

Denton County Master Gardener Association

# THE ROOT

Grow With Us



## WHAT'S GROWING ON

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# Buds From The Board

BY CHERYL HUCKABEE, PRESIDENT

When I write the Buds from the Board article each month, I like to find a quote about that month. This one is particularly fitting for August in North Texas.

*"The month of August had turned into a griddle where the days just lay there and sizzled."*

– Sue Monk Kidd

We aim to make it through the so-called last month of summer by limiting our time outdoors. Denton County Master Gardener Association offers a little air-conditioned respite from the August heat.

- Fall is the perfect time to grow vegetables in North Texas. Learn how to start a fall vegetable garden from Denton County Master Gardener Barbara Brown. Presented in partnership with Keep Lewisville Beautiful. August 3, 6 pm, at Lewisville Grand Theater.
- Join us for our Monthly Meeting & Program, "Growing Mushrooms in Texas," presented by Natalie Simmons, Board Member of the North Texas Mycological Association. You'll learn the art of cultivating these delicious and nutritious fungi. After the class, you can purchase a specially designed oyster mushroom cultivation bucket to put what you've learned into practice! August 9, 10 am, at Global Spheres Center.
- Get an introduction to permaculture, a forward-thinking design system based on principles found in nature where wildlife and native plants are vital. Presented by Denton County Master Gardener Daniel Arenas in partnership with Beulah Acres Agroforest. August 12, 9 am, at Global Spheres Center.
- Learn how rainwater behaves on your property and how to use it efficiently with rainwater harvesting, followed by a rain barrel set-up demonstration. Presented by Denton County Master Gardener Daniel Arenas in partnership with Beulah Acres Agroforest. August 12, 1 pm, at Global Spheres Center.
- Keyhole gardens hold moisture and nutrients due to an active compost pile placed in the center of a round bed. Learn how to start a low-maintenance vegetable garden from Denton County Master Gardener Lynda Harvey. Presented in partnership with Keep Lewisville Beautiful. August 17, 6 pm, at Lewisville Grand Theater.
- Learn about growing vegetables and herbs in your backyard. In this class, you will learn about identifying natural patterns in your backyard, assessing what you already have in place, and gardening with efficiency! Presented in partnership with Beulah Acres Agroforest. August 26, 9 am, at Global Spheres Center.
- Soil quality is key for a prosperous garden, and composting is the best way to build nutritious soil for your plants. Learn from Denton Master Gardener Daniel Arenas to make 'black gold' for your garden. Presented in partnership with Beulah Acres Agroforest. August 26, 1 pm, at Global Spheres Center.

## Buds From The Board (Cont.)

- Nothing is more satisfying than growing your food and preserving it to use all year. Denton County Master Gardener Barbara Brown will share tips and tricks for preserving your harvest. Presented in partnership with Greater Dallas Organic Garden Club. August 27, 2:30 pm, at Northaven Gardens.

We Master Gardeners also anticipate the promise of the cooler autumn months by sowing seeds of cool-season edibles and annuals for fall color. In the first half of August, we direct sow southern and black-eye peas, winter squash, okra, and pumpkin. Anytime in the month, direct sow corn, cucumbers, snap pole and bush beans, zucchini, Chinese cabbage, and Swiss chard. Start seeds indoors of broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, mustard greens, and spinach for transplanting into the garden in late September. We extend summer color into fall by direct sowing zinnias, sunflowers, marigolds, nasturtiums, Mexican sunflowers, and wildflowers (for blooming next spring).

We hope to see you in the air-conditioning at one of our events this month or in the garden, getting ready for the fall.

Happy Gardening!

*Cheryl*



# Outdoor Science With Attitude(O'SWAt) Summer Camp

BY BETH SHARUM

A little heat doesn't stop Denton County AgriLife volunteers! Outdoor Science with Attitude (O'SWAt) summer camp was held June 26 thru June 29 in the mornings at Clear Creek Natural Heritage Center. This is SWAT's sixth year to partner with Denton Parks and Rec for summer programs and the second year holding camp at Clear Creek.

