If your journeys should ever take you to Maui, make this a sure stop on your adventures.

Spring Gardening Season has begun!

Got a yummy fruit, prized vegetable,
specialty herb, or flawless flower in
your garden?

As you begin your spring seed sowing, consider choosing a variety to grow and enter in our 2020 Fruit, Vegetable, Herb & Flower Show!

Bring your free entry on Saturday, June 20, 2020 at 9 am to the Front Lawn of the Historic Bayless-Selby House in Denton.

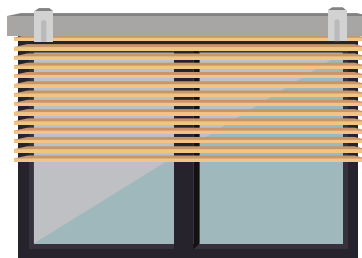
Cash prizes will be awarded for both Youth and Adults in several categories including Best in Show.

Happy Gardening!



Mini-Blinds Wanted

Do you have some used mini-blinds that are destined for the trash? Did your neighbor set out mini-blinds for trash pick-up when they moved out?



The Plant Sale Committee can use any and all mini-blinds for Plant Sale ID stakes. They are also in need of trays and pots. If you have some to donate, contact Bob Bender through VMS.

The Gift of a Garden Tour

BY TREVA MCFADDEN, DIR. OF COMMUNICATIONS-PROMOTIONS

DCMGA's annual Garden Tour is fast approaching. These gardens feature some of the best practices in horticulture and landscaping our county has to offer. This year's gardens are in North Denton County in the cities of Aubrey and Pilot Point and offer a look at a more rural approach to gardening. We also have the pleasure of offering guided tours by members of the Elm Fork chapter of Master Naturalists at two of the properties. There will also be local vendors available to sell you some great items for your garden or just to enjoy.

Don't let the rural setting prevent you from gleaning great ideas for your more urban landscapes. There is great opportunity for you to find just the right plant choices or the ideal gardening technique to make your garden flourish. There will be plenty of Master Gardeners available to inform and educate you on any questions or ideas you may have at every garden site. Even though we want you to ooh and ahh at the offerings at our locations, we're here to educate you on best practices and choices as well.



2020 DCMGA Garden Tour Oohs and Ahhs

These tours are self-guided, so where you start and where you end is completely up to you. We have Early Bird ticket pricing beginning on February 19th through March 31st at just \$10 per ticket.

Prices increase to \$15 April 1st through May 8th and will be \$20 at the door on May 9th.

Mark your calendar today for this fun, family friendly, rain or shine event showcasing Denton County's best and local vendors.

Go to our website www.dcmga.com/upcomingevents for tickets and garden locations.

Table For Two On A Warm Winter Afternoon

BY KATHRYN WELLS

Once upon a time, I was on the hunt for these smiling little common dandelions in my landscape. I thoughtlessly but intentionally pulled them out by their long taproots, delighted on the rare occasions when a root removed easily and completely from the soil, but, more often than not, bending down with a small trowel to finish the job when the root broke mid-tug. It was quite a job as there were (and still are) hundreds of them on our property.

Then I noticed how much life they support, including tiny bees, almost imperceptible to us humans towering five and six feet above them. With a new-found epiphany that dandelions offer sustenance to these small pollinators when not much else is blooming, I resolved to embrace and leave them wherever they raised their pretty heads.

But, I counterintuitively decided I would remove the seed heads when the blooms faded. If you've ever tried to time a dandelion's transformation from flower to seed, it's a tricky calculation. Almost instantaneously, ordinary yellow blooms transform into fluffy white parachutes, ready to carry seed far and wide ... to infinity and beyond. Yet, remove them I tried, feeling charitable in my choice to at least leave the blooms, reasoning that enough seed would still spread to make new blooms for the next cycle.

Then, one winter morning, I noticed dozens of little sparrows dotting the ground, darting here and there devouring those dandelion seeds, delighted to find an all-they-could-eat breakfast buffet on a cold, gray day. Chagrined, I realized that I'd been robbing wildlife of nourishment at every turn just to uphold some kind of conventional cultural standard that proclaimed dandelions were unsightly weeds.



