

Denton County Master Gardener Association

THE ROOT

Grow With Us



Buds From The Board

BY CHERYL HUCKABEE, PRESIDENT

The month of March represents new growth, fertility, and the start of life in humans, plants, and animals. In the Northern Hemisphere, March is the first month of spring. The days are longer, plants begin growing again, and we can enjoy more time outside.

March 12 is National Plant a Flower Day. You can add various cool-season flowering plants to your landscape for early color. Learn more about your choices in [Brighten Your Landscape with Cool Season Color](#) in the February 2022 issue of *The Root*.

Are you interested in attracting pollinators and birds to your landscape? March is a fantastic time to plan and prepare your garden to invite the wildlife. Three great resources for getting you started are the [Let's Talk Birdie](#), [Creating a Feather-Friendly](#) article in the February 2020 issue of *The Root* and our Gardening Basics Fact Sheets [Building a Garden for Pollinators](#) and [Plants that Bring Nature into your Landscape](#). To keep wildlife safe and happy, check out this Gardening Basics Fact Sheet [Landscape Maintenance is for the Living Things](#).

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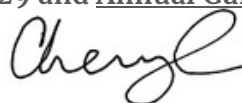
Buds From The Board (Cont.)

March 30 is National Take a Walk in the Park Day. As you explore the many parks, gardens, and trails in the Denton County area, look for eye-catching fuchsia blooms on Texas native Redbud trees (*Cercis canadensis*). Learn more about Redbud trees in the Plant of the Month- Redbud Trees article in the April 2019 issue of The Root. Daffodils are the birth flower of March. Denton County Master Gardeners have planted hundreds of daffodil bulbs at the Denton County Historical Park for you to enjoy.

Bluebonnets (*Lupinus texensis*), Winecup (*Callirhoe involucrate*), Blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium spp.*), and Indian paintbrush (*Castilleja spp.*) will appear along roadsides and in wildflower gardens in March. Check out the Wildflowers of Texas article in *Texas Highways* to learn more about all the wildflowers in Texas.

Of course, we must mention a few gardening tasks you should begin in March. It's time to start pruning and cutting back perennials after the last frost, usually around March 15 in North Texas. Find tips for what and how to prune in To Cut or Not to Cut in the October 2021 issue of The Root. Start a compost pile or bin with our Gardening Basics Fact Sheet Composting or build a rain barrel with this handy fact sheet from Texas A&M AgriLife Making a Rain Barrel. More monthly gardening tips are available on our website, Monthly Gardening Tips page.

Attend our March Monthly Meeting Program by Denton Master Gardeners Joanne and Steve Spurgin about their trip to the Chelsea Flower Show or our many presentations by expert Master Gardener speakers; details are available on our Event Calendar. Lastly, please mark your calendars for our Spring Plant Sale on April 29 and Annual Garden Tour on May 13. We welcome spring and wish you happy gardening!



Global Gardeners Program

BY DANIEL ARENAS & ALLISON LOHSE

We all have dreams, desires, and passions. We all have things that we want to accomplish in search of our own identity and overflowing joy in our hearts. To seek the best version of oneself seems like something that, under the wise eyes and directions of those we have as examples to follow, is a life-long goal that reveals itself season after season. Always continuing to focus on where your heart is leading you to and from.

Every story has a beginning and an end, and the journey that connects these two points should become something we strive for. We make plans – design, think, and dream about them – and take action to move towards that goal.

15 years ago, Pam Pierce, our beloved leader here at Global Spheres Center Gardens, became a certified DCMGA member. She encouraged those around her to take the next steps also. Today we have an 18-person Garden Crew, with 11 being certified DCMGA members! Pam loved and lived the garden life, and wanted the people she loved to share the same passion she always had – gardening.

But how do you perpetuate a passion, create a legacy, and dream bigger dreams for the future? One strategy that is our top priority is preparing future generations. So, from a passion that our leader fed for many years, on September 5th, 2008, we established our first Junior Master Gardeners Certification Project called Glory Gardeners.

People come and go, places and climate change, and time goes by. But our one heart's desire of preparing future generations has stayed at the top of the list. Evolving, watching and learning, adapting, and being creative, always striving to become the new face of what we can offer and how to care for our future generations.

Global Gardeners Level 1



Photos Courtesy DCMGA Member Daniel Arenas

Global Gardeners Level 2



Global Gardeners Program (Cont.)

Illuminate Creative Arts and Studio came about around 8 years ago. It is an on-site department that reaches into our community and offers many classes for kids, such as many styles of dance, music, theater, and arts. There are close to 500 kids enrolled in classes for this season. One that has become a loved one is gardening classes for kids.

Around 2019, Pam directed us to take the next higher step forward and offer garden classes for kids in a new way. Global Gardeners came about from the evolution, knowledge, and growth from the past seasons, and from a dream that Pam had many years ago to pass on the knowledge and passion for gardening that we as adults share.



**Global Gardeners Level 3
Blue Bird Nest Watch**

In 2020 we started running pilot programs with Illuminate and then...COVID hit. We weren't deterred by this but decided, Let's go! That circumstance only excited and challenged us to have these classes available also in a virtual format. Talk about testing new waters!

The Global Gardeners curriculum was designed for kids (and families) interested in connecting with the land and engaging with gardening and their community. A year-long after-school program is held for one hour each week for ten kids, ages 8 to 11.

Creating the curriculum was no joke. We utilized as a reference: all the Junior Master Gardeners materials we had, Learn Grow Eat and Go, Junior Master Naturalists, 4H, wildlife gardeners, personal research, articles, books, and websites. We knew that each form of resource was necessary to design something that would not only be about planting things we need as humans, but also would include promoting local ecoregion, restoration, recycling, composting, crafts, and physical activities. We felt all these topics were needed to spark that seed that is naturally in our kiddos about loving and caring for nature, in a way that nature would in turn provide the things we need to live.

What else would we need other than a curriculum, a place, and a time?

Global Gardeners Program (Cont.)



Volunteers in March 2022

Passionate people! Because for this system to thrive it must co-exist within our daily schedule and personal lives. Luckily, we had some garden crew staff members that were willing to get on board and make this happen.

2020 was a beautiful prototype year! We knew there was nothing wrong with trying and adjusting, but we had to prepare for something bigger, to have more people love it, to have more opportunities. Because SWAT (Science with Attitude) was the AgriLife branch that unified Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists, it made sense to join forces toward a common goal; structure it in a way where members can come and volunteer, pour their hearts out onto our kids, and make it a program that has room for so much growth.

We became the one active and weekly consistent kids program in Denton County since life changed with the pandemic.

Our first-year kids (named Level 1) wanted to keep going, which made us develop a guided curriculum for Level 2, as our new Level 1 kids were coming in. That journey led us to a Level 3 group of kids (the remnant from the first ever Level 1), and so on. Isn't it incredible to have kids, and their families, consistently for 3 years in a row?

By trial and error and some very hard work, the program thrived! Nowadays we have an active Level 1, 2, and 3! Busy and fun weeks, amazing kids and families, and incredible volunteers add up to round out our full plate.

As kids get promoted to next level, they get to venture more and more out of the classroom, and experience more responsibilities in different areas, projects, and gardens that they need to maintain as we move throughout the year. We now have homeschooled kids that want to

Global Gardeners Program (Cont.)



Harvest July 2022



Bumble Bee on Zinnia

participate, kids of all different age groups, so the next levels wait to be designed, and new strategies to create something to provide a space for kids that are in love with gardening.

A garden club maybe? An internship youth program? Remember when what we have now was once just that prototype in the beginning? It feels like we may be in the process of moving on to something bigger, just like any dream should be, limitless!

We know that there is more. We know that there is something bigger behind all this, and it is comforting and inspiring to keep moving forward along with the people that are a part of this program.

