

Denton County Master Gardener Association

THE ROOT

Grow With Us

*Photo Courtesy DCMGA Member Karen Gibson*

Buds From The Board

BY KATHRYN WELLS, PRESIDENT

Happy November, friends!

'Tis the season for enjoying the fruits of your labor, especially in the refreshing cooler temperatures. The gardens (and their gardeners!) are transitioning into a period of rest—a necessary and restorative process in the growing cycle.

And 'tis the season for our 2023 Board of Directors selection process. This year's Nominating Committee, chaired by DCMGA veteran member Dale Powell, has been diligently working to assemble a slate of officers. Already approved by CEA-Hort Janet Laminack, our membership will vote to elect them at our November 9th General Meeting. I am grateful to all the outstanding individuals who served on this year's Committee: Dale Powell (Chair, 2011), Joanne Spurgin (Vice Chair, 2019), Russ Allen (2021), Ann Athey (2021), Pat Edwards (2012), Peggy Fox (2022), Regan McCamey (2022), and Dee Payne (2009).

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Buds From The Board (Cont.)

Speaking of our November 9th General Meeting, we're going to be talking birdie; "Landscaping for Birds: Creating a Feather-Friendly Fly Zone" will be presented by yours truly. The in-person meeting will be a hybrid format also livestreamed via Zoom. As always, our monthly General Meetings are free and open to the public; *registration is required* for our virtual participants.

During this traditional time of expressing gratitude, please know that I am so thankful for you. Each and every one of you is a treasure! And, to our military veterans—thank you for your service; we appreciate you!

Denton County Master Gardeners and Denton County residents—may your harvest be abundant and may this month be filled to overflowing with every good thing. Thank you for growing with us!



TOP GARDENING TIPS

November

Prepare tender plants to overwinter inside; check for insects. Leave the leaves! Mow in place, compost, or use as mulch. Check trees for damaged limbs before winter winds & ice. Plan to relocate established trees & shrubs after dormancy (late November to early January).

#DCMGA #GROWWITHUS

DENTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION

Meet A Member - Lela Khan

BY LEE ANN YATES

This month we shine our Spotlight on Lela Khan, a multi-talented Master Gardener who wears many hats - Native Californian, second-generation Texan, long-time food gardener, permaculturalist, gardening educator and writer, DCMGA Pass-Along Plant Sale and Josey Ranch Pocket Prairie volunteer.

As a teenager, Lela worked with her parents on their small Texas farm raising flowers with her mom and vegetables with her dad amidst a barnyard full of animals. She says some of her happiest memories are of working alongside her dad harvesting vegetables, repairing whatever needed fixing, and building shelters for the animals. Lela credits her parents with instilling in her a deep love and respect for nature.



Lela Khan
Class of 2019

In order to hone her knowledge of Texas-style gardening Lela turned to Metroplex gardening gurus, Neil Sperry and Howard Garrett and she learned herb gardening from Odena Brannam of Lavender Hill Herb Farm. However, Lela declares the biggest overall gardening influencer in her life has been Australian permaculture consultant, designer, and teacher, Geoff Lawton. She completed his Permaculture Design Course in 2018. Seeking even more knowledge, Lela became a Denton County Master Gardener in 2019. A lifelong learner, Lela says that she would like to learn more about trees and urban forestry and she looks forward to becoming a Master Naturalist in the future.

Lela gardens in a typical suburban neighborhood, growing mostly food for herself and the wildlife who share her garden. Because she is a dedicated permaculturalist her garden, while not a typically tidy yard, is full of life, so much so it was certified as a Texas Wildscape in 1997.

Armenian cucumbers, okra, yard-long beans, and fig trees are some of Lela's favorite plants to grow. She added that she also likes self-seeding annuals like nigella and larkspur that return every year.

Lela can't keep her love of gardening to herself. Children in Dallas ISD have benefitted from gardening classes she taught, as did adults at Brookhaven College and events and classes sponsored by the city of Carrollton.

Meet A Member - Lela Khan (Cont.)

She enjoys writing about gardening and has published gardening articles in a local newspaper, *Organic Gardening*, *The Almanac for Farmers & City Folk*, and Neil Sperry's *Gardens* newsletter.

Another hobby Lela enjoys is reading – about gardening or wildlife, of course! She recommends Richard Preston's *The Wild Trees*, a book about Preston's informal study of the giant redwood trees leading to discovery of the interconnectedness between these trees and the ocean. He has a TED talk also. She has a favorite podcast, "Tooth and Claw" in which a biologist explains the science of animal attacks. She admits it can be grisly, but there are lots of interesting facts and humor mixed throughout each episode.



Lela's Gardens



Lela regrets there isn't more time for her to participate in all the wonderful projects that Master Gardeners offer. She focuses her time volunteering as a Co-Captain with the Pass-Along Plants Team as a part of DCMGA's annual Plant Sale. She helps to coordinate plant digs and caring for

Meet A Member - Lela Khan (Cont.)

the plants to keep them healthy until the sale. Lela and the team make sure that every plant has a label with the correct horticultural information. Lela says the research involved broadened her plant knowledge immensely.

The rest of the year she works at the Josey Ranch Pocket Prairie in Carrollton, which is a display and educational garden planted with mostly native and adapted plants for dry and boggy areas. This project was developed after an egret rookery was destroyed because they were considered a nuisance in the neighborhood. After a public outcry, the city set aside one acre for a wildlife habitat garden.