Photos Courtesy DCMGA Member
Kathryn Wells



I am a Master Gardener, but I am also a Master Naturalist—a lover of the land and of all creatures great and small. So, my home is now the one with dry flower stalks still standing in which native bees nest, with fallen leaves carpeting the ground under which cocoons and little insects overwinter, and with fallen limbs stacked to form a cozy seasonal hideaway in which my small residents and visitors dwell. Oh, and depending on the day (and the time), my landscape is spotted with ground-hugging yellow flowers. Or wind-driven white fluff. Or both. With a bounty of life thriving among and within.

Texas Master Gardener Association 2020 State Conference



Blooming on the Brazos

May 12th - 14th

Waco, McLennan County

Registration is now open

\$265 (from 3/1 to 4/22)

A one-day pass is available for \$80, including lunch

Register online

<https://txmg.org/conference/>

For state information & to sign up for the monthly TMGA newsletter

<https://txmg.org>

General Public is Welcome to Attend!



DCMGA Members: It's Pass Along Time!

Need to thin out a high performing or self seeding plant? Consider passing it along to the plant sale.

Start marking plants and making notes on plant name, sun, and water needs.

Ask neighbors and friends for miniblinds they're discarding for use as plant markers.

2020 Plant Sale: May 2nd, 9 am to 2pm or sell out

Trinity UMC, 633 Hobson Ln., Denton





DCMGA Project News

What's Growing On

BY JOANNE SPURGIN



Volunteer Opportunity Fair

Thank you to everyone who made this year's Volunteer Opportunity Fair a success. Over 171 people signed in and visited the 47 booths represented by the various community educational projects DCMGA supports. The extra space from having the fair in Global Spheres' multi-purpose room was wonderful and Global Spheres was so accommodating and easy to work with.

Friends of Shiloh Garden-Shiloh Field

Winter vegetables such as carrots, lettuce, cabbage, broccoli, mustard greens, and green onions are currently being harvested at Friends of Shiloh Garden-Shiloh Field. New winter veggies including more onions, potatoes, lettuces, and carrots are planted each week. Shiloh Field's goal is to help feed those that are hungry, so all harvested veggies are donated to fourteen different agencies in the Denton area. Project Manager Cindy Helm welcomes all volunteers to harvest and maintain the community gardens of Shiloh Field located at 1650 Nottingham Drive in Denton. For additional information, their website page is <http://www.shilohfield.com> or follow them on Facebook @friendsofshilohgarden.



Shilo Field PM
Cindy Helm

Help Desk:

We hope you checked out the Help Desk at the Volunteer Opportunity Fair. In fact, several interns were at a recent meeting where Ann Hillman and Pam Spooner worked through several questions received through the Help Desk email by explaining why, where, and how to research, document, and answer the email. Topics discussed were on plant identification, weeds, and vegetables. Great discussions by all! With spring just around the corner, there are many questions on growing fruit trees, dealing with pre-emergent issues, and the infamous weed and feed guidelines. Volunteering for the Help Desk is a great way to learn and have the luxury of working at home to get your hours in. Email the Help Desk if you have questions: master.gardener@dentoncounty.com.

FMFB Community Garden

Team Project Managers David Huffman and Carol Noble will be hosting an "opening" event (workday) on Thursday, March 19 at 9 AM. Weather permitting, their regular workdays are on Thursday mornings from 9 AM - 11 AM, starting on March 19. The FMFB Community Garden is located at 1901 Timber Creek in Flower Mound.



*MGer Continuing Education (CE),
(formerly Advanced Training)
and also DCMGA Public Presentations*

Our members share their science-based knowledge
and experience on a variety of topics.



DCMGA

March 11, 11:00 am - 12:00 noon

Iris Expert Tips and Tricks - Learn tips and tricks from an Iris Expert immediately following our business meeting. 1 hour CE.