We would love to have you Master Gardeners be a part of this journey. There is room to grow and countless opportunities to explore! Why would you plant a tree? Why would you garden seasonal crops? Why would you promote and increase native species and invite wildlife to your garden? These are just a small sampling of some of the interesting and fun topics you can learn so much more about!

As someone who loves and cares about today and education for tomorrow, search your hearts deeper because we are sure that the answer you will find is – to honor and prepare the fields for the future generations and the future generations for the fields.

Master Gardener Volunteer Signup link:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0c4ca5ae29a3f9c07-global#/>

Illuminate Creative Arts Studio

https://dancestudio-pro.com/online/classes.php?account_id=17919



Meet Kathy Rainey

BY MIKE JAMES

What's with these California ladies? This month we shine our spotlight on Kathy Rainey, one of the many great graduates of the Class of 2017. Kathy grew up in the Northern California region around Sacramento.

Those that have been around a few years will know Kathy as a co-Project Manager of the Denton County Community Grove in the years 2018 and 2019. She followed the Grove assignment as the VP of Outreach on the DCMGA Board during those great and memorable years of Covid in 2020 and 2021.

Beginning in 2019, DCMGA was fortunate that Kathy stepped up as the Project Manager of the Gardenscapers, providing strong and nurturing leadership for one of DCMGA's largest and most impactful projects, one which has the broadest possible reach across the whole of Denton County.



Kathy Rainey
DCMGA Class 2017

Can it get any better than growing up and spending your teenage years in the Lake Tahoe basin, camping, hiking, horseback riding, skiing, and much more? For sure it gets better, as Kathy eventually had the opportunity of moving to North Texas so she could help all of us learn how to deal with our clay soil. Her path to Texas came with a couple of stops, first in Southern California where she and her husband Dan purchased a home with a large backyard. Everything grew, including her peach, apricot, and plum trees, as well as vegetables and berries, during the region's 12-month growing season.

From California, she and Dan moved to the Las Vegas area. Surely everybody is aware that very little grows naturally in that desert environment. Kathy stated that most landscape was either brown or that other color of brown, with a few tumbleweeds mixed in. During this time, she refined her love of nurseries, where she could be around something green. Still, she successfully grew lavender, roses, lantana, and Pride of Barbados.

In 2012, Cathy and Dan moved to Denton County (The Colony) to be close to her son and grandkids. But, almost as importantly, she wanted to experience growing something in the sticky clay soil many of us have. Only after arriving in North Texas and completing her training in DCMGA, did Kathy learn that she had a true passion for gardening.

Kathy has been a flurry of motion as she has learned all she can about EarthKind® principles and many of the great plants available in this part of Texas. Like many folks, one of her first

Meet Kathy Rainey (Cont.)

accomplishments in her yard was the removal of all plants in her gardens except for 3 red oak trees. She is now on her second attempt at planting what she wants. She readily admits that her first attempt with all deciduous plants gave her too much of a dead look. Her second attempt at a beautiful garden front and back has been much more successful.

The second attempt started with her favorite when she replaced the nonnative crape myrtle with a Texas Mountain Laurel (*Dermatophyllum secundiflorum*). During successive planting events, she has added Bridal Wreath Spirea (*Spiraea prunifolia*), Texas primrose (*Calylophus drummondianus*), Butterfly bush *Buddleia* 'Purple Haze', Head Over Heels 'Blush' hibiscus, and Four-nerve daisy (*Tetrameuris scaposa*). Her backyard includes Belleza White Gaura (*Gaura lindheimeri* 'Belleza'®), Pride of Barbados (*Caesalpinia pulcherrima*), Mystic Spires Blue Salvia (a Texas SuperStar® plant), Smoke tree (*Cotinus*), Chili Pequin (*Capsicum annuum* 'Pequin'), Pink Muhly Grass (*Muhlenbergia capillaries*), Pigeonberry (*Rivina humilis*), and *Caryopteris* 'Dark Knight'.



Caryopteris 'Bluebeard' with ice plants between them and stepping stones. Natchez Blackberries in large rectangular pot against the fence and Little Miss Figgy fig in yellow pot near gate on the top left



Kaleidoscopic Abelia and Caryopteris 'Bluebeard' in the foreground. Also pictured are rosemary and herbs, Skullcap ground cover, Mystic Spires Blue Salvia, Pride of Barbados, Christmas holly, a Smoke tree, and catmint.

Photos Courtesy DCMGA Member Kathy Rainey

Meet Kathy Rainey (Cont.)



**Head Over Heels 'Blush'
Hibiscus**



Belleza White Gaura

After pumping new energy into Gardenscapers, the following is a small list of their accomplishments. They have completed landscape improvements at the American Legion Hall Senior Center in Denton, Denton Senior Citizen Center, Good Samaritan Senior Living Community, and the North Texas Fairgrounds. There are many more projects currently in progress.

Kathy also contributes to DCMGA and to the greater Denton County by being an instructor for Design Your Yard, a member of the Project Review Committee, and a member of the Trinity Forks chapter of NPSOT (Native Plant Society of Texas). She has also completed the Texas Superstars Advanced Training course.

As you get to know Kathy Rainey you will quickly learn that this humble lady is a great nurturer of new gardeners through strong participatory and collaborative leadership skills.



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2023 Garden Tour Preview

Red Rock Crossing – Lake Dallas, Texas

May 13, 2023

Landscape Design tips, the importance of Native & Adapted plants, a shade gardening presentation, a scavenger hunt, and local arts and crafts booths – our Annual Garden tour has it all.

Visit the [DCMGA website](https://dcmga.com) for ticket information.

By Kathryn Wells

One look at the land known as Red Rock Crossing reveals something special about this (almost) five-acre property. One step on the land confirms it.

Abutting U.S. Army Corps of Engineers property bordering Lewisville Lake, Red Rock Crossing is lovingly and carefully stewarded by the Lake Dallas homeowners, who have opened their garden gates for this year's Denton County Master Gardener Association Garden Tour; their vision is to showcase the breathtaking beauty of nature that those who visit might find a place of refreshing, restoration, and renewal.

The largest property on this year's Garden Tour, Red Rock Crossing's "wildscaped" design provides habitats for an abundance of wildlife including scores of pollinators. With many gardens throughout the property for shade, sun, rain, xeriscaping, and everything in between, there's inspiration for everyone.

Wisely stewarding the land to support and nurture life in the landscape is the hallmark of the owners' property management and governs their garden choices. The homeowners have purposed to preserve the natural setting of native trees; more than six hundred canopy trees on the property include 175 Post Oaks (some over 100 years old!) and 150 Cedar Elms. Under-canopy native trees include countless Cherry Laurels as well as Elderberry, Roughleaf Dogwood, Smooth Sumac, and Yaupon Holly. Cutleaf Daisies, Flame Acanthus, Sundrops, and Winecups accompany hundreds of other native plant species (along with a few well-adapted



Photos Courtesy DCMGA Member B. Cortines

Wildflower Garden

No matter the season, diversity abounds in Red Rock Crossing's wildflower garden. From late spring through summer, species include Lemon Bee Balm (*Monarda citriodora*), Firewheel (*Gaillardia pulchella*), and a variety of Black-Eyed Susans and Coneflowers (*Rudbeckia* species).

2023 Garden Tour Preview (Cont.)

Red Rock Crossing – Lake Dallas, Texas

ones), which have been added to supplement the indigenous grasses, groundcovers, and plants already growing on the land. A seed-started wildflower garden now prolifically self-seeds, ensuring a plentiful seed bank for future spring and summer shows (much to the delight of the pollinators!).



Rain Garden

Dry except during times of heavy precipitation, water in the rain garden quickly percolates through the sandy loam soil.



Monarch butterflies

depend upon specific, high-quality habitat during their spring and autumn migrations, during which their flyway routes directly through North Texas. One fall favorite in the homeowners' garden is Aromatic Aster (*Symphotrichum oblongifolium*).