DCMGA got involved as designers, planters, and caretakers of the prairie garden and Lela joined that effort. She says every plant in the pocket prairie garden benefits wildlife, including two monarch butterfly waystations. Lela relates that Master Gardeners will offer classes to the public this fall and next spring at the garden.

Lela is an effective member of the larger gardening community in North Texas, as well as, a dedicated, valuable Master Gardener and we couldn't be more pleased that she chose to volunteer and learn with DCMGA!



**Volunteering at Josey Ranch
Pocket Prairie**



Coneflowers



Plant of the Month - Purple Fountain Grass *Pennisetum setaceum* 'Rubrum'

BY LEE ANN YATES

Texas autumn has arrived but the lack of rain in late summer really curtailed our color show this year. If you planned for fall color in your garden that did not depend on trees or shrubs or the ubiquitous chrysanthemums for color, then you may have included Purple Fountain Grass or *Pennisetum setaceum* 'Rubrum'. If you haven't included this lovely, upright ornamental grass in your landscape, you really should consider adding it! Purple Fountain Grass features reddish-purplish-burgundy arching foliage with pinkish-purple seed heads that follow the breezes in summer until the frosts of fall. Purple Fountain Grass is a clumping grass that can reach three to five feet tall and two to four feet wide under ideal growing conditions, so these graceful lovelies need a little elnbogenraum – elbow room! (It's my favorite German word and I've been trying to figure out how to fit it into an article! Bet won!) Elegant seed heads can reach another one to feet above the foliage for a very dramatic accent! They can be cut and dried to add to your fall and winter wreaths and arrangements – bonus!



Purple Fountain Grass

Plant *Pennisetum setaceum* 'Rubrum' in mid-spring after the last frost in well-drained soil in full sun for most of the day for best color. Of course, everyone appreciates some late afternoon shade in the summer, so it will tolerate light shade. This grass makes quite a statement planted in drifts, small groupings, or as a specimen plant in beds. It also looks striking as a centerpiece in a large container surrounded by complementary colored plants. In a container though, realize that it will need more frequent watering, as do all containers. Purple Fountain Grass will "bloom" with those airy, appealing seed heads from July through October.

Purple Fountain Grass is grown as an annual in North Central Texas as it unfortunately will not survive freezing temperatures. It is native to Africa and Asia, so technically it is considered a tropical plant. If grown in large containers, they can be moved to a warm sheltered area in winter. Otherwise, this grass should be dug up and discarded in late winter. In very mild winters, however, it might survive to return the next spring. If that happens, then you should cut the clump to the ground in late winter and new growth will rise through the old stubble.

Purple Fountain Grass (Cont.)

Purple Fountain Grass scores a seven out of ten on the Earth-Kind scale of environmentally desirable plants for Texas. This plant rarely has pest or disease problems so Purple Fountain Grass is a good choice for gardeners who follow no/low chemical input practices. They do need supplemental water during dry spells, but are not generally thirsty plants.

For those of you who share your gardens with deer, this grass is classified as deer-resistant. It has a high heat tolerance – a real plus considering our summers lately. It has a Firewise rating of 5 out of 10, meaning it has marginal resistance to flame-generated heat as long as it has been sufficiently irrigated one to two times a week. Don't plant it next to the foundation of your house, but place it at least five feet away from the house – and always plan with the mature size of the plant in mind remember the elbow room!

The clumping habit of *Pennisetum setaceum* 'Rubrum' provides shelter to a variety of animals, including butterflies and birds. This is true especially in winter, so please resist cutting or removing it during the colder months. Even though the dark color fades in winter to a pleasing straw color, Purple Fountain Grass offers good texture in your landscape which can be hard to come by at that time of year. We never know what kind of winter Mother Nature is going to grace us with, so hedge your bets and leave the textural beauty in place to see what happens in spring!

Speaking of texture, the fine foliage and stems of Purple Fountain Grass play really well against the larger leaves of cannas, hardy hibiscuses, and other large-leaved plants. Their "spikiness" makes a pretty backdrop to shorter plants with rounded or lance-shaped leaves or variegated-leaved plants. Variety is the spice of life! Oooh – maybe plant some interesting Mediterranean-type herbs with them!! Locate *Pennisetum setaceum* 'Rubrum' where it would be backlit by the rising or setting sun to really show off the delicate foliage and seed heads – now there's a "Wow!" moment!



**Purple Fountain Grass with
Portulaca (Moss Rose)**

Purple Fountain Grass (Cont.)

Well, with all these fabulous attributes, why wouldn't you plant *Pennisetum setaceum* 'Rubrum' next spring and enjoy it all year round? Mark it down on your spring to-do list now so you don't forget...go on, I'll wait...OK! Now maybe scout around for some of those seed heads to add to your Thanksgiving arrangements or winter wreaths – ask first, of course and maybe you will meet a new gardening friend!

Happy Gardening and Happy Holidays,
gardening friends!



Purple Fountain Grass

Resources

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

"*Pennisetum* (Purple Fountain Grass)"

<http://counties.agrilife.org/hood/files/2011/07/pennisetum-purple-fountain-grass.pdf>

Earth-Kind Landscaping, "Annual Fountain Grass"

http://ekps.tamu.edu/details?id=267®ion=zone_f

Earth-Kind Landscaping, "Firewise Index Explanation"

<http://ekps.tamu.edu/firewiseindexexplanation>

Texas Gardener

"Pretty Grasses, Enduring Beauty"

<https://www.texasgardener.com/pretty-grasses-enduring-beauty/>

The Spruce

"How to Grow and Care for Purple Fountain Grass"

<https://www.thespruce.com/purple-fountain-grass-2132874>



Join Denton County MGA for our *hybrid* (in person and virtual) November General Meeting & Program.

