

Denton County Master Gardener Association

# THE ROOT

Grow With Us



Photo Courtesy DCMGA Member Lea Sage Watson

## Buds From The Board

BY KATHRYN WELLS, PRESIDENT

Happy July, friends. As summer unfolds, many of our face-to-face activities, events, and meetings continue to be virtual experiences. And, while our in-person activities are limited, we are grateful for the technology that keeps us connected and allows us to advance our mission of educating and engaging our outstanding community.

We continue to harvest fresh produce through our community garden projects, contributing our bounty to area food pantries, where needs have dramatically increased during the COVID-19 pandemic due to job losses, food shortages, and price increases. Immediate Past President and Community Garden Consultation Team Project Manager Pat Moyer is spearheading our Association's response and coordinating community efforts; please see his article in this issue of *The Root* for information on how you can participate.

Our Help Desk continues to answer a record-breaking number of questions, and Project Manager Ann Hillmann was recently featured on a Texas A&M AgriLife videoconference to share our DCMGA Help Desk practices and protocols with other Master Gardener Associations throughout the state.

**CONNECT WITH US ON THE WEB**  
<https://dcmga.com>

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## Buds From The Board (Cont.)

We've (mostly) mastered videoconferencing for our monthly General Meetings, and, in addition to the livestream, replays of the business meetings and CE programs are available on our [DCMGA YouTube channel](#). Our July 8th meeting features Daniel Cunningham from Texas A&M Water University, who will present "Going Green by Saving Blue: A Virtual Tour of the Plantings at the Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center at Dallas." Make plans to join us, as it's sure to be good to the last drop! The meeting is open to the public and free of charge; **please note that [advance registration is required](#) for both members and guests.**

At our July 8th meeting, we also look forward to recognizing those members who have achieved milestone awards for cumulative service. So tune in; one of those members may be you!

Denton County Master Gardeners and Denton County residents—thank you for growing with us. This year certainly remains interesting and challenging; may you continue to be safe and sound with every protection and provision. I hope to see you soon.

*Kathryn*



# Denton County Master Gardeners - You Have The Power to Help Us Feed the Hungry!

BY PAT MOYER

Among the many consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic is the impact to Denton County communities in job loss. This job loss, for even a temporary period, has the domino effect on the ability of people to pay for basics, like housing, health care, and food.

Denton County, under Judge Eads, has requested Covid-19 related grants from the Federal Government to help the residents of the county make it through this tough time. While the majority of the \$154 Million that has been requested goes toward a variety of County Related Covid-19 expenses, housing assistance, and local business loans, it also includes funding for food programs.

The food programs part of the funding includes support of the various food banks/pantries throughout Denton County. This is the point where DCMGA has the ability to help Denton County in this effort.

Judge Eads has asked the Master Gardeners, through Janet Laminack, the County Horticultural Extension Agent, to generate ideas to assist the county. One area where we felt we could help was by asking our members to do what they do best and share, specifically grow produce.

***You don't have a garden just for yourself. You have it to share.***  
~ Augusta Carter



Photo Courtesy DCMGA Member Cindy Helm

**CEA-Hort Janet Laminack**  
donated fresh oregano and flat-leaf parsley from her own backyard garden to supplement the collections at Shiloh Field Community Garden.

In many ways DCMGA projects are already doing this:

- The Children's Garden at Fair Oaks Senior Living Center – Produce from the garden is donated to the residents.
- Shiloh Gardens – DCMGA assists the Friends of Shiloh in its mission of providing produce to several Denton area food pantries and kitchens.
- Flower Mound First Baptist Community Garden – DCMGA assists the church in providing produce to Christian Community Action (CCA) in Lewisville.
- The Grove at the Sandy Jacobs Government Center – Fruit production from the orchard is being provided to a local food pantry.



## Help Us Feed the Hungry! (Cont.)

The issue this effort didn't address was a means for individual DCMGA members to make similar produce contributions. We asked the Project Managers for Shiloh Gardens (Cindy Helms) and Flower Mound First Baptist (David Huffman and Carol Noble) to allow us to "piggyback" member contributions on their respective project workdays. They, graciously, accepted. So now members have a way of sharing their produce without having to search out a food pantry in their local area!

Going forward we have several other initiatives that we want to establish to make this process as easy and inclusive as possible.

- Open the contributions at Shiloh Gardens and Flower Mound First Baptist to all gardeners.
- Develop a comprehensive list of Food Pantries/Community Kitchens with hours of operation to allow direct donation of produce from gardeners.
- Develop a comprehensive list of Denton County Community Gardens to let us share our plans and encourage their participation in this effort.

Stay tuned. There will be announcements for each of these initiatives as they are released. There will be internal DCMGA messages as well as announcements in both the public and private DCMGA Facebook sites.

If you have already made produce contributions at either Shiloh Gardens or Flower Mound First Baptist, we say "Thank You and we hope you'll continue." If you haven't contributed yet, and you have produce to share, please consider us.



Photo Courtesy DCMGA Media Team

### **Ron Marchant,**

Denton County Commissioner for Precinct 2 greets Kathy Rainey, DCMGA Vice President for Outreach and The Grove Project Co-Manager on a chilly day in March 2019.

Located at Sandy Jacobs Government Center Annex, volunteers at the fruit and nut grove recently harvested seasonal blackberries for area food banks.