Since purchasing the property in 2014, the owners' stewardship has included identifying and removing invasive plants (such as privet and honeysuckle), which escaped cultivation from neighboring properties. It is a labor of love and a gift that keeps on giving, as the work requires annual assessments (and additional removals).

Located in the Cross Timbers ecoregion, Red Rock Crossing has sandy loam soil, and it's named for the red rocks found in the soil. The "crossing" nomenclature represents a respite for weary travelers ... be they pollinators or people!

An abundance of educational features adds value for visitors to this property; in addition to our Master Gardener docents, Monarch Watch Conservation Specialist Carol Clark, Texas Parks & Wildlife Urban Biologist Sam Kieschnick, and Native Plant Society of Texas – Elm Fork Chapter representatives will be available throughout the day to help guests learn the importance of native flora and the fauna that depend on them. A variety of seating areas strategically sprinkled throughout the property welcomes visitors to sit a while and enjoy the show of busy bees, birds, and butterflies.

2023 Garden Tour Preview (Cont.)

Red Rock Crossing - Lake Dallas, Texas



Goldfinch

Leaving (at least some!) plants ungroomed in the winter months provides architectural interest in the garden as well as perches, food, and shelter for wildlife. Wintering American Goldfinches especially appreciate the seedheads left intact throughout the grounds at Red Rock Crossing.

As you plan your route for the 2023 Garden Tour, make sure to save plenty of time for Red Rock Crossing; there's much to see, much to learn, and much room to sit and rest a while. We'll be waiting for you!



A Few of Our Favorite Reads

No Dig: Nurture Your Soil to Grow Better Veg with Less Effort, by Charles Dowding. DK; (September 6, 2022).

The Vegetable Gardener's Bible, 2nd Edition: Discover Ed's High-Yield W-O-R-D System for All North American Gardening Regions: Wide Rows, Organic Methods, Raised Beds, Deep Soil, by Edward C. Smith. Storey Publishing, LLC; Illustrated (December 2, 2009).

Secret Gardens of the Cotswolds (Volume 1), by Victoria Summerley. Frances Lincoln; (February 1, 2015).

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Plant of the Month - Native Ground Covers

BY LEE ANN YATES

Grass won't grow under my trees! I've got a slope in my landscape that needs cover and erosion control! What can I plant in that bare spot? We've got problems, friends, right here in Denton County, I tell you – problems! This month I offer three solutions for these problems that won't add to your stress and will pretty up those troublesome spots – native groundcovers! Whether you have full sun, full shade, or a range in between, there is a native groundcover for you. Let's replace the groundcovers we've been using, and the problems they bring, with low maintenance Frog fruit, Horseherb, and Wood ferns!

We are all familiar with English ivy used extensively as a ground cover, especially in older neighborhoods around the county. The Texas Invasive Species Institute has classified English ivy (*Hedera helix*) as a "serious problem in some areas" because of its extensive growth that can cover plants and trees, stopping the normal plant succession. It has escaped the suburban landscape and can be found in the wild, threatening all layers of a forest and destroying the ecosystem. It can kill trees – and pull bricks off the side of a building. Additionally, it is tolerant of pre-emergent herbicides and unfazed by post-emergent herbicides due to the waxy cuticle covering the leaves and stems of the plant. You should mow or weed-whack through a patch to expose openings in the leaves and stems just before spraying with herbicide (glysophate) for any hope of success in destroying it. The final tidbit of bad news is that English Ivy hosts the pathogen bacterial leaf scorch (*Xylalla fastidiosa*), which affects native and ornamental trees like elms, oaks, and maples. Our trees suffer enough environmental stress without pathogen-hosting English ivy adding to their load!



English Ivy Invasive by Melissa McMasters, CC BY-SA 2.0

Invasive English Ivy

Asiatic jasmine is another commonly seen groundcover across residential and commercial properties in the county. There are several varieties and they are sturdy hard-to-kill plants. However, they do scorch in drought, which we have pretty regularly, and tend to look scraggly and unkempt pretty quickly. Mowing and weed-whacking the patch is how most people deal with clean up, but within a short time that only leads to Asiatic jasmine forming a thick, tangled, web-like mat that Evil Spiderman would be proud of! In short, a big mess!

Native Ground Covers (Cont.)

So, what's a gardener to do with those dog-gone bare patches? Go native!! Groundcovers that are native to our area are the perfect solution bringing almost evergreen properties to our landscapes. Two have tiny flowers to brighten the shady areas under trees and one has beautiful textural fronds. Let's take a look at three native groundcovers: Frog Fruit (*Lippia nodifloraobtusa*), Horseherb (*Calyptocarpus vialis*), and Wood Fern (*Thelypteris kunthii*).

Frog fruit (*Lippia nodifloraobtusa*) has the best name, don't you think? In my mind's eye, I picture Kermit sitting under a tree eating fruit amongst little green leaves and dainty white flowers ... how charming! I tried to discover how it got its name and the closest I got was to a relative's medieval name of "fog fruit" and the guess that the name changed over time. There is no evidence that frogs particularly like it or are drawn to or repelled by it. However, in Spanish Frog fruit is called Hierba del sapo, toad's plant, so perhaps the English borrowed it?

Frog fruit, also known as Turkey Tangle Fogfruit (another great visual – clumsy turkeys!!) is classified as a native, perennial, semi-evergreen groundcover. In mild winters or in areas protected from frost, it remains green, but will get frost-burned in the open during severe cold snaps. It goes dormant during hard winters. The leaves can take on a pretty reddish or purplish tinge in winter. It can be mowed in winter, but can take years to recover if you mow it while it is blooming in spring, summer, or fall. It is a member of the Verbena family, spreading one foot wide, but only three to six inches tall. This makes Frog fruit a good choice to fill in between stepping stones on a patio or walkway in addition to covering bare spots under trees or as an effective erosion control plant on slopes. It is moderately steppable, but won't stand up to heavy foot traffic. Frog fruit blooms are the stuff of fairies – white verbena-like blossoms made up of a circlet of tiny white flowers with purple-tinted centers – just the sweetest teensy things ever!



Frog Fruit

Frog fruit makes a great substitute for your entire lawn as its light requirements range from full sun to partial shade. Consider Frog fruit if you are putting in a new lawn, replacing a poor lawn, or to integrate with your existing lawn in patchy shady areas.

Native Ground Covers (Cont.)

Another fantastic feature of Frog fruit is that it tolerates both periodic flooding and drought conditions – perfect for our crazy weather. Frog fruit doesn't mind the flooding rains that recede within a couple of days we deal with our poorly draining soil, making Frog fruit perfect for consistently wet areas of your landscape. Surprisingly, it doesn't mind the drought conditions of midsummer either. However, it needs supplemental water in drought, but not as much as a lawn needs under those stressful conditions.

If you haven't made up your mind to try some Frog fruit, let me just throw this into your thought processes. Frog fruit is a larval host for Phaon Crescentspot, Buckeye, and White Peacock butterflies. The tiny flowers provide a food source for hummingbirds and the leaves provide low cover for birds. Who wants the chore of a grass lawn when you can have all the benefits of a low-maintenance, low-water Frog fruit lawn?!

We have choices, people!! Another oddly named native groundcover, Horseherb, also known as straggler daisy, is in the Aster/Daisy family. I couldn't find an origin for this name either, however, in Spanish it is known as hierba del caballo – literally, Horse herb. Perhaps the Spaniards' horses chowed down on it? Horseherb is also semi-evergreen and perfect in those partial shade to full shade situations in your landscape, especially if those are drier areas with poorer soil. Horseherb grows about six inches tall, but in a prostrate fashion, so it flops over, nicely filling in empty spaces. It blooms from spring, through summer, and until a hard frost with the cheeriest, petite yellow flowers you've ever seen! Bright little confetti flowers in shady spots!