DCMGA President Kathryn Wells will present "Landscaping for Birds: Creating a Feather-Friendly Habitat".

Advance registration is required only for virtual participants live-streaming via Zoom.

In-person participants will meet in the Solomon's Porch building at Global Spheres Center (7801 S Interstate 35, Corinth, TX).

As always, our General Meeting programs are open to the public and free of charge.



Denton County Master Gardener YouTube Channel

Click on "Videos" and check out our new presentations!
And don't forget to subscribe!

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

Spotted in Member's Gardens



Photo courtesy DCMGA member Judy Allen
Beet
Beta vulgaris subsp. vulgaris



Photo courtesy DCMGA member Janet Gershenfeld
Volcano Bush Clover
Lespedeza thunbergii subsp. thunbergii



Photo courtesy DCMGA member Joyce Yamali-Smith
Pomegranate
Punica granatum



Photo courtesy DCMGA member Lea Sage Watson
Sedum 'Autumn Joy'
Hylotelephium spectabile

What's Ready to Harvest in November?

BY CAROL NOBLE

Crisp mornings, colorful leaves, and a chance of frost! Few things are headier to a gardener than the smell of moist earth on a fall morning or the joy of still harvesting from your edible garden when more northerly gardeners may already have an early snow. Denton County can be a great place to garden in November! So-called "cool weather crops" continue to grow and thrive here, with many going strong until the first hard freeze.

Cool weather crop is a term that simply means plants that grow and thrive better in cooler temperatures. They may need cooler soil temperatures to germinate, or cooler daytime highs to grow best. These fall favorites wither in summer's heat, or taste bitter and bolt, but they shine in cooler temperatures. Many even taste better after a light frost.

The favorite late fall stars of the edible garden are leafy greens, crucifers, root vegetables, and herbs. Lettuce, spinach, and mustard greens thrive in the cooler temps, along with carrots, beets, bok choy, broccoli, and turnips. Radishes have a mild, sweeter taste when grown in fall, as do many root crops. Even sun lovers like peppers will tolerate cooler temps with a bit of protection.

At EMFB Community Garden, harvest is still going strong in November. Peppers and eggplant will keep on until a killing frost. Rainbow chard is flourishing, along with beets, turnips, and radishes. Beets and turnips do double duty, as you can eat some of the greens while the roots continue to grow. Baby bok choy, spicy mustard greens, and even the dill and chives are putting on a fall show.



Swiss Chard

Fall is a great time to cook from your garden. Fresh greens, either raw or lightly sautéed, beet or turnip casserole, stir-fried bok choy, roasted radishes, and Brussels sprouts! Cold hardy herbs, such as chives, cilantro, mint, oregano, parsley, sage, and thyme, are the perfect companion to Fall cooking. Add dried sage to your Thanksgiving turkey! Try delicious soups or stews seasoned with chives and thyme. Fresh cilantro will brighten a canned winter salsa. Even lemon balm will survive a light freeze with a thick blanket of leaves and makes a delightful cup of tea on a cool fall morning.

What's Ready to Harvest in November? (Cont.)

Best news of all? It isn't too late to plant! TAMU AgriLife's *Fall Vegetable Gardening Guide* says to plant mustard and turnips around November 1, carrots by November 10, spinach by November 15, and radishes as late as November 25. Garlic is usually planted in October but can be planted up to November 15 for harvest next spring.



Mary Harned, Pat Moyer, and Lori Giesler plant garlic.



Sandra Giesler weighs greens from FMFB Community Garden.

A few easy steps will help your garden thrive thru November if the weather cooperates. First, remember that cold hardy does not mean your plants won't freeze. Some will be finished off with a light frost, while others will survive down to around 28 degrees, and some will survive even into the low twenties. Historically, Denton County experiences a first freeze around November 15, although it may occur any time from late October to December. The good news is this freeze is often light and brief, and with a bit of protection, your plants may go well into December.

A simple frost cloth, or pots covered with a blanket, may help your plants survive. If you use plastic, be careful to remove it when the sun comes out, as it quickly heats up in the sun and can cook your plants. Remember that temperatures vary even within your own yard. Farther north or in an exposed garden it will be colder, especially if the freezing temperatures come with wind or a rapid, extreme temperature drop. A forecast into the mid-thirties means time to protect your most tender plants.

Mulch helps keep the ground from freezing and protects roots. A pile of fall leaves heaped over your plants before a mild frost may be all you need to keep them going. Straw is another good cover or even cardboard.

What's Ready to Harvest in November? (Cont.)

Finally, do not forget to water! Be sure to keep your plants watered, especially before a possible freeze. Water thoroughly before the temperature dips if your ground is dry. Stressed plants are more likely to freeze. Just don't overwater, as powdery mildew and other fungal diseases also thrive this time of year, and waterlogged roots will stress your plants. The old practice of coating plants with a layer of ice to protect them from freezing is not advised for home gardeners.

When frost threatens, harvest any remaining frost susceptible crops as they won't survive without protection. These include beans, squashes, cucumbers, corn, okra, melons, peppers, tomatoes, eggplant, and potatoes.

Temperatures from 26-31 degrees may damage foliage on broccoli, cauliflower, chard, lettuce, mustard, radishes, and turnips, but the plants can recover. Be sure to protect these if a hard freeze is predicted, along with any very young seedlings or new plantings such as strawberries. Pea plants are fairly cold tolerant, but may be damaged or drop blooms. A hard freeze usually won't occur in November, but in Texas, you never know!