The inspiring video may be seen [via this official link on the Denton County, TX Facebook page.](#)

## Help Us Feed the Hungry! (Cont.)

### DCMGA Contributions at Shiloh Gardens and Flower Mound First Baptist Church

What we're looking for:

- Vegetables (including root vegetables and leafy greens), Fruit and Herbs. FMFB is also accepting canned goods.
  - Clean the produce as if you're going to use it.
    - ~ use running water,
    - ~ remove any soil
- Place the produce by type in a container
  - Use zip-lock type bags or grocery store produce bags or disposable grocery bags
  - Leave the bags unclosed (don't zip the bags or tie the tops)
  - Mark the bags with the contents, particularly for produce that may not be easily identifiable (greens and herbs)
- Deliver the produce - Be prepared to follow the site's social distancing protocols (bring a mask and gloves, just in case).
  - Flower Mound First Baptist Community Garden, 1901 Timber Creek Rd, Flower Mound, TX (David Huffman/Carol Noble - Co Project Managers)
    - ~ Thursdays between 9:00 and 9:30
  - Shiloh Community Garden, 1650 Nottingham Dr, Denton, TX 76209
    - ~ Mondays and Thursdays between 7:00 and 9:00
- (Optional) Stick around, enjoy the company and the garden. Maybe pull a few weeds.

As you plan your fall garden, consider planting an extra row for the hungry. July is the time for planting tomatoes and pumpkins for the fall harvest, and soon it will be time to sow those lettuce, spinach, and radish seeds too!

We can make a real difference in someone's life doing what we love. Don't miss this opportunity!



Photo Courtesy DCMGA Member David Huffman

### FMFB Community Garden

Project Co-Manager Carol Noble is a friendly face (even behind her mask!) at the designated donation drop-off station in Flower Mound.

## Plant of the Month - Growing Tomatoes In the Fall

BY LEE ANN YATES

In my humble opinion, one of the greatest comedians on Earth was George Carlin (it's a toss-up between him and Robin Williams). Carlin did a great rant about the tomato. He declared it looked as if it was finished, but there was a problem – the tomato wasn't finished on the inside! It was still full of seeds and "goo." Carlin claimed tomatoes looked like they were in their larval stage. This struck a chord with me – YES! EXACTLY! Tomatoes are gross. However, many do not feel that revulsion and for some reason I can't fathom, they LOVE tomatoes – red, yellow, pink, purple, even green, mini, cherry, regular, and outstandingly huge. Alright, being the grown-up I am – let's plant some tomatoes, you tomato-loving weirdos!!



Canva Stock Photo

### Plant Tomatoes In The Fall

to avoid many of the problems that plague spring-planted tomatoes.

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Planting tomatoes in the Fall is something all Texans who looove tomatoes should do. Heck, I do it, but that's because I love my husband, who is a major-tomato-weirdo. If you missed out on planting a spring garden, have no fear, your second chance for having a successful vegetable growing adventure awaits! By planting tomatoes in the Fall, you avoid so many problems that plague Spring-planted tomatoes such as early blight, cracking and splitting due to extreme heat, and the dreaded spider mite infestations that come in those hot Summer weeks. The problem you can't avoid with Fall tomatoes is that they have to be planted in the crazy heat of mid-summer. The time to plant is NOW – Neil Sperry suggests the last week of June and the first week in July for planting, while Aggie Horticulture extends your planting time to the middle of July. This should give you about six weeks of production before our first average freeze – around November 15. There are, of course, those wildcat freezes that happen occasionally like the hard freeze we had in October last year. Gardeners scrambled to cover their tomatoes and other plants, hoping their babies would survive through that aberration – a few were successful, many were not. So be prepared for those aberrant events!

First, let's address those who already have a garden and want to rejuvenate and extend their bounty. Aggie Horticulture recommends removing all plants whose time has passed. If your tomato plants have gotten diseased and/or damaged by insects, they will not produce abundantly again. It's time to say thank you very much, then bag those puppies up and let the garbage man have them. Don't put diseased or insect infested plants into the compost pile – diseases and pests won't degrade or disappear. Re-check your sunlight, now that the sun is moving lower in the sky. Tomatoes still need at least 8 hours of sunlight or they become weak and spindly-legged like Auntie Edna. Afternoon shade is a good idea, morning shade less so, but acceptable. Now head to the nursery and choose your red globes of deliciousness. A list of some good varieties for Denton County is on page 8.



## Fall Tomatoes (Cont.)

### *New To Vegetable Gardening?*

If you're a newbie to vegetable gardening, welcome to the joy of fall gardening. It gets cooler from here – literally and in groovyness! First thing to do is COMPLETELY clear the ground of grass, weeds, everything before you till. This is a good opportunity for a family event! Digging up Bermuda grass is a life-altering experience. Don't think you can till your Bermuda into miniscule bits and destroy it – you can't! Trust me on this – I am speaking with the voice of experience, great frustration, and perhaps a few tears. All you will do is create miniscule bits of Bermuda every one of which will grow through anything you plant to eat. It is always a good idea to have a soil test done (how-to:

<https://agrifeextension.tamu.edu/library/gardening/testing-your-soil-how-to-collect-and-send-samples/> ) and amend your soil according to the needs outlined in your soil report. At the least, dig three to four inches of compost into the top six to eight inches of soil – this will give your tomato transplants a nutrient-rich start. Make sure you put your plants where they will get at least eight hours of sunshine daily. Decide which types of tomatoes you want to plant and head to your favorite nursery. A word of caution – try not to get overexcited and buy several plants if you are not prepared for the abundance that will follow. What will you do with all that fruit? Make a plan! Gallons of salsa, tomato sauce, and spaghetti sauce may be in your future! More detailed information on the planting and care of tomatoes can be found here:

[https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/organic/files/2011/03/E-517\\_tomatoes.pdf](https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/organic/files/2011/03/E-517_tomatoes.pdf)

### *Seeds or Transplants?*

If you are planning to plant a whole field of tomatoes, you probably want to plant tomato seeds. However, most home growers don't want or need more than two or three plants, so use transplants. Transplant on a cloudy day if possible, or in the evening, to prevent your transplants from drying out or wilting. Dig your planting holes a couple of inches deeper than the plants sit in their pot. If the plant is particularly leggy, dig a horizontal hole, lay the plant on its side and bend it carefully so only a couple of inches of stem and all the leaves are above the surface – the underground stem will develop

roots! Before placing the plants in their holes, fill the holes with water and let it soak in. If your soil needs it, add some compost or fertilizer to start feeding the new babies right off.