Horseherb

Horseherb (*Calyptracarpus vialis*), is a low-maintenance, native, perennial, but it is deciduous in north central Texas. In a mild winter it will remain green; however, in a harsh winter it will die back. You can mow to remove the dead growth in winter and occasionally during the growing season to "prune" it, but don't overdo the mowing. You will lose the natural softness of this sweet groundcover. One possibly positive feature is that Horseherb will naturalize and fill in shady, empty areas. Horseherb expands by stolons, or runners, and stem rootings and if your soil is too rich, too "good," it can overrun areas and will need to be controlled, but that can be done by pulling it up in unwanted areas. Water weekly for the first growing season until it is well established. Afterward, Horseherb will survive on rainfall except in drought conditions.

Native Ground Covers (Cont.)

Avoid planting Horseherb in an area where it may experience "wet feet" or it may rot. This is really a plant for drier areas of your landscape, but during our extended droughts of midsummer, it would benefit from some supplemental water to keep it looking its best. If your garden is a restaurant for deer, Horseherb is deer resistant! Dry, shady, bare – this is Horseherb's preferred home – talk about a problem-solver! Like Frog fruit, Horseherb is a wonderful choice for a whole lawn substitute and works well on slopes for erosion control. It tolerates moderate foot traffic, but due to its sprawling growth habit doesn't work well between flagstones in a path or patio.

One more happy reason to grow this tiny bit of floral sunshine is its attraction to small butterflies like sulfurs and skippers as both a larval host and a nectar source. Seeing those little butterflies flutter across a lawn of tiny yellow Horseherb flowers is a beautiful sight!



Thelypteris kunthii, by Daderot, CC BY-SA 1.0

River Fern (Wood Fern) at Zilker Botanical Garden, Austin, TX

The last native groundcover you might consider is Wood fern (*Thelypteris kunthii*) known for its semi-evergreen foliage, rather than blooms. Who doesn't love a fern? They bring to mind cool, damp shade – the antidote for summer! This perennial offers year-round seasonal interest with cool green fronds unfurling scroll-like in spring, standing tall through summer, turning bronze in fall, and soft brown in winter. Around Valentine's Day you can cut off the dead fronds at their base before spring growth starts to appear. That is about all the maintenance Wood fern needs,

other than watering and dividing the root balls when necessary either to free up space or to multiply the ferns you have to fill up space.

Wood ferns are also known as River ferns because in eastern Texas they grow in moist woodlands, but in west Texas they grow along river banks and in seeps along canyon walls and floors. You may also see Wood fern referred to as Southern Shield fern in nurseries. Ferns don't have blossoms because they propagate through the little spores lining the backs of the fronds. They are a fantastic way to bring texture into your shady landscape and play well against broader-leaved plants.

Native Ground Covers (Cont.)

Wood ferns are not picky about the soil they are planted in as long as it stays pretty moist. They are very happy in heavy, wet soils and will tolerate poor drainage as long as the soil is not compacted. Wood ferns are not appropriate for soils that will completely dry out, although they can survive brief dry spells. Mulching heavily will help maintain moisture and they need to be planted in part shade to full shade in your landscape. They will thrive in average to rich soil, but will really appreciate soil amendments and will need watering regularly, especially during drought.

Wood ferns reach a mature size of three feet wide and three feet tall, making them a perfect plant for a single focal point in your landscape or as a shady mass planting. Like the previous two groundcovers, Wood ferns can be used for erosion control on a shady, moist slope. They are a perfect plant for a wetlands garden, around a pond, or a boggy landscape spot.

Ecological balance and sustainability recommendations embrace including native plants in at least 30% of your landscaping to provide necessary habitat for pollinators and other wildlife. If you want more information on native groundcovers, as well as native plants in general, check out our friends at the Native Plant Society, Trinity Forks Chapter – the chapter for Denton County. Their website is <https://npsot.org/wp/trinityforks/>.

I hope you consider adding some native groundcovers to your landscape. There is one for every type of light and moisture situation and they are a wonderful way to increase diversity in your plantings. Happy Gardening, folks! It's SPRING!!



Photo Courtesy Cressler, Alan, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

A Colony of Southern Shield Fern

Native Ground Covers (Cont.)

Resources

Texas Invasive Species Institute, "English Ivy"

<http://www.tsusinvasives.org/home/database/hedera-helix>

Texas SmartScape, "Frog Fruit," "Horseherb"

<http://www.txsmartscape.com/plant-search/plant-details.php?id=244>

<http://www.txsmartscape.com/plant-search/plant-details.php?id=344>

Native Plant Society of Texas (NPSOT), "An almost evergreen lawn grass substitute"

<https://npsot.org/wp/plant-profiles/an-almost-evergreen-lawn-grass-substitute/10777/>

The National Gardening Association, Plants Database

<https://garden.org/plants/view/80537/Horseherb-Calyptocarpus-vialis/>

Collin County Chapter, NPSOT, "Wood Fern (*Thelypteris Kunthii*)"

<https://npsot.org/wp/collincounty/2020/01/08/wood-fern-thelypteris-kunthii-perennial-for-full-to-part-shade/>

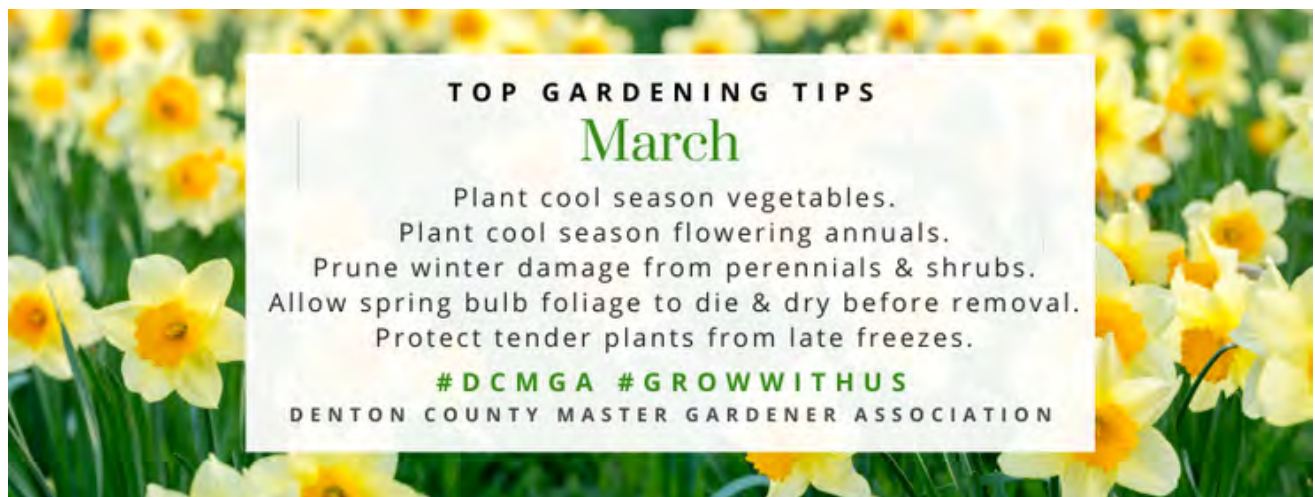
Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, "Calyptocarpus vialis," "Thelypteris Kunthii"

https://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id_plant=CAVI2

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

Trinity Forks Chapter, NPSOT

<https://npsot.org/wp/trinityforks/>



You're Invited

March 2023, Monthly General Meeting & Program
"The Chelsea Flower Show"



Denton County Master Gardeners Joanne and Steve Spurgin will take us on their journey to the 2022 Chelsea Flower Show held on the grounds of the Royal Hospital Chelsea, London, England.

March 8, 2023, 10 am
Global Spheres Center
7801 S Interstate 35E, Corinth, TX 76210

Preparing Your Landscape For Spring

BY BARBARA BROWN

Spring heralds a time of renewal when the trees, grass, shrubs and flowers greet each day with exuberant new growth. The first day of spring is officially March 21. With only a few weeks remaining before spring hits in all its glory, now is the time to clean up, prune, fertilize and prepare your landscape for success.