Beets, carrots, collards, Brussels sprouts, kale, spinach, rosemary, parsley, and cilantro can usually survive into the low twenties or below. Carrots can be stored where they grow and harvested when needed. There is plenty to choose from for fresh eating thru November. Harvest extra to dry or freeze for all winter long.

Don't forget the garlic! One of the easiest things to grow, garlic is usually issue-free and only takes a few minutes to plant. If you don't have a dedicated bed for them, tuck a few around your roses and in among your greens. While you can't harvest garlic in November, there is still time to plant for a harvest next spring.

Gardeners in North Texas are truly blessed to be able to harvest something almost all year long. With a little care, November gardens will keep right on sharing their bounty. In this season of thanksgiving, as we slow down, reflect, and give thanks, we are truly grateful for the fall blessings that continue to grow.



Weekly Fall Harvest Ready to Deliver

What's Ready to Harvest in November? (Cont.)

Resources

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

"Fall Vegetable Gardening Guide"

<https://agrillifeextension.tamu.edu/asset-external/fall-vegetable-gardening-guide/>

"Aggie-Horticulture"

<https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/archives/parsons/vegetables/coldtoler.html>

"Easy Gardening - Cilantro"

https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/vegetable/files/2010/10/E-277_cilantro.pdf

"Easy Gardening - Sugar Snap Peas"

<https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/vegetable/files/2010/10/EHT-015-Easy-Gardening-Sugar-Snap-Peas.pdf>

Extension Education in Travis County, "Frosts and Freezes"

<https://travis-tx.tamu.edu/about-2/horticulture/plant-problems-and-maintenance/frosts-and-freezes/>

Texas A&M Today, "How To Prepare Your Plants For Cold Weather"

<https://today.tamu.edu/2019/11/11/how-to-prepare-your-plants-for-cold-weather/>

What to Plant in November

- Carrots, spinach, mustard greens, radish, and turnips (seeds or transplants)
- Kale, broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, and artichokes (transplants)
- Trees, vines and shrubs
- Spring and summer flowering perennials (dig and divide, or new plants)
- Cool season annuals such as pansies, dianthus, and ornamental kale
- Narcissus and spring bulbs (late November)
- Sow seeds of crimson or white clover as a cover crop (Protects soil and prevents weeds. Cover crops reduce soil erosion and run-off)



Guide to Fall Planting of Onions and Garlic in North Texas

BY BARBARA BROWN

When choosing root crops for your fall vegetable garden you may think of beets, carrots, and radishes. However, there are two more vegetables you should add to the list—onions and garlic. Here are some tips to help you be successful in growing onions and garlic.

Garlic

Although there are hundreds of varieties of garlic, they are broken down into two main groups—hardneck and softneck. Hardneck garlic grows best in colder climates than we typically have in North Texas. They have a single row of cloves and a long flowering stem called a scape. Softneck garlic on the other hand has many cloves of different sizes and no flowering stalk.

Although using store-bought garlic may grow for you, it is not the recommended option because the variety may be wrong for our area or the garlic may have been treated with an anti-sprouting chemical. Varieties of softneck garlic that are known to grow well in North Texas are Silver White, Early Italian, and Inchelium Red Softneck.

Prepare the soil for planting by removing any vegetative growth and breaking up any soil lumps down to about 8 inches. Mix some organic material and fertilizer into the soil to help feed the plant as it grows. Cover the soil with 2 to 4 inches of mulch.

Separate the gloves from the garlic head just before planting. Plant the largest cloves and use the smaller ones for cooking. Plant cloves

pointy end up about 2 to 3 inches deep and 6 inches apart. Garlic rarely needs supplemental water during its winter growth. Add another helping of fertilizer about 3 weeks after planting. Harvest in the late spring or early summer when the leaves begin to turn brown.

If planning to store your garlic, you need to cure it. That means letting the bulbs dry out completely by separating bulbs from each other and placing them on a raised surface in indirect light. Be sure they have room to breathe. Then store in a cool, dry location.



Garlic (l.) and Onions (r.)

Fall Planting of Onions and Garlic (Cont.)

Onions

Onions are one of the easiest crops to grow. You may choose to plant seeds in November or December. However, to have a bit less effort and a greater chance of success, plant onion slips or sets in mid-to-late January. It is possible to plant onion sets in the late fall. However, onions are only hardy to 20°F. Even with heavy mulching, you are taking a risk that may or may not lead to a reward.

Onions are divided into three classes as defined by the number of required daylight hours needed for growing a bulb. For North Texas or any locations south of the 35th parallel latitude, short or intermediate-day onion varieties are recommended. The suggested short-day onion varieties are Sweet Red Onion, Red Creole, White Granex, and Texas Super Sweet 1015-Y. Good intermediate types include Sweet Red and Cimarron.

Onions grow best in full sun. Create a 4-inch-deep trench to which you add fertilizer and organic material. Then put back two inches of soil. Plant onion slips 4 to 6 inches apart by making a small hole about 1" deep and insert the slip root side down and pack gently with soil. Do not plant too deeply or they will not bulb. Water after planting and add supplemental water whenever the soil at 1 inch deep is dry. Onions are big eaters, so plan on adding fertilizer every three weeks until bulbs appear, then stop fertilizing. When the tops of the onions turn brown and fall over, it is time to harvest by gently tugging. If it does not release easily, brush some of the soil away from around the bulb and try again.