Location: AgriLife Extension Office, 401 W. Hickory St. Denton, Room 115.



AgriLife and Keep The Colony Beautiful

March 11, 6:30 pm - 7:30 pm

Texan Plants - Learn how to integrate and grow native wildflowers, trees, shrubs and perennials into your garden. Learn soil preparation and maintenance tips. Event contact name: Kathy Rainey.

Location: City Hall Annex, 6804 Main Street, The Colony



Garden Secrets series, Keep Lewisville Beautiful

March 12, 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Herb Gardening - Free, but pre-registration is required by emailing info@keeplewisvillebeautiful.org or calling 972-538-5949.

Location: MCL Grand, 100 N Charles St. Lewisville



Aubrey Area Gardening Series

March 19, 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm

Trees - Speaker - Pat Moyer. Event contact name: Barbie Dane.

Location: 226 Countryside Drive, Aubrey



DCMGA

March 20, 10:00 am - 11:30 am

Recurring event: April 17, May 15, June 19, August 21st, September 18, and October 16th.

Water Conservation- Wet, Wild and Wonderful - Explore new and creative ways to use and manage water in the landscape. Develop water educational tools for use at public events.

Location: AgriLife Extension Office, 401 W. Hickory St. Denton, Room 507

**BY HELP DESK TEAM**

Q: My Texas A&M soil test showed a very high level of phosphorus (301). The report recommended avoiding "phosphorus-containing fertilizers and organics." I have put a lot of tree leaves on my garden this year, and I have used Dynolite for mulch in past years. Are those items considered "organics" and will they increase the phosphorus levels in my garden?

A: Leaves are considered "organics," so they will add phosphorus to your soil, as will the Dynolite, which is composted organic matter (yard waste). These organic sources of phosphorus require soil microbes to transform them into a more readily available inorganic form of the element. This "mineralization" takes time, meaning your soil will have high levels of residual phosphorus for a few years. Bear in mind that North Texas soil characteristically maintains a significant phosphorus content, but not nearly as high as your current reading.

Have your soil tested annually, and you should see the phosphorus concentration decrease. In the meantime, do not add ANY organic matter (compost, leaves, manure, "soil conditioners"). Only use fertilizers with a "guaranteed analysis" on the product label,

at the rate and with the contents based on the soil test recommendations. In your case, the center number, indicating phosphorus, should be "0."

Correcting iron and/or zinc deficiency requires a foliar treatment, rather than a soil amendment. A number of commercially available products exist for this purpose. Completely follow all label instructions and warnings. Soak plant material just to the point of runoff. Be careful when using iron-containing products, as they can discolor concrete, paint, brick, etc.

Due to the wonderfully detailed information provided, this answer couldn't be printed in its entirety here, but please link to our Facebook post for additional information and resources:

<https://www.facebook.com/DentonCountyMGA/posts/3826984187342217>.

And, as always, please explore our website for a wealth of gardening education, information, and upcoming events: www.dcmga.com.



Stock Photo Courtesy of Canva

If you have questions about soil health or any other horticulture-related subjects, please contact our Master Gardener Help Desk at 940.349.2892 or master.gardener@dentoncounty.com.

It's free of charge, and it's our pleasure to assist you.



TEXAS
MASTER GARDENER
TEXAS A&M AGRI LIFE EXTENSION
Denton County

DENTON COUNTY
MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION

March 2020

GENERAL MEETING & PROGRAM

*Featuring Presenter Dell Perry
of Seandel Iris Gardens*

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11, 2020
JOSEPH A. CARROLL BUILDING, ROOM 115
401 W. HICKORY STREET, DENTON
10:00 AM - 12 NOON
PRE-MEETING SOCIAL AT 9:30 AM
FREE & OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension is an equal opportunity employer and program provider. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas cooperating. Persons with disabilities needing accommodations for effective participation in the meeting should contact Denton AgriLife Extension office at least a week in advance to request mobility, visual, hearing, or other assistance.