The O'SWAt camp team's goal was simple. For the 20 campers (and our volunteers) to have a great time the week of camp. And for the campers learn a few things about plants, pollinators, produce, and the prairie. It was a bonus that our Master Gardener, Master Naturalist, and 4-H volunteers learned a ton, too!

The heat advisories and triple digits did not slow the volunteers or the campers down. Camp days were filled with lessons and hands-on activities. Some highlights of the week included the celebration of butterflies, bats, and birds, propagating plants with scraps from the kitchen, the importance of community gardens, and learning about different types of animals from grasslands around the world. Oh, and we might have had an arctic fox and a kangaroo come visit to teach us about adaptations in different grasslands.

When asked about their favorite things about this camp, the camper's most common answer was "Everything!"

This camp is not possible without the group of dedicated, talented, and wonderfully fun Master Gardener, Master Naturalist, 4-H, and AgriLife volunteers. It takes a village of volunteers to make this program such a success. We thank you for your hard work and dedication to the program.

Photos Courtesy DCMGA Member Beth Sharum



**Campers with Master Gardener  
Mary Lehrer**



**Campers Identifying Fruits and  
Vegetables**

## O'SWAt Summer Camp (Cont.)



Campers with  
Caterpillar and  
Chrysalis



Campers with  
Butterfly Coloring  
Pages



Agent Dusty Fife with  
Fruit Kabobs



SAVE THE DATE!

# Fall Into Gardening

PRESENTED BY:

DENTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION,  
UPPER TRINITY REGIONAL WATER DISTRICT & BEULAH ACRES

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 30  
GLOBAL SPHERES CENTER, CORINTH, TX

KEYNOTE SPEAKER:  
STEVE HUDDLESTON  
AUTHOR "EASY GARDENS FOR NORTH CENTRAL TEXAS"

GARDENING WORKSHOPS, DEMONSTRATIONS, GARDEN TOURS,  
& KIDS ACTIVITIES

Logos for Texas Master Gardener, Denton County, Upper Trinity Regional Water District, and Beulah Acres are displayed on the left side of the poster.

## Kid's Camp At Shiloh Community Garden

BY NANCY DIMARCO

Shiloh Community Garden, in collaboration with Denton Parks and Rec and Denton Master Gardeners, hosted its second mini-camp for children, aged 6 - 11, May 30 - June 1, 2023, at Shiloh, 1650 Nottingham, Denton.

Fourteen energetic, enthusiastic, and eager children participated, along with Carin Zeman, Outdoor Recreation Coordinator, Denton Parks and Rec, DCMGA veterans Debbie Schwend and Brad Allison, and 2023 interns Leslie Koberna and Dominique Wilson.

Children were transported from Denia to Shiloh by van each day and lessons began at 9 am. The three half days were filled with lessons on how plants grow and what they need; ladybug identification, anatomy, and usefulness; bees and why they are so important, taught by Bee Expert Extraordinaire Mark Huckabee; and wriggly worms, taught by vermiculturists Don and Pat Edwards.

Our last day began with a tour of the Denton Community Food Center, which accepts much of the produce from Shiloh. Tom Newell, the Director of the Food Center, gave the tour and answered questions from the children. They learned about the entire process of growing, harvesting, and transporting produce, why it is grown, and for whom. We ended our day harvesting potatoes from the field, along with onions, carrots, and blackberries.

Teaching children is such a blessing because we "plant the seeds of interest" at young ages and watch as they cultivate lifelong interests in animals, plants, and stewardship of our earth.