If you have some favorite tomatoes from Spring planting that are about done production-wise, but still are disease- and pest-free, you can take cuttings, which will root quickly and be ready for transplanting in two to three weeks. It is even possible to plant your fall bush-variety tomatoes in large pots, which might make it easier to protect them from an earlier-than-expected frost.



Photo Courtesy DCMGA Member Barbara Brown

## Fall Tomatoes (Cont.)

### *Determinate or Indeterminate Tomato Plants?*

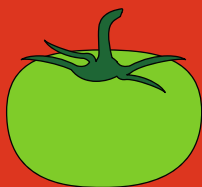
Read the plant tags carefully – they are usually chock-full of valuable information. One of many things to note on a tomato plant's tag is that tomatoes are either determinate or indeterminate plants. Determinate varieties are often referred to as bush tomatoes. They grow to about four feet tall, stop growing when the fruit sets, and all the tomatoes will ripen within about three weeks. After that the plant will die. Indeterminate varieties, known also as vining tomatoes, can grow up to ten feet and must have a supporting structure – heftier than one of those little conical cages. They bloom, set new fruit, and ripen fruit simultaneously throughout the growing season. These dudes get HUGE! But you get a lot of tomatoes off of one plant. Just keep in mind the space you have for tomatoes when choosing your plant. Before I understood these categories, I put a little cage around what I later learned to be an indeterminate tomato. Then I added cages and wire fencing one on top of each other, until I had quite the Seussical contraption holding up one of those huge dudes. The things I do for love ... my hubs kept asking, "Are you sure this is right?" "It's FINE!" I answered a mite testily. "You wanted tomatoes, weirdo."

Another point to note on the plant tag is whether the tomato is an heirloom or a hybrid variety. Heirloom varieties have been reproduced for generations and they are "open pollinated." Their seeds breed true, so you can save the seeds from your tomatoes this year to plant next year. These tomatoes are not bred to have resistance to diseases. Hybrid tomatoes have been specially bred and selected for disease resistance and productivity. Seeds from hybrids do not breed true, so seeds from this year will not give you the same tomatoes next year – in fact they may be completely sterile and in many cases it is prohibited to save these seeds due to proprietary patents.

Here is the list I promised you of varieties for North Texas recommended by Aggie Horticulture and DCMGA tomato growers-extraordinaire. It includes both heirloom and hybrid varieties. It is definitely not a comprehensive list; think of it more as a starting point! I borrowed it from a program used by DCMGA members that covers Fall vegetable gardening in general, then hones in on tomatoes. You can find it here:  
<http://txmg.org/denton/files/2012/10/introduction-to-vegetable-gardening-web.pdf>

### Heirloom

Cherokee Purple  
 Zebra Roma  
 Texas Wild Cherry Tomato  
 Yellow Pear  
 Black Krim



### Hybrid

444\*  
 Celebrity  
 Carnival  
 Sweet 100  
 Juliet  
 Fourth of July  
 Sun Gold Tycoon\*



\* denotes a Texas Superstar plant



## Fall Tomatoes (Cont.)

Honestly friends, "seeds and goo" is how I think about raw tomatoes, but I love everything made from tomatoes. I was only familiar with store-bought tomatoes. Then I saw and smelled a home-grown tomato. I was almost converted. Still seeds, but no goo, and lots of meaty "yum"! My husband is so pleased I can slice up a tomato for him now without getting completely grossed out! Now we grow a few tomato plants and last year he canned salsa for the first time. He's considering pasta sauce this year – it's a slippery slope, folks! Watch out for the goo! Happy Gardening!

### Resources

*Texas A&M AgriLife Extension*

"Easy Gardening Tomatoes"

[https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/organic/files/2011/03/E-517\\_tomatoes.pdf](https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/organic/files/2011/03/E-517_tomatoes.pdf)

"Fall Vegetable Gardening Guide"

<https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/vegetable/files/2013/09/EHT-056.pdf>

*Denton County Master Gardener Association (DCMGA)*

"Introduction to vegetable gardening in North Texas"

<http://txmg.org/denton/files/2012/10/introduction-to-vegetable-gardening-web.pdf>

*Neil Sperry's Gardens*

"Time Is Here for Tomatoes!"

<https://neilsperry.com/2018/06/time-is-here-for-tomatoes/>



Join Denton County MGA  
in cyberspace for our  
July General Meeting  
& Program.

Immediately following business  
meeting, we're pleased to  
welcome Daniel Cunningham of  
Texas A&M AgriLife Research  
Extension (Water University at  
The Dallas Center), who will  
present "Going Green & Saving  
Blue: A Virtual Tour of the  
Gardens at The Dallas Center."

**Advance registration  
is required.**

Free of charge.