2020 GREATER AUBREY AREA GARDENING SERIES

**Jump start your 2020 gardening with this
free educational series.**



JANUARY 16
Veggie
Gardening 101
Dana Bays



AUGUST 20
Waterwise
Gardening
Shirlee & Cloud Singer



FEBRUARY 20
Texas Plants
AgriLife TBD



SEPTEMBER 17
Roses
Pat & Don Edwards



MARCH 19
Texas Trees
Pat Moyer



OCTOBER 15
Pots in Small Spots:
Container Gardening
AgriLife TBD

AUBREY AREA LIBRARY

226 Countryside Drive
Aubrey, TX 76227

Register via email to
kab@KeepAubreyBeautiful.org
or via phone at 940-343-1313.

6:00 PM - 7:00 PM

**Third Thursday: Jan, Feb, & March
and August, September & October**

SPONSORED BY

**KEEP
AUBREY
BEAUTIFUL**



KEEP AMERICA BEAUTIFUL AFFILIATE

Keep Lewisville Beautiful Presents...

2020 Garden Secrets Classes

Join Keep Lewisville Beautiful and City of Lewisville for FREE community classes led by Denton County Master Gardeners and The Texas Agrilife Extension Office. **Classes are free but seats are limited . RSVP is required.**

All classes will be held at the MCL Grand
(100 N Charles St, 75057).

RSVP REQUIRED: 972-538-5949
info@keeplewisvillebeautiful.org



The mission of Keep Lewisville Beautiful is to engage the citizens of Lewisville through service and education to enhance their community environment.



Keep Lewisville
Beautiful



WATER
UNIVERSITY



RSVP: 972-538-5949

keeplewisvillebeautiful.org

info@keeplewisvillebeautiful.org



2020 CHILDREN'S GARDEN AT FAIROAKS

An Opportunity for Families to Learn Gardening Together

The children's garden invites parents & their children to learn about gardening through planting, maintaining, & harvesting vegetables & herbs. Our children's garden is unique since we share the garden with Fair Oaks, a senior independent living community. We will be planting in the vegetable garden at the back of Fair Oaks with the residents--a wonderful opportunity for children and seniors to experience a growing garden together.

WHERE

Fairoaks
1950 Lattimore St., Denton

WHEN

Thursday mornings from 10:00-11:00 starting March
19th until the Veggie Show on Saturday, June 20th

WHO

Dana Bays
Bill White

DATE

Thursday, March 19
Thursday, March 26
Thursday, April 2
Thursday, April 9
Thursday, April 16
Thursday, April 23
Thursday, April 30
Thursday, May 7
Thursday, May 14
Thursday, May 21
Thursday, May 28
Thursday, June 4
Thursday, June 11
Thursday, June 18
Saturday, June 20

ACTIVITY

Planting
Planting
Planting
Planting
Planting
Planting
Planting
Planting
Trees
Check on Residents Gardens
Field Trip to Shiloh Gardens (Weather Permitting)
All Check Residents Gardens
Harvesting
Fruit, Vegetable, Herb, & Flower Show

DEMO/TOPIC

How to Plant
Tops and Bottoms
Shade-Sun Stickers
How to Compost
How to Grow Microgreens
How to Grow in a Greenhouse
Butterflies in the Garden
How to Compost with Worms
Ladybugs in the Garden
How to Maintain Trees
Suck-a-Bug

2020 Vegetable, Fruit, Herb, & Flower show is June 20th from 9am to 1pm at Denton
Community Marketplace, 317 W Mulberry St, Denton, TX 76201

The weather determines what we are able to plant each week, but our planting includes radishes, carrots, potatoes, spinach, lettuce, chard, squash, peas, beans, tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, onions, herbs, watermelon, and cantaloupe. We will also be harvesting throughout the season.

PLEASE PARK ON LATTIMORE STREET. IN THE EVENT OF RAIN, THE CHILDREN'S GARDEN WILL NOT MEET.