Landscape Beds

If you have not done it already, remove spent annual plant debris from your landscape beds. Clear leaves away from the base of perennial plants to make pruning easier. The leaves can remain in the beds on top of the soil as mulch if you choose. If you have not done a soil test in a couple of years, now is a good time to find out which nutrient supplements your new and existing plants need.

Texas A&M AgriLife offers a soil testing service (<https://soiltesting.tamu.edu/>) and provides instructions on how to take a soil sample. An internet search can help you find other testing labs and some garden centers offer soil-testing services to their customers. Although there are home soil testing supplies available, they may not be as accurate or complete as the results from a soil testing lab.

For perennial plants, the University of Georgia Extension service recommends that you "Use hand pruners to cut back shoots that are dying from disease or winter cold or that have become leggy. Always cut dying shoots back to healthy green wood to prevent further dieback. Once new shoots are 6 to 8 inches long, they can be pinched or 'tip pruned' to encourage branching, compact growth and more blooms."

Grass

The first thing to do: if you have an in-ground irrigation system is to make sure all your sprinkler heads work properly. Maintaining and auditing in-ground sprinkler systems once each year increases their efficiency and effective water distribution for your lawn. Check for leaks and broken or clogged sprinkler heads. Run the system and check for uniformity of coverage and make sure you are not overwatering some areas or accidentally watering streets or sidewalks.



Photo Courtesy Flickr

Clear leaves away from the base of perennial plants to make pruning easier.

Preparing Your Landscape For Spring (Cont.)



Photo Courtesy: Wikimedia Commons

Make sure all your sprinkler heads work properly.

like shaving. An old razor blade may cut and scrape your skin while a new blade cuts smoothly and gently. Other lawn tools you use periodically, like sprayers and spreaders, should also be cleaned to make them ready for use.

Remove or mower-mulch residual leaves on your grass. You may choose to use a pre-emergent to stop weed seeds from sprouting and competing with your grass. There are several reliable weed seed control chemicals available. The organic pre-emergent option is corn gluten meal, which should be applied at the rate of 20 lbs. per 1,000 square feet. For weeds that have already emerged, choose a post-emergent weed control product. Weed and feed products are not recommended for early spring use.

A general rule of thumb for the first fertilizing treatment of your lawn is to wait until after two or three mowings or when daytime temperatures are 80° or above for several days. The amount of nitrogen fertilizer needed depends on the type of grass in your yard and the amount of sunlight so read the package instructions carefully or follow the recommendations from your soil test.

If you have not yet cut back your ornamental grasses, now is the time before they begin to green up and grow.

Trees

Do a careful inspection to identify any dead or broken branches that should be removed.

"Common reasons for pruning are to remove dead branches, to improve form, and to reduce

Becky Bowling, Ph.D., AgriLife Extension urban water specialist, suggests that residents may also reach out to their water district, city or county to inquire about possible irrigation system audit services they provide. If there are problems with your system, using professionals licensed by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality is recommended.

Next, clean and sharpen the blade on your mower. This gives you a good cut and reduces tearing and damage to grass blades, which makes them less attractive and more prone to infection. Think of it

Preparing Your Landscape For Spring (Cont.)

risk. Trees may also be pruned to increase light and air penetration to the inside of the tree's crown or the landscape below." (*Texas Forest Service*). If you are removing growth for reasons other than dead or broken branches, no more than 25% of the crown should be removed and less than that for mature trees, which do not tolerate pruning as well as young trees. Texas A&M AgriLife Extension offers a helpful video on how to prune trees correctly at:

https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=watch_permalink&v=953432805073981

ALERT about wound dressing oak trees:

experts usually do not recommend using wound dressings on pruned branches.

However, if you are pruning an oak tree (live oak, white or red oaks), you should use a wound dressing. Why this is a big deal?

Oak wilt, one of the most destructive tree diseases in the United States, kills oak trees. Although more frequently documented in Central Texas, it has been detected in North Texas also. Oak wilt is an infectious disease caused by *Bretziella*

fagacearum fungus, which invades and disables the tree's water-conducting system (xylem).

Best advice for pruning oak trees: wait until fall to prune oak trees. If for safety reasons you must prune an oak tree, Mike Sills, Dallas County Urban Forester from Texas Forest Service recommends dressing the wound with latex paint because the sap oozing from the fresh cuts may attract oak wilt disease-carrying insects. For more information on oak wilt, see [Texas Oak Wilt's website](#).



Do a careful inspection to identify any dead or broken branches that should be removed.

Adding mulch around the base of your tree helps conserve moisture. Apply a 2 to 4-inch layer of organic mulch and no more; use less if the soil drains poorly. More than 4 inches of mulch may harm the tree's root system. If using finely textured or double-shredded mulch, use 1 to 2 inches only since these materials allow less oxygen through to the root zone. (*Penn State Extension Service*). To fertilize your trees or not? Generally, trees growing in a well-maintained yard do not need additional fertilizer. However, when a tree's growth is being impacted by streets, sidewalks, or structures, you may choose to give it a nitrogen fertilizer boost. If you are not sure, test a soil sample from the area around the tree.

Here's to a successful spring season for all of us!

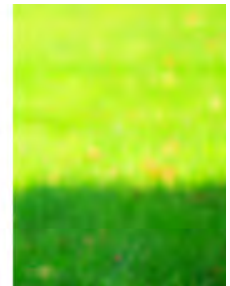


Volunteer Opportunities

Plan Your Week

We all enjoy PYW. If you would be interested in helping with this most valuable information tool, please let us know. Gain valuable volunteer service hours as you assist Trish Percy in communicating all the timely dates that keep our organization running smoothly.

Tech Team



The Grove

Pat Moyer is currently serving at the Grove. He is seeking someone to take over as PM.

One of Denton County's Government Centers located in Carrollton hosts an award-winning Denton County Master Gardeners Association project, called the Sandy Jacobs Government Center Annex Fruit and Nut Grove.

GAAGS

Greater Aubrey Area Gardening Series (GAAGS) Leadership Team is looking for a PM and team members. Approximately 3-4 hours per month for 3-4 months is needed for the PM role and 2 to 3 hours per month for other team members from January through April. This team's work toward DCMGA's educational outreach to the public and DCMGA members in the Greater Aubrey Area is well documented.

For more information about any of these positions, contact Trish Percy (PYW), Tom O'Brien (Tech), Pat Moyer (Grove), or Jolayne Lacour (GAAGS) at dcmg.vpprojects@gmail.com.

**Volunteers
needed**

Turf Removal: An Alternative to the Lush Green Lawn

BY REBECCA FRIDLEY

Ahhh! Spring is finally moving in our direction, and the most prominent thing about spring is the lawns will finally start to wake up and come to life. A lush green lawn is so beautiful, but the upkeep can be daunting, and the watering is expensive and, frankly, a waste of water on our already decreasing supply. Do you ever wish you could remove that green lawn and replace it with an alternative? Well, this article will share options for turf removal and a few alternatives to turf. It may sound scary, but the results could be beautiful and surprisingly freeing!

Failure to Plan = Planning to Fail

Any major project requires a plan if you want to be successful. I would suggest researching what you want the final project to resemble. Do you want a desert landscape with rock, boulders, and yucca? Are you thinking more of a raised garden or flower bed? Considering the final outcome into your initial plan is essential regardless of your final product.



Photo by Kevin Casper, CCO Public Domain

A Lush Green Lawn
is a burden on our decreasing water supply.

Various Methods of Turf Removal

The fastest but possibly least desirable method of turf removal is the use of chemical herbicides. If you choose to use this method, follow the EarthKind® philosophy. (See below). Always use amounts and instructions stated on the label. Too much of any chemical could be a poison that gets into the soil and can get onto the skin or pet paws, causing chemical burns or illness. Just think, if it is not suitable for the lawn, it is probably not good for humans or animals.