Photos Courtesy DCMGA Member Nancy DiMarco



**Shiloh Campers and Leaders**



**A Young Camper Enjoying a Freshly Picked Plum**

## Meet Lori Barr

BY MIKE JAMES

It would be difficult to be a member of DCMGA and not have experienced the excitement and leadership of Lori Barr. In an organization of greats, Lori demonstrated her exceptional leadership as a co-chair of the Garden Tour project for the past 3 years. It is a treat to be allowed to tell just a small bit of her story. A Texas native, Lori grew up in the Denison area of Grayson County in North Texas. The middle child among seven siblings, her earliest memories of gardening are of her father in his 400 sq. ft. vegetable garden. She smiles as she reminisces watching and listening to her father as he tilled the soil in spring, meticulously laying out rows, and sowing his chosen seeds, including onions, peppers, lettuce, tomatoes, green beans, squash, and okra.



Photos Courtesy DCMGA Member Lori Barr

**Lori Barr**  
**DCMGA Class 2018**

Under her father's guidance, she learned valuable skills, such as knowing to harvest onions once their tops had fallen, being cautious while picking peppers for homemade pepper sauce, and appreciating the incredible flavors of freshly picked lettuce and bell peppers in salads. Additionally, she gained knowledge of canning and preserving tomatoes, green beans, and okra. Lori quickly admits that her preferences now lie in savoring freshly harvested produce rather than the canning process. Her father's garden also boasted fresh blackberries, wild garlic, and beautiful iris, further fueling Lori's passion for gardening and nurturing plants.

Currently residing in a retirement community, Lori talks of her limited gardening space due to deed restrictions and her home's unique setting that backs up to Lake Lewisville, offering scenic views of wildlife and native trees in the Riparian zone. Since moving to this home in 2014, she has established two new garden beds and has ambitious plans for another. Her patio thrives with a depth of plants sensitive to cold weather or awaiting their turn in the garden. Lori's view is one of wildlife, including hummingbirds dining at the 'Big Momma' Turk's Cap (Lori calls it "Big Bertha"!), monarch butterflies laying eggs on milkweed, and Orange Cestrum adding vibrant hues against the trees, plus every imaginable bird, coyote, or bobcat. To create this harmony, she has interspersed vegetables and herbs amidst a variety of flowers like salvia, lilies, butterfly bush, phlox, spirea, lantana, gaura, and crinum lilies. But don't forget about her current favorite flower, her glorious Orange Cestrum.

Lori's contribution to Denton County Master Gardener Association (DCMGA) has been personally fulfilling, while having significant impact within the organization. From being a mentor of

## Meet Lori Barr (Cont.)

interns for the past three years, to working at the Fair Oaks, LLELA, and Plant Sale projects, she is a busy master gardener. But all of that pales in comparison to her role for the last three years as the Garden Tour Co-project manager, coordinating and organizing successful events.



**Lori's favorite flower, Orange Cestrum  
(Cestrum aurantiacum)**

Like many good leaders, Lori's insatiable thirst for knowledge led her to attend the Chelsea Flower Show. That same thirst for knowledge has already led to her next endeavor. She is on a new journey of research and adoption of innovative gardening practices and identifying suitable plantings as she becomes involved in more extensive EarthKind® landscape planning practices utilizing new and specialized software.

A 1982 graduate of The University of North Texas with a BS in Fashion Merchandising, she has retired from 25 years in a successful management career in retail, followed by many years in interior design and staging.

Lori and her husband, Patrick, are blessed with a blended family of four children and are eagerly awaiting the arrival of a grandson to join their two granddaughters.

Please join me and reap the rewards of getting to know Lori Barr and, most importantly, tell her thanks for all her service.



## Plant of the Month - Clematis Pruning and Feeding

BY LEE ANN YATES

In the July issue of *The Root*, I covered the many varieties of Clematis that will grow in North Texas, if you remember the Master Gardener mantra of "Right Plant, Right Place." Be sure to check out that article, choose wisely, and you can enjoy this most elegant blooming vine in your garden!