**DENTON COUNTY  
MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION**

**Virtual**

**JULY 2020**

**GENERAL MEETING & PROGRAM**

WEDNESDAY, JULY 8TH, 2020  
10:00 AM - 12 NOON  
VIA ZOOM VIDEOCONFERENCE

REGISTRATION  
REQUIRED

TEXAS A&M  
AGRI LIFE  
RESEARCH EXTENSION

THE DALLAS  
CENTER

**Going Green & Saving Blue**

A Virtual Tour of the Gardens at The Dallas Center

TEXAS A&M  
AGRI LIFE  
RESEARCH  
WATER  
UNIVERSITY

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.

# How To Join Or Start A Community Garden

BY BARBARA BROWN

As the name implies, a community garden provides land for individuals to grow vegetables and fruits either for personal consumption or to be shared with the community through neighborhood food banks. Although the community garden land may be owned by a government or private entity, the work to prepare the soil, plant, water, and harvest is usually done by volunteers.

## *Should I join a community garden?*

There are many good reasons to join a community garden. You will learn and be encouraged to share information on successful gardening practices and lessons learned. You can make new friends. Gardening provides an opportunity to be outdoors and working in the garden provides good exercise. Best of all, you harvest fresh, healthy produce.

To find a community garden near you some research may be required. You can check with your city parks and recreation department for registered or city sponsored gardens. Local garden clubs and Master Gardener Associations may have a list of community gardens ([master.gardener@dentoncounty.com](mailto:master.gardener@dentoncounty.com)). Or, check social media sources and search engines that focus in your local area for a list of community gardens. It is a good idea to select a community garden near your home to improve the chances you will visit frequently. To find a community garden that supports local food pantries, you can enter your zip code on AmpleHarvest.org (<https://ampleharvest.org/find-pantry/>).

## *A few answers you need before you join a community garden*

1. Is the community garden open to new members?
2. Is there a cost associated with joining?
3. How long has the garden been in operation?
4. How is the garden managed? Is there an organization sponsoring the garden that sets the rules or mission of the garden, an administrator, or an ad hoc committee?
5. What are the rules for participants? Take care of your own plot with a specified frequency, help in the rest of the garden, bring your own tools and soil amendments?
6. Who is the food being grown for? Personal use, often called an allotment garden where each individual has a designated area, or is it a group garden with some portion of the harvest donated to those in need? Or, is the garden a combination of the two.
7. Are there rules governing what you may plant?
8. Is the garden required to be organic in the use of chemical and soil amendments?
9. What is the water source and how is it made available to gardeners?
10. Is there training or consultation available?

## *How to start a community garden*

If you have never been part of a community garden, joining one near you with the intent to learn effective processes and common challenges is a good way to begin your preparation. Keep a journal of what you learn that you can later apply to your community garden.

Next, you will have to do some homework to get off on the right foot. First, of course, you need to identify the land where the garden will be located. Then, depending on the chosen location, you will

## Community Gardens (Cont.)

likely need official permission for the intended use of the land from the city zoning commission, HOA, or other government or private entities that have enforceable rules on land use in the area.

You may find it helpful to create a small group of people interested in establishing a community garden to work with you to brainstorm a mission for the garden and a few basic rules of operation. When your team has reached a general consensus on purpose and operating principles, you have found the land to be used for the garden and taken steps to get proper permissions, consider inviting an expert to a meeting to provide guidance as you move into the detailed planning activities. Your county extension agent or local Master Gardener Association can often provide you a contact to help get your project off to a good start.

### *What a community garden plan should include*

Will the garden be composed of raised beds or traditional rows in the existing soil? The answer to that question will impact many other garden decisions. Here in North Texas there are many advantages to raised bed gardens chief among them being a work around for our challenging clay soil. From the perspective of a community garden, raised beds also provide obvious demarcation of space and a method to allocate and identify ownership. However, raised beds require materials and construction that can be a significant initial cost.



Photos Courtesy DCMGA Member David Huffman

**The Denton County Master Gardener Association's**  
FMFB Community Garden is located on Morriss Road south of Cross Timbers.  
It has provided more than 10,000 lbs. of produce for Lewisville CCA.



## Community Gardens (Cont.)

The next item is a budget. Are tools, soil, amendments, and plants provided or purchased by the plot owner? Do plot owners share in the cost of water or is it freely available? What will be the management structure of the community garden, which includes adding new members and unfortunately sometimes disciplining existing members?

Do you want your community garden to be organic or not? There really is no compromise on this one. Choosing to be organic includes soil amendments, pest removal, and even the source of plants. It is not possible to be partially organic. Your plan should include meeting your garden's neighbors and providing training resources to help gardeners be successful. Want to give starting a community garden a try? Great! You, your garden-mates, and community will reap significant benefits.

### Resources

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, "Starting a Community Garden"

<http://agrilife.org/urbandallas/files/2016/08/STARTING-A-COMMUNITY-GARDEN.pdf>

Denton County Master Gardener Association (DCMGA)

<https://dcmga.com/>

American Community Gardening Association

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

Keep Texas Beautiful, "Community Gardening Resources"

<https://www.ktb.org/community-gardening>

Raskin, Ben; 2017. *The Community Gardening Handbook: The Guide to Organizing, Planting and Caring for a Community Garden*. Lumina Media, Irvine, CA.