After harvesting, onions must be thoroughly dried before storing. You may dry them indoors or outdoors. To test for correct dryness, feel the leaves down to the onion bulb, it should feel dry and the bulb should have a thin paper-like coating. This will usually take 2 to 3 weeks. Store in a cool, dry location until use.

Enjoy your success!



Onions



Red Onion Harvest





It's time for Membership Renewal!

Scan this code or go to
dcmga.com/members-info/
to renew




Volunteer Opportunity
TECHNOLOGY TEAM
CONTACT VP-PROJECTS TOM O'BRIEN
tobrien083@verizon.net

Fall Into Gardening Recap

BY CHERYL HUCKABEE

The citizens of Denton County told us they'd like to learn more about several important gardening concepts:

- Soil improvement
- Low-maintenance, drought-tolerant plants
- Plant ideas for their landscape
- Using water more efficiently
- And growing vegetables and herbs

We delivered! One hundred twenty-seven participants learned about these concepts and more at the Fall into Gardening: Learn to Grow & Manage the Flow event in partnership with Upper Trinity Regional Water District (UTRWD) and Beulah Acres on September 17.

Participants attended four free classes, hands-on activities about drip irrigation, seed starting, hydrology stream trailer, garden tours, and information booths Ask a Master Gardener and Native Plant Society of Texas to learn gardening and water conservation tips and tricks.



Photos Courtesy DCMGA Member Kathryn Wells

Kathi Eflandt Demonstrates Plant Propagation



Speakers Charlotte Canion (left) and Bonnie Ambrose (right)

Fall Into Gardening Recap (Cont.)

We learned from a post-event survey that the most important things the participants learned and planned to implement are soil improvement and water conservation.

“Water conservation rain barrels and redirecting water to other parts of the garden. Soil and additives.”

“I learned how to properly collect soil samples for testing by using a pipe and going down 10 inches to gather the sample. It helps so much to revisit the technique of lasagna gardening and other ways of garden bed preparation.”

“Using methods of keeping as much water on my property as possible. Time how long I am watering a plant by hand, so I know how many gallons I'm giving it at a time rather than just estimating its needs.”

“Rain barrel, drip irrigation. Better soil amendment. Testing my soil. Start a compost. Making a few more flower beds in the back yard using the wet cardboard method.”

Two lucky participants won a GoNGrow box of plants and other gardening goodies!

We're already planning next year's event and many more educational programs about the topics you told us you want to learn: Landscape Design, Compost & Mulch, Pest Management, Plant Propagation, Weed Control, and many more. Check the Upcoming Events page on dcmga.com frequently for dates and details.



Native Plant Society of Texas members Pat Moyer, Barbara Beane, Beckey Cortines, and Pat & Don Edwards.



Stream Trailer demo, UTRWD Blake Alldredge, Water Education Coordinator.



Rounding Up 2023 Master Gardener Interns

BY JUDY ALLEN

People interested in becoming Master Gardeners attended an informal get-together in October to receive additional information on the program. Kim Wootton presented pertinent information on what expectations would be for incoming Master Gardener interns. This included required class times and volunteer service to become a certified Master Gardener.

Veteran Master Gardeners were there to welcome prospective interns and answer any additional questions. It was great fun getting to know new people who have the desire to learn about this amazing program.

The question was asked: What is a Master Gardener? In short, we are a volunteer organization that contributes time and knowledge to the community through education and service. Texas AgriLife Extension conducts this program through the Texas A&M University System. We are members of our local communities with a keen interest in the outdoors and all things plant related.

Master Gardeners in Denton County receive a minimum of 70 hours of specialized horticultural training. In the first year, 70 hours of volunteer time is also required. Countless projects qualify for the volunteer hours needed each year. These include becoming involved with youth in area schools, assisting in gardens that provide fruits and vegetables to local food banks, working in gardens at senior centers, and helping answer gardening questions that come into the extension office.

This year has been unprecedented in the number of applications received. It's exciting to see how many new people are interested in gardening. They seek a deeper understanding of research-based procedures and want to achieve more success in their own outdoor spaces. With this knowledge comes the responsibility to serve others and help them succeed.

All applications are received, and the vetting has begun. If you are interested in becoming a Master Gardener in 2024, please check out our website at [DCMGA.com](https://dcmga.com/) for important timelines in the application process.



Photo Courtesy DCMGA Member Judy Allen

DCMGA Members Barbara Beane, Kim Wootton, and Melissa Migis



A Night at the Movies Member Social

BY JUDY ALLEN

What a beautiful evening to get together and watch a great movie. Once again, we are able to enjoy the company of our dear Master Gardener friends. The snacks were abundant and the weather was perfect for a fall evening. We even wore our jackets and sat by the fabulous fireplace. The Gurley's home is perfect in every way and made us feel welcome and cozy. We all should try raising watermelons after seeing the success Tammie is having! Amazing!

Kiss The Ground was the movie of choice. What an eye-opener! We truly need to protect our soils and actively tell others. Most people don't realize how critical the situation is concerning our soil. We are losing our topsoil at an alarming rate due to several factors. Conventional farming with its deep tilling practices is a large contributor. We learned that we can each do our part by composting, mulching, and cover-cropping our precious soil. The good news is that we are seeing positive changes across our nation. Master Gardeners are certainly doing their part.

These social events help our friendships flourish and allow us to make new ones along the way. We are truly blessed to have such great people to hang out with.