### *Pruning Clematis*

Pruning is a chore required for any clematis vines and many people decide not to grow clematises because of confusion surrounding the proper requirements. I promised earlier I would demystify the confusion. If you decide to grow the Texas natives, just prune after blooming, whatever time of year that is. If you have considered growing the large-flowered varieties of clematises but have been put off by their seemingly complicated pruning timetable, there are two experts who have created simplified pruning systems for these clematises.



Photo Courtesy DCMGA Member Jerry Hamby

Deborah Hardwick, a clematis collector and world-renowned clematis authority, has a mission to simplify clematis pruning information. Historically, clematises were divided into complicated pruning groups where timing and manner of pruning was related to when and how the plant sets and opens buds. Each clematis is assigned a group number: 1, 2, or 3. Hardwick developed a system whereby you learn the group number, then replace it with a corresponding "traffic light" color code. Clematises are pruned, or not, in the spring. Hardwick's system works like this:

- **Red-Pruning Group: NO!!** Group 1 classified clematises, which flower only on the prior year's growth, is the Red-Pruning Group. NEVER prune these Clematises in spring to avoid removing the buds. Minimal cuts can be made to maintain size or remove damaged stems, but wait until after the first flush of blooms fades.
- **Yellow-Pruning Group: SLOW!!** These are Group 2 clematises, which can flower on new growth, but the larger flowers will occur on older stems. Prune cautiously. In spring, check the vines carefully and remove any damaged ends and ones that show no signs of growth.
- **Green-Pruning Group: GO!!** This category applies to Group 3 Clematis. Green means "Go ahead and prune as often and as hard as you like!" These are vigorous bloomers that flower on new growth.

## Pruning and Feeding Clematis (Cont.)

Richard Hawke uses the 1-2-3 grouping based on the bloom period:

- Group 1 are early season bloomers beginning between April and June. They flower on old wood only, so avoid cutting back any woody stems of any vine in this group.
- Group 2 are mid-season bloomers that flower on both old and new wood. Flowers usually begin in early summer and may bloom again in late summer or early fall. Begin one to two feet down from the top of the vine, cutting above the buds. If it requires hard cutting due to tangling, the best time to do this is after the first blooming time.
- Late-season bloomers are Group 3, flowering on new wood only. The best time to prune is spring and about two feet off the ground. Look for healthy buds on sturdy stems, making your cut just above these buds. These are the longest blooming, growing from early summer into fall.

Some growers refer to the three groups as A, B, and C, which correlate to 1, 2, and 3. No matter how the growers label the plants, the groups will contain the same named clematises.

Whichever way you choose to remember when to prune your clematis, knowing its group and when to prune makes a big difference in floral performance.

### *Feeding Clematis*

Clematises tend to be heavy feeders. Fertilize in early spring before flower buds start to swell. Organic compost or rotted manure are ideal fertilizers and act as mulch to cool the root zone as well. Tomato fertilizer is also good as its lower nitrogen level fosters good flowering. Water deeply and less often as your Clematis gets established. It is all right to reduce the plant's original size at planting if needed. Pinch it back a few times during the first year. Slugs love clematis, so control the population when necessary. Plan for adequate sun for the cultivar or native you are planting, but remember they all like cool, shaded "feet."

Many nurseries sell potted clematis online, but some native species may only be available as seeds. Fortunately, they germinate fairly quickly if sown shortly after they ripen in early fall. Seeds stored for more than a few weeks may need several cycles of cold and heat to germinate. Hairy "tails" on seeds should be removed before sowing. If the seed coats are tough, soak them for five days at room temperature and peel off the pericarp (outer coating) before sowing. It is possible to sow native seeds on moist paper towels sealed inside plastic baggies, stored in the fridge. Check them weekly for germination and any evidence of mold - toss the moldy ones! Once the seeds start to germinate, they can be transferred to individual pots, started under grow lights, then eventually hardened off.