Joy, LaManda; *Start a Community Food Garden: The Essential Handbook*. Timber Press, Portland



Photos Courtesy DCMGA Member David Huffman

**Learning How To Grow And Harvest**  
vegetables can be a fun family activity.



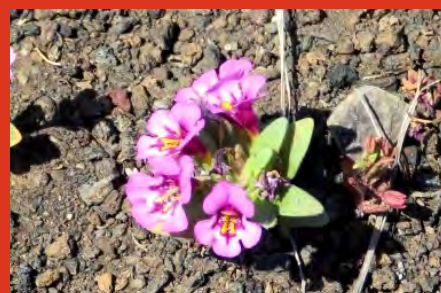
## Garden Visits

### Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve

BY KAREN GIBSON

*Editor's Note: When Master Gardeners travel, they like to visit other gardens. This column gives you the opportunity to "visit" a garden you might not otherwise see. Once again, this month's isn't your usual garden, or really even a garden. It was a most unexpected location for Mother Nature to show her amazing wildflower growing talents.*

In June 2017 while in southeastern Idaho for a family reunion, I had the chance to visit Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve. Mid-June is the peak of wildflower season there and I was astounded at the multitudes of wildflowers growing on the lava fields. Bitterroot, dwarf purple monkeyflower, and dwarf buckwheat were just a few of the wildflowers I discovered.



Photos Courtesy DCMGA Member Karen Gibson



## Garden Visits (Cont.)

These plants survive in extremely harsh conditions. Average rainfall is 15-20 inches per year, with long periods of drought. The soil is meager at best, and surface temperatures can exceed 150 degrees F. in the summer. Winters are cold, harsh, and the wind blows year round. And yet they bloom! The black lava fields covered with colorful wildflowers was simply breathtaking.

Another day trip took us to Idaho Falls, where their River Walk – Greenbelt Trail runs along both sides of the Snake River. You can see the waterfalls for which the city is named and several spectacular flower plantings.



Photo Courtesy DCMGA Member Karen Gibson



Photos Courtesy Marilyn Walker

### *Denton County Master Gardener YouTube Channel*

Our virtual General Meetings and other programs can be viewed on our YouTube Channel.  
Check it out! And don't forget to subscribe!

<http://www.youtube.com/c/DentonCountyMasterGardener>



# An Encouraging Update About Monarchwatch.org 2017 Milkweed Grant & Planting Project

BY SHARON CLARK, DCMGA CLASS OF 2017

*Editor's Note: Bring Back the Monarch is a program sponsored by [MonarchWatch.org](http://MonarchWatch.org) to restore 20 milkweed species, used by monarch caterpillars as food, to their native ranges throughout the United States and to encourage the planting of nectar-producing native flowers that support adult monarchs and other pollinators. This organization, founded in 1992, has sponsored projects all over the US to renew and restore degraded, damaged, or destroyed ecosystems and habitats to support these beauties during their Spring and Fall migrations. Following is the report of one of our members who received a grant to establish a Monarch Waystation on her property.*

In early 2017, as a Denton County Master Gardener Association (DCMGA) intern, I was awarded a grant of milkweeds from Monarch Watch's Bring-Back-The-Monarchs program for habitat restoration on my six-acre field.

## History

In late April 2017, Monarch Watch shipped me 200 milkweeds (very small, 2" x 2" pots), 100 each of *Asclepias viridis* (Green Milkweed) and *Asclepias asperula* (Antelope Horns Milkweed). I also purchased about 90 companion nectar plants (see list on page 17).

The planting program was approved by DCMGA as a one-time volunteer activity.

In May 2017, a wonderful group of fourteen DCMGA interns volunteered to plant the milkweeds and companion nectar plants at forty sites scattered over six acres (Coastal Bermuda having been recently harvested). Prior to the actual planting, the forty 'plots' were marked with flagged and numbered tomato cages. Three hundred holes were bored for the milkweeds and the companion



Photo Courtesy DCMGA Member Sharon Clark

## Planting 2017 Interns

Front Row: Katie Chapman, Cindy Kraus, Bonnie Raffo, Jeanne Wulforst

Middle Row: Kim Wootten, Treva McFadden, Patti Barry, Judy Chenault, and Mary Lehrer

Back Row: Sharon Clark, Dwyane Coats, Steve Spurgin, Kathryn Lancaster, Sonny Smith, Robert Vidler and Kim Shaneyfelt

## Encouraging Update Milkweed Grant (Cont.)

plants (a big thank you to Sonny Smith and Steve Spurgin and a posthumous "thank you" to my deceased partner Dwyane for this hole-boring activity!). Additional soil and supplemental water were placed at each plot.

At three months post planting (end of July), fifty-four *A. viridis* and fifty-three *A. asperula* were noted (around a 53% survival rate); however, the ever growing Coastal Bermuda grass may have either obscured visualization or prohibited growth due to lack of sunlight reaching the milkweeds. Most of the companion plants were surviving and flowering.

At six months post planting (October), only a few of the *A. viridis* could be located despite the presence of the marker flags. No *A. asperula* were located. The Coastal Bermuda was very tall at this point, and ready for harvest. The companion Maximillian sunflowers were now flowering.

.....

Photos Courtesy DCMGA Member Sharon Clark



**Green Milkweed**  
Asclepias viridis, bloom



**Antelope Horns**  
Milkweed, Asclepias asperula



**Green Milkweed**  
Asclepias viridis

.....

Disheartened regarding the lack of milkweeds at my Monarch Waystation, I forwarded a disappointing report to [Monarchwatch.org](http://Monarchwatch.org).

In 2018 and 2019, due to extenuating circumstances, the status of the milkweeds was noted, but counts were not recorded. The six-acre field was cut and baled in late November 2019.

### 2020 Update

As sheltering at home has produced a good deal of discretionary time, I began in early March to inspect on a daily basis the six acres in search of milkweeds. Probably due to the late 2019 field cutting and the regular rainfall of this Spring, the milkweeds are easy to locate. The counts are encouraging.