Social Time



"Kiss The Ground" movie viewing



DCMGA member Tammie Gurley's watermelons



Wine Tasting Recap

BY SHARRIE ELY

On September 24, 2022, the Denton County Master Gardener hosted an outdoor social, "Denim and Diamonds: A Texas Wine-Tasting" at the home of DCMGA member Tammie Gurley. DCMGA members and their guests paid a \$25 fee to taste six different Texas wines and to hear about the wines, the wineries, and about what makes Texas wines different from other wines produced in the United States. Michael Cook, the Extension viticulture program specialist for North Texas with Texas AgriLife Extension, was able to take time from his very busy schedule to share information about each wine featured and then discuss the growth and breadth of the wine industry in Texas.

Michael Cook shared that the Texas Hill Country is second only to Napa/Sonoma, California in wine tourism. The majority of Texas' wine grapes, over 70%, are grown in the High Plains AVA (American Viticultural Area) near Lubbock. In the AVA the long, hot summers with cool nights balance the acidity of the grapes grown in this area. The low rainfall also decreases the chance of disease.

California produces about 85% of all US wine. Currently, Texas is ranked 4th or 5th in wine production which is behind Washington, New York and Oregon.

Texas is 3rd in the US overall in terms of economic impact, with a roughly 13.1-billion-dollar industry which is just behind New York. And, as mentioned, the Fredericksburg area is #2 in the US in wine tourism.

The Texas wines featured at this event were picked by type and availability so if attendees enjoyed a particular variety, they could find and purchase that variety.

The featured wines included:

- 1. Vermentino (2019) (Duchman Family Winery, Driftwood TX):** Sourced from Bingham Family Vineyard in the Texas High Plains, the Vermentino grape is an Italian varietal commonly grown in Piedmont and Sicily. The wine undergoes all stainless-steel fermentation. It has a light golden color, and its aroma is clean and light with hints of citrus.



Photos Courtesy DCMGA Member Sharrie Ely

Mike Cook, Texas AgriLife Extension Viticulture Specialist

Wine Tasting Recap (Cont.)

2. **2019 Viognier (2019) (Becker Vineyards, Stonewall TX):** Becker was the first winery to introduce the Viognier grape, which originates in the Northern Rhone region of France, to Texas. A lively, bright blend of Viognier, sourced from three Texas High Plains vineyards, this vintage excites the palate with crisp acidity and light body, allowing subtle fruit to come forward. Floral aromatics include citrus blossom, white peaches, which opens to a slight warm vanilla.

3. **Dry Rosé (NV) (Lost Draw Cellars, Fredericksburg TX):** A blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Counoise, Cabernet Franc, Moscato Giallo, Grenache, Muscat Canelli grapes from the Texas High Plains AVA (American Viticultural Area). This wine represents the best white and red grape varieties in the Texas High Plains AVA.

4. **'La Herencia' Tempranillo (2018) (McPhersonCellars, Lubbock TX):** Tempranillo, the noble grape of Spain, is relatively neutral for a thick-skin, dark-colored grape. It typically needs help from other grapes to add complexity. 'La Herencia' or 'The Heritage' is a delicious blend of 78% Tempranillo, 8% Grenache, 7% Mourvedre, 4% Carignan, and 3% Syrah.

5. **GSM (2017) (Llano Estacado Winery, Lubbock TX):** Grenache, Syrah, and Mourvedre grapes —commonly known by the acronym 'GSM', are the specialty of the Southern Rhone region in France. Smooth, with a velvety body. Flavors of flowers, fruit and spice fill the rich palate.

6. **Aglianico (2019) (Eden Hill Winery, Celina TX).** 100% Aglianico grapes from the Oswald Vineyard near Brownfield, Texas on the Texas High Plains. Aglianico is a grape variety that is particularly widespread in southern Italy and originally comes from Greece. Because of their high tannin content, the wines often need a few years of ripening to fully develop their quality.



Wine Tasting Recap (Cont.)

The team that helped organized this social event, pick the wines, organize the setup, arrange and prep food, and then clean up after the event were led by Dee Payne and included Kim Shaneyfelt, Susan Novak, Tammie Gurley, Karen Jamieson, Debby Ishee, Kaye Gross, Joanne Spurgin, and Sharrie Ely. Servers for this event were Susan Novak, Kaye Gross, Karen Jamieson, Debby Ishee, and Diane Sloan.



**Tammie Gurley, Dee Payne, and
Kaye Gross (l. to r.)**



Debby Ishee and Karen Jamieson

Once again, many thanks go to Michael Cook for an informative and entertaining evening, learning about Texas Wines.

Michael Cook is the Extension Viticulture Program Specialist for North Texas with Texas AgriLife Extension. He can be reached at 940-349-2896 or via email at m.cook@tamu.edu.



**A Few of Our
Favorite
Reads**

***Floret Farm's Cut Flower Garden* by Erin Benzakein (Author), Julie Chai (Author), Michele M. Waite (Photographer). Chronicle Books; Illustrated edition (March 7, 2017).**

***The Old Farmer's Almanac Vegetable Gardener's Handbook* by Old Farmer's Almanac. Old Farmer's Almanac; Illustrated edition (November 12, 2019).**

***The Complete Gardener: A Practical, Imaginative Guide to Every Aspect of Gardening* by Monty Don. DK (May 4, 2021).**

The information given herein is for educational purposes only. Reference to commercial products or trade names is made with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service is implied.

Proposed 2023 Board of Directors

With CEA-Hort Janet Laminack's approval, the Nominating Committee has assembled a proposed slate of officers to serve as our Association's 2023 Board of Directors.

The slate was presented to the membership in October with elections to be held at the November 9th General Meeting.