*Happy Gardening, folks!*

# Pruning and Feeding Clematis (Cont.)

## Resources

*Texas Master Gardener, Randall County Master Gardener Association, "Popular Vines"*

<https://txmg.org/randall/staying-connected/gardening-with-the-masters/gardening-tips-2/popular-vines/>

*Texas Gardener, "A Texan's Guide to Clematis"*

<https://www.texasgardener.com/a-texans-guide-to-clematis/>

*Fine Gardening, "What Group is My Clematis?"*

<https://www.finegardening.com/article/what-group-is-my-clematis>

To download Richard Hawke's clematis rating chart visit this site:

<https://www.finegardening.com/article/clematis-trials-at-the-chicago-botanic-garden>

For a PDF of the trial results:

[https://images.taunton.com/downloads/finegardening/clematis-trial-results-from-Fine-Gardening.pdf?\\_gl=1\\*uqbaax\\*\\_gcl\\_au\\*MTUwNTY1NTMwNS4xNjgoNDQ2OTAZ](https://images.taunton.com/downloads/finegardening/clematis-trial-results-from-Fine-Gardening.pdf?_gl=1*uqbaax*_gcl_au*MTUwNTY1NTMwNS4xNjgoNDQ2OTAZ)

Photo Courtesy DCMGA Member Angie Lindsey



'Jackmani' clematis

Photo Courtesy DCMGA Member Janie Cindric



'Henrii' clematis

Photo Courtesy DCMGA Member KC Walsh



'Crystal Fountain' clematis

Photo Courtesy DCMGA Member Angie Lindsey



'Nelly Moser' &  
'Ramona' clematis



*You're Invited*

August 2023, Monthly Meeting & Program  
"Growing Mushrooms in Texas"



Natalie Simmons, Board Member of the North Texas Mycological Association, will present the art of cultivating oyster mushrooms in buckets and wine cap mushrooms in the garden.

August 9, 2023, 10 am  
Global Spheres Center  
7801 S Interstate 35E, Corinth, TX 76210

# It's Time For Fall Vegetable Gardening

BY DONNA HULL

As the summer heat bears down in July and August, it can be hard to feel enthusiastic about preparing soil and planting vegetables. But here in North Texas it is time to do just that - start the fall vegetable garden! Gardeners in North Texas are lucky enough to have not one, but TWO great growing seasons for vegetables and herbs. All it takes is planning, planting, and a bit of time and energy. You'll be rewarded with fresh produce on the table for months to come.

## *Why the Fall?*

The fall season begins with summer heat, but by late August the average weekly temperature is falling slowly but steadily as the nights become cooler. Fall plants started in July and August may need some shade cloth early on, but September, October, and even early November provide the warmth that fruit and vegetable plants crave without the searing sun of the summer. At the same time, rain returns to North Texas. Although spring is the season we associate with rainfall, October is actually the second wettest month on average in Denton County. The lack of intense heat and shortening days causes the fruit to store more sugar, and many gardeners say that fall fruit and vegetables have better flavor. The fall garden also has less pressure from pests and fungal diseases, and in general, there are fewer hail- and wind-producing storms rolling through. And the best reason of all? An abundance of fresh, healthy, and delicious food!

## *Changing Seasons, Changing Conditions*

The basic guidelines for planning the fall garden are the same that apply to gardening at any time of year - good soil, access to water, and ample amounts of sunlight. As a general rule of thumb, a plant that produces fruit and seeds for eating will need 6 or more hours of sun; leafy greens can manage with a little less sun. But remember that the intensity and distribution of light on your property in the winter is different than the light in the summer. Deciduous trees will lose their leaves, providing sunlight to areas previously engulfed in shade. The angle of the sun also differs in the winter, changing the sun's intensity and position. Walking through your landscape with these considerations might open up some new possibilities for growing a fall garden.