As of this writing, there are one hundred twenty milkweed plants growing in the field, ninety-six *A. viridis* and twenty-four *A. asperula* – 60% survival rate. The plants are scattered around the 'plots' with several outlying locations being noted – including nine *A. viridis* plants growing unusually in the moist riparian area of a pond.

## Encouraging Update Milkweed Grant (Cont.)

The *A. viridis*, with its erect growth characteristic, is easy to spot; most of these plants are now flowering. The *A. asperula*, being a smaller plant with a recumbent growth characteristic and narrow leaves, can be difficult to locate among the existing grass; none are currently flowering.

Of the companion nectar plants, the Maximilian sunflowers have flourished, and a good crop of sunflowers is anticipated in the Fall.

Currently each milkweed plant is flagged (yellow: *viridis*; pink: *asperula*) for ease of location and further monitoring. Hopefully, as the Summer and Fall progress, these plants will become an attraction for Monarch butterflies, a source of food for their larvae, and a community for other invertebrates living on and around milkweed plants.

### Resources

For further information regarding milkweeds, Monarchs, and way stations, Monarch Watch's website ([www.monarchwatch.org](http://www.monarchwatch.org)) has an abundance of information. A wonderful source of information regarding the milkweed's invertebrate community is *Milkweeds, Monarchs and More* by Ba Rea, Karen Oberhauser, and Michael A. Quinn (ISBN 978-096-5747d2-3-3) (Texas Parks and Wildlife and Bas Relief Publishing, 2010).

### List of Companion Nectar Plants

- Black-eyed Susan, *Rudbeckia hirta*
- Blackfoot Daisy, *Melampodium leucanthum*
- Butterfly Bush, *Buddleia sp.*
- Coreopsis, *Coreopsis lanceolata*
- Dahlberg Daisy, *Thymophylla tenuiloba*
- Fall Aster, *Symphyotrichum ovlongifolium*
- Gaillardia, aka Indian Blanket, *Gaillardia puchella*
- Gaura, *Oenothera gaura*
- Gazania, aka African Diasy, *Gazania sp.*
- Lantana, *Lantana urticoides*
- Liatris, aka Gayfeather, Blazing Star, *Liatris mucronata*
- Maximilian Sunflower, *Helianthus maximilian*
- Purple Coneflower, *Echinacea purpurea*
- Shasta Daisy, *Chrysanthemum maximum*
- Tickseed, *Coreopsis auriculata*
- Zinnia, *Zinnia peruviana*





## Share Your Bounty!

With the cancellation of our annual Fruit, Vegetable, Herb, and Flower Show, we left many gardeners with prized plants they were unable to submit for judging. We'd like to share some submissions sent to our Facebook page and Communications Team.

Barbara Brown sent in some delicious tomatoes to be envied. Since she is the queen of preserving a harvest, we can only imagine the delicious sauce or salsa to be made from these beauties. Fresh and yummy in a salad as well.



Photo Courtesy DCMGA Member Barbara Brown

Next up, Jerry and Gloria Alexander sent in some candid photos from their garden, including Daisies, Lilies, Cabbage, and Jerusalem Sage. This garden is full of color and just makes one happy viewing it.



Photo Courtesy DCMGA Member Jerry Alexander

Lastly, Lynda Harvey sent in some harvest pictures featuring Tomatoes, Zucchini, Long Beans, Hollyhocks, Beets, Onions, and Penny the dog enjoying a snow pea treat! What a treat indeed Lynda. You're so lucky to have a willing helper to taste test the bounty.

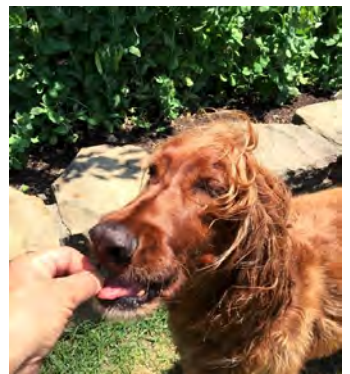


Photo Courtesy DCMGA Member Lynda Harvey

Thank you to all of our gardeners in our community. We are grateful for your diligent work to harvest these beautiful specimens and we encourage you all to share your overflow with our area food banks and your neighbors to help our community and those in need during this time.



## DCMGA Project News

### What's Growing On

BY JOANNE SPURGIN



Although gardeners do need to get down into the soil, online education, whether we like it or not, is here to stay. Many projects are conducting Google/Zoom meetings which offer VS and/or CE hours. Please check the member calendar for activities. If it shows the meeting is at the Extension Office, please check with the project manager first because the Extension Office is not currently open for our use. The activity may be an online meeting.

Veteran members are required to complete **12 hours of Volunteer Service (VS)** and **12 hours of Continuing Education (CE)** before **December 31, 2020**. Each week there is an abundance of opportunities shown on the member calendar, sent by email or posted on Facebook to meet these requirements. Please remember to log your hours in VMS as soon as possible.

**Advanced Training Seminar:** Cancelled for 2020

**Cool Shade for the Third Grade:** Cancelled for 2020

**Community Garden Projects (FMBC Community Garden, Friends of Shiloh Gardens):** Volunteers are needed weekly to help these projects provide food for the area food banks. Also, donations from your home garden, canned goods, and cash donations are welcome to meet the huge increase in people needing food assistance.

**Fairoaks Independent Living Center:** This project is now meeting weekly to work outside on the gardens of senior citizens.