Another method of turf removal, according to the University of Maryland Agricultural Extension website, is the "Slice and loosen method." The University of Maryland suggests "with a flat rectangular blade, also known as a garden spade, slide the spade through the top 1-2 inches of sod and soil, parallel with the ground. Turn the sod and soil in a different area and let it dry. Once completely dry and brown, it can be mixed back into the soil or garden as this material is rich with nutrients." Keep in mind, if you have Bermuda grass, it spreads by stolons and rhizomes. This is certainly more difficult to eradicate than other grasses.

Turf Removal: An Alternative to the Lush Green Lawn (Cont.)

The best and most EarthKind® method to remove the turf in your yard is to smother the grass. The most efficient way to accomplish this is to use a lasagna layering technique.

Lasagna Layering

Lasagna layering creates a "new soil layer atop the lawn you wish to remove," writes Rosemary McCreary with the University of California Master Gardener program.

In the weeks before beginning your project, collect plenty of cardboard boxes and newspapers. Hint, make friends with the neighbor who has the Amazon truck in front of their house daily! Cut the boxes into large flat, disassembled sheets of cardboard. Remove any plastic tape or staples. Please note boxes with glossy coating do not work well as they do not quickly decompose.

Next, cut the grass as short as possible and begin layering. For the first layer, place large pieces of cardboard or newspaper directly on the grass you are removing. If you are using newspaper, you will need enough for several layers. It is vital that you overlap the edges to keep the sunlight from reaching the grass.



Photo by naturalflow, flickr

**Lasagna Gardening
begins with layers of cardboard and then additional
layers of dried leaves or hay and compost.**

Once you have fully covered the grass with a cardboard layer, cover the cardboard with dried leaves or hay, then a layer of compost. You may continue to layer alternating dried leaves or hay and compost a few more times.

The decomposition process will take about 6-8 weeks for the grass to die and for the cardboard and organic material to break down.

Turf Removal: An Alternative to the Lush Green Lawn (Cont.)

Final stages

Once you have achieved the desired results, you may begin carrying out your final vision. I lived in Las Vegas, Nevada, for many years and loved the desert landscape look. The rocks, boulders, yucca, and succulents were so fun to watch, and the best part was virtually no watering.

Denton County has so many wonderful Texas native trees, plants, and flowers to choose from for your new space. You can create a garden full of fabulous flowering plants that need little water to survive. Many of our Master Gardeners have done just that. If you are unsure where to purchase plants native to Texas, make plans to attend the Denton County Master Gardener Association Plant Sale Saturday, April 29, 2023. There is always a fantastic variety of items to purchase and plant.

If you have additional questions regarding turf removal, contact the Denton County Master Gardener Help Desk at master.gardener@dentoncounty.gov

Happy Gardening!

Sidewalk Strip

Many Master Gardeners are turning their sidewalk strip (hell strip) into low- or no-water use native plant gardens.



Photo by Bryant Olsen, Flickr

Resources

Lawn (Turfgrass) Removal Methods, *University of Maryland Extension*
<https://extension.umd.edu/resource/lawn-turfgrass-removal-methods>

Grass Removal Methods, *University of California Master Gardener Program of Sonoma County*
https://ucanr.edu/sites/scmg/Lawn_Replacement/Grass_Removal_Methods/

Landscape IPM , *Texas A&M AgriLife Extension*
<https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2010/10/ipm.pdf>



Garden Visits

Chelsea Flower Show

BY STEVE AND JOANNE SPURGIN

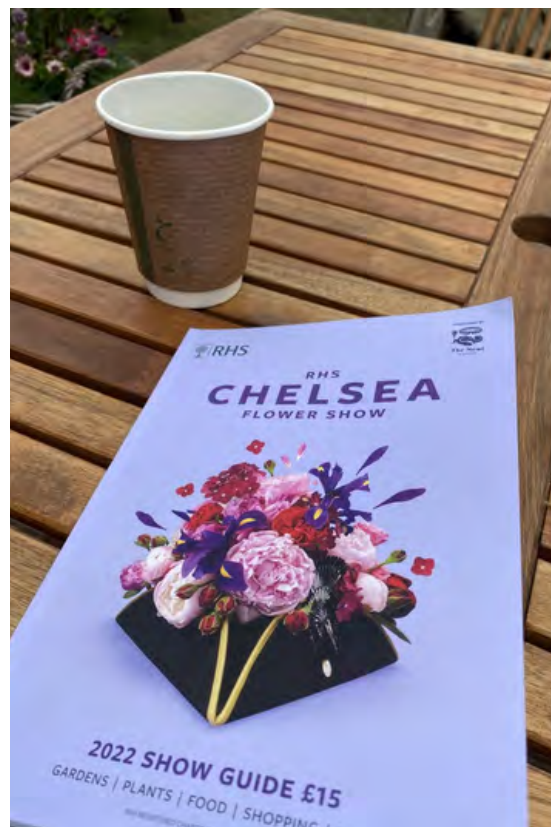
Editor's Note: In 2020 we began highlighting local gardens in response to the need for social distancing and restricted travel. Restrictions have eased, but interest in local (and not so local) gardens is alive and well. So we continue to highlight gardens that our members visit.

Many people have not heard of the Chelsea Flower Show but for gardeners, it's the Super Bowl of horticulture. Sponsored by the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS), a 200-year-old garden charity with a mission of improving people's lives through plants, the show has grown to be one of RHS's largest events. Held annually since 1912 on the grounds of the Royal Hospital Chelsea, London, minus the world wars and COVID years, the RHS Chelsea Flower Show is known worldwide as the most prestigious flower show and garden design competition. With over 170,000 attendees during the five-day event, the first two days' attendance is for "members only," with the Queen attending on the first day. Throughout the show, the Queen's Platinum Jubilee was honored.

Planning the Trip

Being an English-speaking country, with good public transportation, suggestions from friends, and being cost-conscious, we planned a six-day trip to London to attend the show in May 2022 and see other gardens in the area. Joining the RHS enabled us to purchase tickets to attend the 2nd day of the show with other RHS members plus other annual benefits.

From Heathrow Airport we took the Heathrow Express train (or 'tube' as they call it) which goes directly to Paddington Station, the central train hub in London. We selected a hotel within walking distance of Paddington Station and on the route that would take us to Sloan Square, the stop for the Chelsea show. Across the street from our hotel was Hyde Park where Kensington Palace was. Walking is common in London and the areas we were in were beautiful, very safe, and the architecture was awesome!



Photos Courtesy DCMGA Members Steve and Joanne Spurgin

Chelsea Flower Show (Cont.)



The day before the Chelsea Flower Show we spent time finding the showgrounds and visiting the Chelsea Physics Garden and the Tower of London. Exiting the Sloan Square train station we walked onto Kings Road, a two-mile stretch of high-end shops, restaurants, and art galleries. To honor the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and the Chelsea Flower Show, storefronts were decorated with floral designs. We walked several blocks on Kings Road and then several residential blocks to the showgrounds. The shops and architecture were beautiful and a sight to see. A short walk from there was the Chelsea Physics Garden, the oldest garden in England established in 1673 to grow plants for medicinal purposes. We enjoyed the free very informative tour and then headed to the Tower of London to see the crown jewels.

2022 RHS Chelsea Flower Show Highlights

On show day we arrived early. It was a wonderful day! Truly a gardener's heaven. We spent the day viewing 39 remarkable gardens. Designers compete for the limited coveted spots by submitting sketches and the purpose of their design. Judging takes three to four days with highly experienced judges. Delivery of the designer's brief, design, overall impression, planting, and construction are the elements judges use to determine the highly coveted awards.



Chelsea Flower Show (Cont.)