For additional information, visit us on facebook: DENTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION
or online: www.dcmga.com



Texas A&M AgriLife Extension is an equal opportunity employer and program provider.
The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating





DENTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION

Annual Plant Sale

**SATURDAY,
May 2, 2020**

9:00 A.M. - 2:00 P.M. or Until sellout!!

**Trinity United Methodist Church
633 Hobson Lane, Denton**

Bring your own wagon or cart so you can take home as many of these wonderful plants as your garden can hold.

☛ Texas native plants, tough-as-nails perennials and no-fuss roses

☛ Hard-to-find ground covers, bedding plants and herbs

☛ Special container plants

☛ Pass-along plants from Master Gardeners' own gardens

☛ Master Gardeners available to help you make your selections and answer your gardening questions

For more information, visit our website at dcmga.com, like us on FACEBOOK or call (940)349-2883

"Texas A&M AgriLife Extension provides equal opportunities in its programs and employment to all persons, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, or gender identity. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating"

DENTON COUNTY
MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION

2020 Garden Tour

SATURDAY, MAY 9, 2020

9 AM TO 4 PM

Four Delightful Denton County Gardens

A favorite family-friendly event you don't want to miss!
Inspiration abounds on self-guided tours of four unique North
Denton County private properties with Master Gardeners onsite to
provide education and information.

Two properties include an optional Nature Walk guided by volunteers
from the Texas Master Naturalist - Elm Fork Chapter.
Closed-toe shoes are recommended.

Vendors of unique garden-related items at one location!

Early-Bird tickets are available Feb. 19th thru March 31st for \$10.
Regular ticket price of \$15 is effective April 1st thru May 8th.
At-Door tickets will be available on May 9th for \$20.

Go to www.dcmga.com/upcomingevents
for tickets as well as property information and locations.



#GrowWithUs



@DentonCountyMGA

DENTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION

2020 Events

Denton County Speaker Series:

Aubrey: Jan. 16 - Oct. 15

Flower Mound: Feb. 3, 10, 17, 24

Lewisville: Jan. - Nov.

Children's Garden: March - June

Design Your Yard Class: Jan. 23-25

Plant Sale: May 2

Garden Tour: May 9

Junior Master Gardener Camp:

June 8-12

Fruit, Vegetable, Herb, and

Flower Show: June 20

Design Your Yard Class: Aug. 27-29

Fall Garden Fest: Oct. 3

DCMGA New Member Round Up: Oct. 13



DCMGA.COM



Mission Statement

Denton County Master Gardener Association educates and engages county residents in the implementation of research-based horticultural and environmental practices that create sustainable gardens, landscapes, and communities.

Extension EO/EEO Statement

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension provides equal opportunities in its programs and employment to all persons, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, or gender identity. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating.

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Vice-President - Outreach	Kathy Rainey
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Social Media

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/DentonCountyMGA>

Instagram:

<https://www.instagram.com/DentonCountyMGA>

Twitter:

<https://twitter.com/@DentonCountyMGA>

Pinterest:

<https://www.pinterest.com/DentonCountyMGA>

YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCtNGrhH1hopNTVcMNnUyi2A>

Save the Date

March 11	General Meeting
April 8	General Meeting
May 2	Plant Sale
May 9	Garden Tour
May 12 - 14	TMGA Annual Conference, Waco

Contact Information

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension
Joseph A. Carroll Building
401 W. Hickory Street
Suite 112
Denton TX 76201-9026

Office: 940.349.2883

Help Desk:

940.349.2892

master.gardener@dentoncounty.com

Webmaster:

dcmga.webmaster@gmail.com

Communications:

dcmga.communications@gmail.com

Website:

<https://dcmga.com>

Content

Submission deadline for the April edition of *The Root* is Sunday, March 15. Submissions may be revised at the discretion of the editor.

Ideas, photos, and articles are welcome and may be submitted to Editor Karen Gibson at karenhoot19@gmail.com or Communications Director Liz Moyer at lizmoyer@live.com.

All photos are courtesy of DCMGA Media Team unless otherwise attributed.