**Fall Garden Festival:** Zoom meetings are being held for planning purposes. County restrictions will determine how we move forward with this large indoor event. Because of the restrictions, there may be limited volunteer opportunities this year.

**Garden Tour:** This event is still on schedule with the teams preparing to address restrictions placed on outdoor events.

**Gardens on the Go:** This project is restarting itself with new enthusiasm. Check the calendar for Zoom meeting dates.

**Help Desk:** This is the best project for expanding your knowledge, and it offers the benefit of working from home! Volunteers are always welcome and great training is provided. Please check the calendar for online meetings.

***We can complain because rose bushes have thorns; or rejoice because thorn bushes have roses. ~ Abraham Lincoln***





## Online Education Opportunities

*For Master Gardeners and the Community We Serve*

Science-based knowledge on a variety of topics in an innovative and interactive virtual format.

### DCMGA Members

Watch for a VMS email with current Online CE Opportunities.

### AgriLife Online Courses

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

(Most, but not all, are free.)

<https://agrilifelearn.tamu.edu/catalog?pagename=Plants-and-Garden>

### AgriLife Online Pest & Weed Control Courses

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

(Some are free, some are inexpensive, some are pricey.)

<https://agrilifelearn.tamu.edu/catalog?pagename=Pest-and-Weed-Control>

### Earth-Kind® Online Master Gardener Training

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

<https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/earthkind/training/>

### Introduction to Plant Identification

UDSA NRCS Science & Technology

<http://www.conservationwebinars.net/webinars/introduction-to-plant-identification>

### Aggie Horticulture YouTube

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCbp4wkcScRVoHlN3Hi1\\_KUQ/](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCbp4wkcScRVoHlN3Hi1_KUQ/)

### Gardening 101 + Virtual Learning Series Aggie Horticulture, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

Beginning July 1, AgriLife has moved away from Facebook Live events. You will now be required to REGISTER for their events online through their website:

<https://wateruniversity.tamu.edu/events/>

As always, their classes are FREE and no credit card info will be collected. Once registered, you will be emailed a link from which to attend the class. Class links will be sent out the day of the event to prevent spamming. There is no need to download anything with the new virtual class platform. It will play through your internet browser.

### DCMGA Members

See our Member Handbook for approved CE sources and guidelines.

Note that members may claim up to three hours of annual discretionary education; veteran members with 10+ years of service may claim up to six.





#### BY HELP DESK TEAM

*Q: The leaves on my favorite Rose of Sharon started browning last week, and now, the plant looks nearly dead. What could have happened? If I can't save it, can I replant a new Rose of Sharon in its place?*

**A:** What a heartbreak to see such a beauty fail so rapidly. The most likely culprit is cotton root rot (*Phymatotrichum omnivorum*). Rose of Sharon is highly susceptible to the fungus, which is active during this time of year and advanced by overwatering. Is it possible that you could be overwatering it in an attempt to save the shrub? Or could there be an area irrigation/pool leak?

Before giving up on your plant, first correct any water or drainage issues you may have. Run each zone of your irrigation system for a minute or two. Put on your raincoat and wellies and look closely at each sprinkler head and your entire drip line. Sometimes water will spew like a geyser; other times, you'll see bubbling water at the base of sprinkler heads or a flowing stream from your drip lines. If you see leaks or misdirected sprays, correct them. Do this check every month you use irrigation. This link gives easy guidance: <https://wateruniversity.tamu.edu>.

Next, get into the habit of checking soil moisture before running irrigation. Use a screwdriver to probe the soil to a depth of 6-8 inches. If you're able to probe to that depth, moisture is sufficient

and no watering is necessary. Alternatively, invest in an inexpensive (<\$5) soil moisture meter and spot-check your landscape before watering (to the same 6-inch depth).

If you're not able or inclined to manually check the soil, or if you travel, then consider upgrading to a smart controller. It uses your local weather station's current evapotranspiration (ET) readings to calculate irrigation. (ET refers to evaporation that comes from the soil itself as well as from the plants' leaves.) The controller doubles as a rain/freeze sensor, shutting off when temperatures drop below freezing or when local rain exceeds a set threshold. Once installed and linked to your WiFi, these smart controllers can be programmed and adjusted from the controller itself or from your smartphone, tablet, or computer.

Water University explains how to use a probe or screwdriver to gauge moisture and gives details on rain-freeze sensors and advanced controllers.

Aggie Horticulture describes how to possibly save ornamental plants suffering from cotton root rot by using ammonium sulphate to acidify the soil, creating an unfavorable growing condition for the fungus. This option is a last resort, but it is inexpensive, fairly easy, and might be worth a try.

(Continued on next page.)



Photo Courtesy of DCMGA Member Kathryn Wells

The downside is that you'll have to continue acidifying the soil every year, which may become tiresome. In short, prune the shrub back. Build a ridge of soil about four inches high around the trees drip line. The circumference of the ridgeline should be equal to the diameter of the crown/top of the tree. Work in one pound of ammonium sulphate for every 100 square feet of area within the ridge. Fill the ridge with water to a depth of four inches. Repeat this treatment five to ten days later. Limit treatment to twice per season. Refer to the section entitled "Fertilizer Applications" in this [Texas A&M article](#).

If your shrub dies completely and you wish to replant another Rose of Sharon, do not replant it in the same location, since the fungus remains active in the soil for years. Instead, plant it in a sun/part-sun location where drainage is excellent. These beauties like moist soil, but not standing water. In its place, plant a flowering shrub resistant to cotton root rot.