Photos Courtesy DCMGA Member Donna Hull

## **Broccoli from the fall garden**

# It's Time For Fall Vegetable Gardening (Cont.)

## What to Plant

In selecting plants for the fall, there are a few things to keep in mind. Pollinators are less abundant as the weather cools. Because of this, plants like tomatoes, peppers, and eggplant that produce flowers will be slower to form fruit come October. Start these plants as transplants in July (maybe with a little shade cloth) to ensure a good harvest. It is also possible to keep pepper plants and some tomato plants from the summer garden alive through the summer heat. If they remain healthy, they can produce a fall harvest. Bush beans and lima beans should be planted by seed in late August or the 1st of September for a fall harvest.

The "most likely to grow and stay happy" plants of the fall garden are the leafy vegetables, cruciferous vegetables, and crops that produce edible tubers or roots. From the leafy veggie group, plant lettuce, Swiss chard, spinach, arugula, collards, kale, and bok choy; there are many Asian greens available as well from seed suppliers that are delicious. The cruciferous vegetables - cauliflower, broccoli, Brussels sprout, and cabbage - love the fall in Texas, and most of these plants will last well into the winter. Herbs, such as cilantro, parsley, and chives, grow well in the cooler fall weather.

Tuberous plants to consider include beets, radishes, carrots, and turnips. Garlic is planted in October in North Texas for harvest the following spring. And as fall turns into winter, be sure to save space for planting onions in January and potatoes in February!



**Bok choy and cruciferous vegetables from the fall harvest**



**Leafy greens from the fall garden - bok choy, Swiss chard, mint and arugula**



**Brussel sprouts harvested by the author for Christmas dinner**

## It's Time For Fall Vegetable Gardening (Cont.)

Because of the changing seasons, timing is important in a fall garden. Following a planting calendar will help ensure success. These calendars also indicate whether to plant transplants or begin by seed. Two excellent sources are:

- Recommended Planting Dates for North Texas (*AgriLife Extension*)  
[https://counties.agrilife.org/wise/files/2020/04/Gardening-Planting\\_Dates\\_for\\_North\\_Texas1.pdf](https://counties.agrilife.org/wise/files/2020/04/Gardening-Planting_Dates_for_North_Texas1.pdf)
- Vegetable Planting Dates for North Texas  
<https://www.nhg.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/NTxVegPlanting.pdf>

Choosing the right variety for our area is also an important key to success. Speak directly with a knowledgeable gardener at a local nursery to be sure you are getting the "right plant for the right place." The following resource is also helpful:

- Recommended Vegetable Cultivars for North Central Texas  
<https://aggie-hort.tamu.edu/archives/parsons/publications/NCVEGLIST.html>



**Hoop house with frost cover**



**Hoop house without frost cover**

### *Extending the Harvest*

Tomatoes, eggplants, and peppers are warm-weather plants, and no amount of plant-saving efforts (unless you have a greenhouse!) will keep them past the first frost or freeze. However, many "fall" garden plants are capable of surviving into the cold weather of January and February with a little help. According to Texas AgriLife Extension, temperatures of 26-31 degrees will burn the foliage of, but not kill, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, chard, lettuce, onions, radishes, and turnips, as long as the plants have already been exposed to increasingly colder temperatures over time. Brussels sprouts, carrots, collards, kale, parsley, and spinach are able to endure even colder temperatures with little or no damage.

## It's Time For Fall Vegetable Gardening (Cont.)

The easiest way to protect plants from an oncoming freeze is to cover them with frost cloth. If placed directly onto the plants, be sure to remove it as soon as it is possible to prevent damage to the plants. If you are planting in containers, simply move the containers indoors. Remember that container plants need more protection as the plants have less ground insulation.

A second method, which requires really only a small amount of effort, is to build a hoop house with rebar and PVC pipes. Instructions for building one can be found in the Resources below. Once in place, frost cloth can be placed over the top and simply rolled on and off, according to the weather forecast. Greenhouse plastic can also be used on a hoop house for deeper freezes (and during our ice storms); beware of the buildup of humidity inside the plastic, and remove it as soon as the temperature allows. Another great use for the hoop house is to place microfiber garden netting over the leafy and cruciferous vegetables, making it difficult for cabbage loopers, leaf miners, and other pests to get access to your plants.