Per Section 6. of the Bylaws, each term of office is one year, and all offices have a two-year consecutive elected term limit, which means that individuals may be elected for the same position two years in a row.

President: Cheryl Huckabee (2018)

Vice President - Projects: Kelli Bixler (2020)

Secretary: Missy McCormick (2022)

Treasurer: Tom Torno (2022)

Communications Director - Systems: Judy Allen (2020)

Education Director: Daniel Arenas (2013)

Member at Large: Kim Shaneyfelt (2017)

Immediate Past President (a non-elected position): Kathryn Wells (2017)

Brief biographies of each nominee can be found on the DCMGA website:

https://dcmga.com/wp-content/blogs.dir/11/files/2022/10/Nominating-Committee_2023BOD_SlateProfile_WithMemo.pdf

Many thanks to this year's stellar Nom Com team members:

Dale Powell (Chair, 2011)

Joanne Spurgin (Vice Chair, 2019)

Russ Allen (2021)

Ann Athey (2021)

Pat Edwards (2012)

Peggy Fox (2022)

Regan McCamey (2022)

Dee Payne (2009)



A row of wooden blocks spelling out the word "ADMINISTRATION" on a wooden surface.

Pass-Along Marking

BY LIZ MOYER

Avoid Plant Sale Prep Horror!

We've all been there. It's time to pot up pass-alongs for the Plant Sale, but:

1. We can't remember which plants were outgrowing their locations and need to be thinned and/or dug around the margins (edges)
2. The ones we think probably were candidates are still too small to be sure
3. We can't remember the names of the plants, and they are too small for ID

Oh, the horror!



Photos Courtesy DCMGA Member Liz Moyer

Flag Marker

Act now! Grab a permanent felt tip pen and a bunch of plastic knives or utility marking flags and get out there. Mark your plants now for digging in early March. It's a good idea to make yourself a diagram or some notes when you mark them. Check your markers periodically throughout the winter to be sure they are still legible and to remind yourself where they are ...

Another advantage: utility flags and plastic knives come in a variety of colors and can really add a pop to your winter landscape!



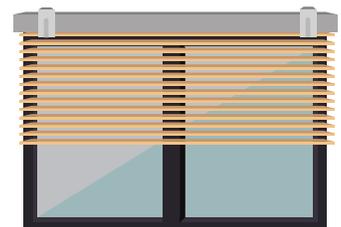
Knife Marker



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. If you have some to donate, contact Bob Bender through VMS.





Denton County Master Gardener Association YouTube Playlists

Flower Arranging
Herbs & Vegetables
Organic Gardening
Other Gardening Topics
Permaculture
Seasonal Tasks & Tips
Waterwise Gardening
Wildlife Habitat Gardening

Houseplants
Landscaping
Pollinators
Roses
Shade Plants
Tree Care
Turf Care

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

New! DCMGA General Meeting Presentation

November 9, 2022. 10:00 am to Noon
Open To The Public

"Landscaping for Birds. Creating a Feather-Friendly-Fly Zone" presented by Kathryn Wells, President Denton County MGA

Location: Global Spheres Center, 7801 S Interstate 35, Corinth, TX

You may also join virtually via Zoom. Advance registration required for virtual attendance.

To Register:

<https://uso2web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZArc-ihpjoPE9IZWAziSVL7eAspAXWGqCav>

DCMGA Members

Plan Your Week emailed each Friday has the most current Online CE Opportunities.

Resources & Education Opportunities For Master Gardeners and the Community We Serve

Science-based knowledge on a variety of topics.

New!

Home Grown Lecture Series

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension. Virtual.

November 3, 2022 – Holiday Meats–Not Just Turkey!
– Shannon Dietz, County Extension Agent–Ag & Natural Resources

December 1, 2022 – Plantable Christmas Tree Alternatives – Brandi Keller, County Extension Agent–Horticulture

Registration Required:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/home-grown-lecture-series-2022-tickets-221010808277>

New!

Tree Class

Trees are one of nature's most valuable assets, performing many functions and providing countless benefits. In this class, you will better understand how important trees are, how they work and what they can do for and with you!

After the class presentation, we will go outside and plant a tree together, demonstrating proper tree planting procedures that you can replicate at home. Co-sponsored by Beulah Acres.

November 5, 2022

9:00 am to Noon

Location: Global Spheres Center, Beulah Acres, 7801 S. Interstate 35, Corinth

For More Events – Visit
[the DCMGA Upcoming Events Page](https://dcmga.com/)

**BY HELP DESK TEAM**

Q: We had such a hot, dry summer this year and even some of my "hardy" plants suffered an insurmountable demise. I will have to replant, but I don't know where to start.

A: Who is not happy to see the heat and the drought of this past summer go and welcome fall weather? We are enjoying cooler mornings and evenings, along with less scorching afternoon highs, and finally some late October rainfall. And fall is the best time for planting trees, shrubs, and perennials!

Maybe it's time to reimagine your landscape by emulating nature. Would some of your shrubs that survived benefit from being transplanted to a different part of your landscape? Rather than changing your entire landscape design during our always-too-brief fall season, you may want to think about slowly replacing plants or expanding the beds at your property borders with native or adapted selections that require less water, maintenance, fertilizing, and pest control.