The large Show Gardens emphasized the possibilities of utilizing plants for environmental and mental health issues, establishing community connections, inspiration for bee-friendly plants and the habitats needed, growing edibles among park settings, discovering the soil beneath us, and urban pocket park possibilities were several themes displayed. The smaller Sanctuary Garden designs concentrated on using the power of nature to nurture and heal.

The large Show Gardens are built outside in three weeks from scratch then after the show dismantled in five days. The smaller gardens have two weeks to build and three days to dismantle. Anywhere from 650-4,000 plants are utilized within the design creations. Growers plan for the plants to be at their peak performance for the show so plants are not planted in the soil but remain in pots and are assembled closely together to achieve a packed garden effect. Even large trees and shrubs grown in containers have been used for multiple shows. Truly a spectacle!

New in 2022 were Container and Balcony Gardens designed to emphasize the capability of converting small spaces into urban paradises. Another new category was called "All About Gardens" illustrating the positive power of plants on humans and the planet and putting plants first, and design second. Household studios were also emphasized to promote the value of filling our homes with beneficial plants.



Chelsea Flower Show (Cont.)

At the heart of the show was the Great Pavilion. Covering approximately three acres of light, airy, and spacious areas, the best nurseries and floral exhibitors competed for RHS's coveted awards. Growers specializing in specific plants (roses, clematis, Japanese maples, African violets, tulips, peonies, alums, hostas, succulents, grasses, Bonzi, etc.) had fascinating displays marked with botanical names and docents to answer questions. Floral designs and educational exhibits were also showcased as well as gardening advice from RHS volunteers. We spent hours there. The colors, fragrances, and happy people were a memorable experience, plus a refuge if inclement weather occurred.



Vendors

No show of this size would be complete without shopping! With over 200 shopping stands, new and innovative gardening art, tools, clothing, plants, seed, fabrics, shoes, you name it, it was wonderful! We can't wait to go back.



Volunteer Opportunity Fair: The Missing Pieces Were Found!

BY KELLI BIXLER - VP-PROJECTS

The DCMGA Volunteer Opportunity Fair (VOF) was held this year on a rainy Wednesday, February 8, 2023. The rain did not wash away the excitement for the event, as approximately 140+ members, interns, and visitors were in attendance. The theme for the fair was: "You Are the Missing Piece!" Global Spheres Center provided breakfast and hosted this annual event organized for the incoming intern class. Interns learned about the many volunteer opportunities offered by DCMGA. Thirty-five DCMGA Project Managers and Committee Leaders were in attendance to encourage interns to sign up and volunteer for projects or committees that interested them. This year, Project Managers were asked to highlight not only volunteer opportunities but educational offerings as well.

Brochures, videos, posters, and photographs of the outstanding (and award-winning!) projects created and managed by the dedicated members of DCMGA were available to see at the VOF. Interns had the opportunity to learn about projects and committees, ask questions, seek out groups that met their interests, or find a project near their home. Offerings included community gardens, new website information, public speaking opportunities, beautification, hospitality, working with youth, special interests, and more. One intern even said, "I want to thank you for the Volunteer Fair today. It was a wonderful event and has me now EVEN MORE excited about being a part of this incredible organization!"

Interns could learn about our newest projects, such as Roots for Wings, Fall Into Gardening, and Global Gardeners. Or they could explore special interest groups such as the Succulent Group, Herbal Branch, or the Propagation Team. Did you know that there is an annual Monarch Butterfly release at the Bob Jones Nature Center? We all know now! The Denton County Community Grove has a new interim Project Manager this year, and his table had many visitors interested in fruit and nut tree care and maintenance. Annual DCMGA projects such as Garden Tour, Plant Sale, and Fruit, Vegetable, Herb, and Flower Show (which has a new location this year) were also visited by many interns. These projects take place in the spring, just in time for interns to earn volunteer hours while interacting and learning from seasoned Master Gardeners.

Project Managers have been offered many tools to "advertise" work days and educational opportunities this year. Look for notifications via Facebook, Plan Your Week (PYW), Sign-Up Genius, and personal texts or emails letting members and interns know the days that project participants are meeting.

Volunteer Opportunity Fair: The Missing Pieces Were Found! (Cont.)

These meeting times and dates can also be seen on the member calendar on the DCMGA website. Master Gardeners have been reluctant to fully return to in-person volunteering until this year. It was evident, with the number of interns and certified Master Gardeners in attendance at the Volunteer Opportunity Fair, that people are ready to get back to work and to start serving and educating Denton County again. Our missing pieces have been found, so let's get started!





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

Science-based knowledge on a variety of topics.

.....

Home Grown Lecture Series

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension. Virtual.

March 2, 2023 - Top "T" Questions: Tomatoes, Turf & Trees - Brandi Keller, County Extension Agent-Horticulture

Registration Required:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/home-grown-lecture-series-2023-tickets-479567558477?aff=erelexpmlt>

New!

Living on a Few Acres

Living on a Few Acres is a **webinar series** developed for the beginning producer or homesteader looking to become more self-sufficient or take the first step in producing a product. Topics for the series include beekeeping, syrup making, soil fertility, vegetable gardening, tree and small fruit production, home food preservation, backyard greenhouses, and hydroponic production.

March 9, 2023. 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm (CT)

Soil Fertility and Garden Layout

\$5.00 Registration Fee. To Register:

<https://extension.psu.edu/living-on-a-few-acres-soil-fertility-and-garden-layout>

March 16, 2023. 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm (CT)

Vegetable and Mushroom Production

\$5.00 Registration Fee. To Register:

<https://extension.psu.edu/living-on-a-few-acres-vegetable-and-mushroom-production>

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

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

Houseplants

Landscaping

Pollinators

Roses

Shade Plants

Tree Care

Turf Care

New!

Denton County Youth Fair Live

Auction

Denton Youth Fair is a county fair for FFA and 4H youth ages 8-18. Assets/images/calendar/texas-superstars-calendar-image.jpg9. The Grand and Reserve Champions (overall) will sell their winning Plant or Floral Arrangement in the Live Auction Arena for the first time in 2023. Additional winning entries may be available in the Silent Auction. Come to witness the results of the Horticulture and Livestock projects at the auction.

April 1, 2023

11:30 am to 3:00 pm

Location: North Texas Fairgrounds, 2217 North Carroll Blvd., Denton, TX

DCMGA Members

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

**For More Events - Visit the
[DCMGA Upcoming Events Calendar](https://dcmga.com/)**



BY HELP DESK TEAM

Q: I am worried that my plants were damaged by the recent really cold weather with ice, sleet and snow. What should I do now?

A: Mother Nature threw several challenges to our landscape plants this winter but it is a bit too soon to know if any lasting damage was done. While flowering bulbs that already emerged and started to bloom may not make it back this spring, bulbs still dormant should be fine.

Deciduous shrubs and young trees

The best time to check your deciduous shrubs and young trees for lasting freeze damage is when leaves begin to emerge in the spring. The absence of new leaves on some branches, while other parts of the plant are showing new growth is a sign that those branches were damaged. Try to be patient and give the plant a chance to recover. If you have been patient and the damaged parts of the tree or shrub have not recovered within a month or so of the beginning of the growing season, then it is time to prune them away from the healthy parts of the plant.

When it is safe to prune, identify where the branch is dead and where it is still alive. Beginning at a branch tip, use a sharp blade to lightly scrape the bark. The damaged wood will be brown and the healthy wood green. This is called a scratch test. "Prune off the tissue above the green area, being sure to make cuts at about a 30-degree angle to prevent water from accumulating on the cut surface"

<http://extension.msstate.edu/news/feature-story/2023/watch-ornamental-plants-for-signs-freeze-damage>.

Large trees

For large trees, there are two kinds of potential damage you should address: load damage from the weight of ice and freeze damage to the woody tissue. Broken tree limbs should be removed for safety reasons. For oak trees, the wound left after the broken branch is removed should be painted with latex paint to keep the oak wilt-carrying insects from access.