### *Ready to Start? Need More Information?*

Give fall gardening a try!! You won't be disappointed. If you are interested in finding out more, there will be a presentation on Fall Vegetable Gardening organized by Keep Lewisville Beautiful on August 3, 2023, from 6-7 pm at the Lewisville Grand Theatre, 100 North Charles Street, Lewisville, TX 75057. Email [amy@keeplewisvillebeautiful.org](mailto:amy@keeplewisvillebeautiful.org) for more information. Good luck!

### Resources

**Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, "Fall Vegetable Gardening Guide"**

<https://teea.tamu.edu/files/2019/09/fall-vegetable-gardening-guide.pdf>

**"Cold Tolerance in Vegetables"**

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

**"Constructing a Cold Frame Hoop House for the Backyard Gardener"**

<https://travis-tx.tamu.edu/files/2021/09/EAGF-2017-Cold-frame.pdf>

**Denton County Master Gardener Association (DCMGA)**

**"Vegetable Gardening" Denton County MGA 2022 Fall into Gardening Event**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3GNj73G\\_Xow](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3GNj73G_Xow)

**Edible Dallas & Fort Worth, "Grow a Winter Garden"?**

<https://www.edibledfw.com/winter-2015-2016/grow-a-winter-garden/>

**National Weather Service, Denton Climatology**

<https://www.weather.gov/fwd/dentonclimatology>

## An Unexpected Surprise - The Common Buttonbush

BY MELISSA WEAVER

Interesting what a little arm-twisting will do. I hadn't planned on entering the Fruit, Vegetable, Herb and Flower Show, but that morning I found myself wandering my garden for the perfect entry, or, at least something that looked fresh and had survived the week's brutally hot temperatures. The day lilies looked tired, the tomatoes were stubbornly green, and salvia seemed a little too common. But wait, there, tucked in the back corner of the yard were white, pincushion-like blooms that might just work. Little did I know at the end of the day I would be surprised and awarded the Best of Show award!!!

These fragrant spherical blossoms, some say resemble the COVID virus depiction or a starburst, belong to the Common Buttonbush shrub, *Cephalanthus occidentalis*. It is a Texas native shrub that thrives in damp to wet areas and goes mostly unnoticed in a garden until it blooms from June through August, attracting pollinators and people alike. Bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds flock to it for nectar and pollen. One of the last natives to leaf out in the spring, its leaves provide food for the larval stage of the Hydrangea and Titan Sphinx moths.

The Buttonbush is a large deciduous shrub that typically grows 12-15 feet tall and wide, though it can reach up to 20 feet. A Native in most of the United States (zones 5-11), it prefers wet to damp soil and does best in full to part shade. Commonly found on stream and pond banks, this is a great plant to help with erosion control, create wildlife habitat, and restore wetlands. It can be a great solution for wet corners, rain gardens, bogs, and septic sprinkler fields in a residential setting. It also is great for shielding areas like brush piles or utility boxes. The Buttonbush can adapt to most soil types, but is not drought-tolerant and will not do well in dry sites even if given supplemental water. While it needs little to no pruning, the Buttonbush can be limbed-up into an interesting multi-trunked tree.

By August, the show is over and this showy shrub begins to fade into the background. The once fragrant white blossoms, now fertilized by pollinators, form a hard reddish ball, providing a



**Melissa Weaver and her "Best in Show" Buttonbush Entry**

## The Common Buttonbush (Cont.)

winter food source for waterfowl and songbirds. The leaves take on a yellow hue and then fall to the ground as the Buttonbush prepares for winter.

It shouldn't have been a surprise to me that the Buttonbush won Best of Show at the contest. When this shrub is on, it shines! Popular with bees, butterflies, birds, and wildlife, this water-loving plant may prove to be a great unexpected addition to your garden.