NICE (Natives Improve & Conserve Environments) Native Plant Partners {Please disregard the events in red at the top of the first page}

<https://dcmga.com/files/2021/04/NPSOT-2021-Native-Plants-2.pdf>

Native and Adapted Plants for North Texas, Texas A&M AgriLife

https://assets.ctfassets.net/v8jpyzhn40x/6IfLcu4sbpiiCEImg7LJtg/d3e5c13621eab9787afb75321ac67b7/Native_and_Adapted_PLants_for_North_TX_AgriLife.pdf

However, before you plant or transplant anything (except trees, which should be planted into unamended native soil), be sure to prepare your beds. Water may not have been absorbed into your soil if you have heavy clay, if the soil has been too compacted, or if the soil particles are drawn too close together as a result of dehydration. Soil amendments help increase drainage and aeration within the soil by creating air spaces and allowing water to drain through while still holding some degree of moisture within the soil.



Screened Compost

Amend your soil with lots of organic matter, including sphagnum peat moss, finely ground pine bark mulch, well-rotted manure and compost, and rototilling to 8" - 12". If you have heavy, clay soil, include 1" of expanded shale with all of that organic matter.

Adding mulch on top of the soil without any organic matter IN the soil will not be sufficient. Your plants that died probably died due to getting too dry and not solely because of the drought. Loosening the soil is necessary so that supplemental water can penetrate to your plants' roots and provide necessary nutrients, rather than just running off.

Mulching all bare soil conserves moisture, helps moderate soil temps (both summer highs and winter lows), and helps keep the weeds to a minimum. Please don't skimp on mulching, as it is so important, but be careful that you don't mulch up around the trunks of trees or shrubs where rot can develop and pests can go unobserved.

If you amend your soil in the fall, you will find that your spring gardening tasks will be much easier to accomplish. Your plants will be happy, healthy, and ready to start putting out all those leaves, flowers, and fruit you were hoping for when you planted them. You will have fewer weeds, fewer bugs, and generally a more self-sustaining garden because of your autumn efforts.

Resources:

Neil Sperry's Garden's, Ask Neil

<https://neilsperry.com/2022/07/qa-ask-neil-july-21-2022/>

Tarrant County Master Gardener Association, Sharecropper newsletter

http://www.tarrantmg.org/linked/sharecropper_october_2011.pdf



*If you have questions about any horticulture-related subjects,
please contact our*

Master Gardener Help Desk

at 940.349.2892 or master.gardener@dentoncounty.gov.

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

What's Growing On

Denton County Master Gardener Association Upcoming Events

- November 1** **Texas Tough Plants**
6-7 pm. Presented by Mike James. Little Elm Library.
- November 2** **Garden Art on a Slim Budget**
10-11 am. Presented by Lynda Harvey. Denton Senior Center.
- November 5** **Tree Class**
9 am-noon. Presented by Beulah Acres. Global Spheres Center, Corinth. Registration required.
- November 9** **General Meeting & Program**
10 am-noon. Business meeting & program "The Relationship Between Trees & Mycology", presented by Sebastian Tabibi. Global Spheres Center, Corinth. Registration required.
- November 11** **Texas Superstars**®
11 am-noon. Presented by Charlotte Canion. Dallas Aboretum.
- November 17** **KLB Garden Secrets Series: Texas Superstars**®
6-7 pm. Presented by Charlotte Canion in partnership with Keep Lewisville Beautiful. Lewisville Grand Theater.
- November 18** **Preserving Your Harvest**
9-10 am. Presented by Bonnie Ambrose. Denton Senior Center.
- November 18** **Fabulous Fall Flowers**
11 am-noon. Presented by Charlotte Canion. Dallas Aboretum.
- December 3** **Permanent Gardening Class**
8am-5 pm. Presented by Beulah Acres. Global Spheres Center, Corinth. Registration required.
- December 9** **Growing Succulents**
9-10 am. Presented by Bonnie Ambrose. Denton Senior Center.
- December 9** **Container Gardening**
11 am-noon. Presented by Charlotte Canion. Dallas Aboretum.

For detailed information: dcmga.com/upcoming-events

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.



2023 GREATER AUBREY AREA GARDENING SERIES

AUBREY AREA LIBRARY
226 COUNTRYSIDE DR., AUBREY, TX

JAN

19

Presented by Bonnie Ambrose
6:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Companion Plants

Learn about the benefits of companion planting to conserve water, save space, improve pest control and pollination, provide habitat for beneficial insects, and add beauty to your garden.

FEB

16

Presented by Mike James
6:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Plant Choices

Need help selecting plants for your landscape? This presentation will help you learn the crucial factors to consider in choosing the right plant for the right location, such as light, water, soil, and plant characteristics and function.

MAR

16

Presented by Rooted in
6:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Sprinkler Systems 101

Are you confused about how to manage your sprinkler system? This class simplifies the parts and components of your in-ground sprinkler systems with easy-to-follow tips on operating and setting your controller. You'll learn some water-saving tips, too!



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.



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.

2022 Board of Directors

President	Kathryn Wells
Vice-President - Projects	Tom O'Brien
Vice-President - Outreach	Georgiana McCoig
Secretary	Kelli Bixler
Treasurer	Dale Powell
Communications Dir. - Systems	Cheryl Huckabee
Education Director	Daniel Arenas
Member-at-Large	Kim Shaneyfelt
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

November 9 DCMGA General Meeting, Global Spheres Center (& Virtual) - Program: "Landscaping for Birds: Creating a Feather-Friendly Fly Zone"

December 14 Annual Christmas Party (members only)

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.gov

Webmaster:

dcmga.webmaster@gmail.com

Communications:

dcmga.communications@gmail.com

Website:

<https://dcmga.com>

Content

Submission deadline for the November edition of *The Root* is Tuesday, November 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 Cheryl Huckabee at dcmga.communications@gmail.com.

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

<https://dcmga.com>