Other references:

[Cotton root rot](#)

[New Rose of Sharon varieties](#)

[Trees, shrubs and flowering plants with resistance to cotton root rot](#)



*If you have questions about shrub care or any other horticulture-related subjects,  
please contact our Master Gardener Help Desk at 940.349.2892 or  
[master.gardener@dentoncounty.com](mailto:master.gardener@dentoncounty.com).*

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



Canva Stock Photo



To help ensure the safety of our community, the Greater Aubrey Area Gardening Series 2020 fall sessions have been **canceled**.

Planning for the 2021 season is in progress;  
stay tuned for scheduled dates and topics.

A variety of virtual presentations may be viewed on YouTube:  
[Denton County Master Gardener Association](#)  
[Texas A&M AgriLife Water University](#).



## 2020 GREATER AUBREY AREA GARDENING SERIES

Jump start your 2020 gardening with this  
free educational series.

 <b>JANUARY 16</b> <b>Veggie Gardening 101</b> <i>Dana Bays</i>	 <b>AUGUST 20</b> <b>Waterwise Gardening</b> <i>Pat Moyer &amp; Claud Singer</i>
 <b>FEBRUARY 20</b> <b>Texas Plants</b> <i>AgriLife TBD</i>	 <b>SEPTEMBER 17</b> <b>September 17</b> <i>Pat Moyer</i>
 <b>MARCH 19</b> <b>Texas Trees</b> <i>Pat Moyer</i>	 <b>OCTOBER 17</b> <b>Pots in the Garden</b> <i>AgriLife TBD</i>

**AUBREY AREA  
LIBRARY**  
 226 Countryside Drive  
 Aubrey, TX 76227  
 Register via email to  
[kab@KeepAubreyBeautiful.org](mailto: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

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**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**

*Please check with [KeepLewisvilleBeautiful.org](https://KeepLewisvilleBeautiful.org) for the status of all classes.*

**Jan 23rd:**  
Grow Native  
Not Wild  
6-8 PM

**February 6th:**  
Spring Vegetable  
Gardening  
6-7 PM

**March 12:**  
Herb Gardening  
6-8 PM

**April 2nd:**  
Plant Combos  
and Companions  
6-8 PM

**May 7th:**  
DCMG Favorite  
Texas Plants  
6-7 PM

**May 28th:**  
Family Friendly  
Gardening  
6-8 PM

**June 25th:**  
Landscape CPR  
6-8 PM

**July 16th:**  
Made for Shade:  
Shade Gardening  
6-8 PM

**August 6th:**  
Fall Vegetable  
Gardening  
6-7 PM

**Saving from a  
Rainy Day: DIY  
Rain Barrel  
6-8 PM**

**September 17th:**  
ULandscapeit  
6-8 PM

**October 8th:**  
Butterfly Gardening  
6-7 PM

**November 19th:**  
Foodscaping  
6-8 PM

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

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





A New Date!

DENTON COUNTY  
MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION

# 2020 Garden Tour

SATURDAY, OCT 10, 2020

9 AM TO 4 PM

## Four Delightful Denton County Gardens

**THIS EVENT HAS BEEN RESCHEDULED!**

All previously bought tickets will be honored for this date change.

Now experience Texas gardening in the Fall!

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 now until event for \$10.

At-Door tickets will be available on Oct. 10th for \$15.

Go to [www.dcmga.com/upcomingevents](http://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: Canceled for 2020**

**Flower Mound: Coming Spring 2021**

**Lewisville: Watch for updates:**

<https://keepLewisvillebeautiful.org/garden-secrets/>

**Fall Garden Fest: Oct. 3**

**Garden Tour: Oct. 10**

**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.

### 2020 Board of Directors

President	Kathryn Wells
Vice-President - Projects	Joanne Spurgin
Vice-President - Outreach	Kathy Rainey
Secretary	Katherine Woodward
Treasurer	Joe Beckett
Communications Dir. - Systems	Liz Moyer
Communications Dir. - Promotions	Treva McFadden
Education Director	Barbara Brown
Member-at-Large	Tammie Gurley
Past President	Pat Moyer
Extension Agent - Horticulture	Janet Laminack

### Social Media

Facebook:

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

Instagram:

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

Twitter:

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

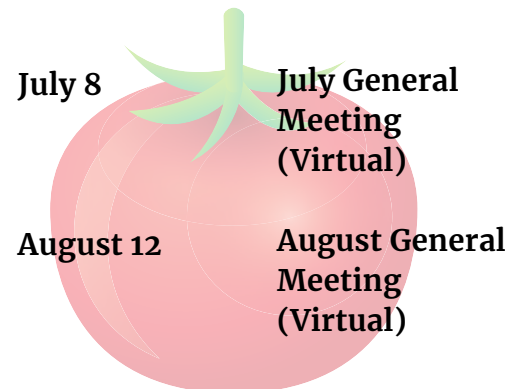
Pinterest:

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

YouTube:

<http://www.youtube.com/c/DentonCountyMasterGardener>

### Save the Date



### 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](mailto:master.gardener@dentoncounty.com)

Webmaster:

[dcmga.webmaster@gmail.com](mailto:dcmga.webmaster@gmail.com)

Communications:

[dcmga.communications@gmail.com](mailto:dcmga.communications@gmail.com)

Website:

<https://dcmga.com>

### Content

**Submission deadline for the August edition of *The Root* is Wednesday, July 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 or Communications Director Liz Moyer at [dcmga.communications@gmail.com](mailto:dcmga.communications@gmail.com).

*All photos are courtesy of DCMGA's Creative Visual Arts (CVA) Team unless otherwise attributed.*

<https://dcmga.com>