Ice Coated Shrub

The Native Plant Society of Texas's recommendation for tree care after a freeze states: "If by mid-April the leaf buds haven't swollen and started opening, then it's time to check to see if the branch has died by using the scratch test. And if the bark has started cracking and flaking off, that's often a sign the branch is dead (assuming it isn't a tree that has naturally peeling and flaking bark)." Here are two excellent resources for more information on freeze damage to large trees:

- Morton Arboretum: types of damage a freeze may cause in trees:
<https://www.mortonarb.org/trees-plants/tree-and-plant-advice/horticulture-care/winter-injury-trees-and-shrubs>
- This Texas Forest Service guide on getting the help of a certified arborist:
<https://tfsweb.tamu.edu/afterthestorm/>

Flowering perennials

Winter-hardy flowering perennials should be okay. The time to check them is after they begin their spring growth by adding on new leaves and flower buds. Be patient as they may do this a bit later than usual. If no new leaves or buds emerge within a couple of weeks of the normal time, you may have lost the plant. If so, when you go to the nursery for a replacement, be sure to check the new plant for signs it was damaged. You can do this by pulling the plant out of the pot and checking that the roots near the edge of the pot are healthy. If they were frozen and damaged, these roots will be brown and mushy.

LATE WINTER PREP FOR YOUR SPRING TURF

TIME TO APPLY PRE-EMERGENT TO YOUR NORTH TEXAS LAWN

LATE-FEBRUARY THROUGH EARLY MARCH
THERE'S A SPECIFIC TIME-FRAME TO APPLY

Apply Late-Winter pre-emergents before the soil temperature has warmed to 55 degrees F. For weeds that tend to sprout throughout the summer, a second application may be required in June or July.

STOP THE GROWTH OF SUMMER WEEDS
PREVENT CRABGRASS AND SANDBURS WITH A PRE-EMERGENT APPLICATION AT THE CORRECT TIME.

A pre-emergent application will inhibit the seeds before they can 'emerge' or germinate. Applications of Team, Halts, Balan, and Dimension may be used to prevent crabgrass and sandburs. Remember to carefully follow ALL directions on any herbicide you use.

REMEMBER, TIMING IS KEY
DON'T MISS THE BRIEF WINDOW FOR TREATMENT

For summer weeds such as sandburs and crabgrass you can apply pre-emergents 2 to 3 weeks before the average killing freeze date in your area. Check your local forecast. In North Texas this can be from the end of February to the middle of March. If you miss this timeframe for treatment, you will have to wait until next year to apply pre-emergent. Timing is key!

WHAT NOT TO APPLY
AVOID WEED AND FEED APPLICATIONS AS IT IS TOO EARLY TO APPLY FERTILIZERS TO YOUR LAWN

Over fertilizing and over watering can lead to more weeds and disease in your turf.
Annual and Broadleaf weeds can be treated after they emerge. HerbPublicationSC5200713.indd (tamu.edu)
Turfgrass Weeds | AggieTurf (tamu.edu)

MORE INFO FROM TEXAS A&M

To learn more about weed identification and treatment for cool and warm season weeds, be sure to visit
http://publications.tamu.edu/TURF_LANDSCAPE/PUB_turf_Herbicides%20for%20Weed%20Control%20in%20Turfgrass.pdf
Refer to <http://AggieTurf.tamu.edu> for more information on turfgrasses and identification tools for common turfgrass weeds and insects.

Denton County Master Gardener Association

Questions? Contact our Help Desk

email: master.gardener@dentoncounty.com

PHONE: 940.349.2892

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.

2023

GREATER AUBREY AREA GARDENING SERIES

AUBREY AREA LIBRARY
226 COUNTRYSIDE DR., AUBREY, TX

<p>JAN 19</p> <p>Presented by Bonnie Ambrose 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM</p>	<p>Companion Plants</p> <p>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.</p>
<p>FEB 16</p> <p>Presented by Mike James 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM</p>	<p>Plant Choices</p> <p>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.</p>
<p>MAR 16</p> <p>Presented by Rooted in 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM</p>	<p>Sprinkler Systems 101</p> <p>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!</p>

KEEP
AUBREY
BEAUTIFUL



TEXAS
MASTER GARDENER
TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION
Denton County



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 Cooperation.



Denton County Master Gardener Association *Upcoming Events*

**MARCH
8**

The Chelsea Flower Show

DCMGA'S Joanne and Steve Spurgin will take us on their journey to the 2022 Chelsea Flower Show in London England. Our monthly business meeting will follow the program. Global Spheres Ctr. 10am-12pm.

**MARCH
10**

Native Plants: Less work, More Beauty

Liz Moyer, Denton County Master Gardener and instructor for the Native Plant Society of Texas, will show you how to bring natural beauty and pollinators to your gardens. Denton Senior Center. 9am -10am.

**MARCH
11**

Veggie Gardening Class

Planting your own food is one of the most amazing things you can do! Becoming a successful gardener requires you to "see" and understand your garden. Explore the possibilities in this class. Global Spheres Center. 9am-12pm

**MARCH
11**

Tree Class

Trees are one of the most valuable assets in nature, 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. Global Spheres Center 1pm-4pm

**MARCH
15**

Making Seed Bombs

Seed bombs are a fun craft and a wonderful way to get children involved in gardening. Denton County Master Gardener Cheryl Huckabee will teach us how to make them and drop them for the best germination. Co-sponsored by the Carrollton Public Library. 2pm-3pm

**MARCH
16**

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! Presented by Rooted in. Greater Aubrey Area Gardening Series Aubrey Area Library 6pm-7pm

**MARCH
24**

Preserving The Harvest

Learn from a pro when Denton County Master Gardener Barbara Brown shares the joys of preserving all the goodness from your garden. Presented in partnership with the Lewisville Public Library. Lewisville Public Library 3pm-4pm

Check out dcmga.com for more details.

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DENTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION'S

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION
Denton County

Plant Sale

April 29, 2023
9:00 A.M.- 2:00 P.M. or Until sellout,
RAIN or SHINE!!!

Trinity United Methodist Church
633 Hobson Lane, Denton

- ✿ Texas native plants, tough-as-nails perennials, and no-fuss roses
- ✿ Hard-to-find ground covers, bedding plants, and herbs
- ✿ Special container plants
- ✿ Pass-along plants from Master Gardeners' own gardens
- ✿ Master Gardeners available to help you make your selections and answer your gardening questions

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

For more information,
 Visit our Website: dcmga.com
 Email: master.gardener@dentoncounty.gov
 Call Help Desk phone: (940)349-2892

"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 County AgriLife Extension office at least a week in advance of the meeting or event to request mobility, visual, hearing or other assistance."

"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."



DENTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION

2023 Garden Tour

SATURDAY, MAY 13

9 AM TO 4 PM

TICKETS AVAILABLE NOW!

Inspiration abounds on self-guided tours of four unique Denton County properties. Learn about garden design, native plants, enjoy children's activities, and shop for gardening goodies during the tour! Advance purchase tickets are \$15, and on tour day \$20. Children 12 and under are FREE!

HIDDEN COTTAGE GARDEN

Denton, TX 76205



RED ROCK CROSSING

Lake Dallas, TX 75065



WILDLIFE WAYSTATION & MARKET

Oak Point, TX 75068



HUNDRED WOODS ACRE

Oak Point, TX 75068



SCAN THIS CODE OR GO TO
DCMGA.COM TO PURCHASE TICKETS.

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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

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

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

Pinterest:

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

YouTube:

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

Save the Date

- March 8 General Meeting & Program, "The Chelsea flower Show" - Global Spheres
- April 1 Denton County Youth Fair Live Auction

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Content

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

Ideas, photos, and articles are welcome and may be submitted to Editor Karen Gibson or Communications Director Judy Allen at dcmga.communications@gmail.com.

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