### Resources

**North Carolina State University**, North Carolina Extension Gardener Plant Toolbox

"*Cephalanthus occidentalis*"

<https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/cephalanthus-occidentalis/>

**Clemson University**, Clemson Cooperative Extension Home & Garden Information Center

"Common Buttonbush"

<https://hgic.clemson.edu/factsheet/common-buttonbush/>



### A Few of Our Favorite Resources

**Davis Garden Show and Beyond** is about gardening anywhere. Each week Don Shor and Lois Richter chat about plants and things, on Davis' low-power FM station, KDRT (K-dirt). Topics vary seasonally.

Listen on Apple Podcasts:

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/the-no-till-market-garden-podcast/id1441886206>

***The Vegetable Gardening Book: Your complete guide to growing an edible organic garden from seed to harvest***, by Joe Lamp'l, Cool Springs Press; (September, 2022).

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.



**Melissa's Buttonbush**



**Buttonbush Closeup**

Photos Courtesy DCMGA Member Melissa Weaver

## 2023 DCMGA Fruit, Vegetable, Herb and Flower Show Recap

BY DEBBY ISHEE

For many years, the DCMGA Fruit, Vegetable, Herb and Flower Show (FVHF Show) has been held at the Denton County Historical Lawn in conjunction with the Denton Community Market. This year, word was that a building was being placed where the FVHF Show had previously been held and the space would no longer be available for our use. After hearing this, my co-project manager Pam Hawkins and I set out to find an alternate location. We went to the North Texas Fairgrounds and looked inside through locked doors and envisioned the show being held indoors – the space was perfect. When we checked the Fairgrounds website, the fee to rent that building was too much, so we continued our search. We visited Trinity Presbyterian and First Presbyterian Churches in Denton and found both to be great sites for our show, but what we really wanted was to have our event at the Fairgrounds.

In years past, DCMGA put on the Fall Fest at the Fairgrounds and our thought was that the FVHF Show could be a smaller version of that event with vendors and education booths to occupy visitors during the judging process. We didn't give up on our vision and finally went to the Fairgrounds office to discuss the cost. Because the Fairgrounds was so appreciative of the work that Kathy Rainey and the DCMGA Gardenscapers group provided by designing and maintaining the entrance to the Fairgrounds, we were given permission to use the West Wing Building at no charge! We were thrilled that our show would be held indoors in an air-conditioned building!

Everyone from DCMGA Help Desk, Texas Supertar®, Gardenscapers, Help Desk, SWAT, Drip Irrigation, NPSOT, African Violet Society, and Master Naturalist were all ready and available to fulfill our mission to educate the public. Thanks to Carolyn Stoy who provided us with the list of vendors who participated in the Garden Tour – 23 vendors, including one food truck, provided an assortment of crafts and products for our visitors' shopping pleasure.



African Violet Society Table



Lauri's Art, One of the Many Vendors

## 2023 DCMGA Fruit, Vegetable, Herb and Flower Show Recap (Cont.)

By 7 AM, June 17, 2023, volunteers rallied to get everything set up for the show and by 10 AM, there were 131 total entries registered, which included 85 fruit and vegetables and 34 flowers and herbs in the adult division, and 11 vegetables and 1 flower in the youth division.

Our outstanding panel of judges included: Janet Gershenfeld, Jerry Alexander, Shar Harnesh, and Katie Wilcox (flower and herb judges) and Daniel Arenas, Dr. Nat Mills, Karen Stubbs, and David Huffman (fruit and vegetable judges). Special guest Louie McDaniel, current president of the Texas Master Gardeners, announced the winners of the show.

It was truly amazing to see the variety and the quality of all the entries. There were so many blue, red, and white ribbons awarded and all the entries were so appreciated.

Congratulations to the rosette winners:

- Best of Show – Melissa Weaver for her Button Bush
- Grand Champion – Adult – Steve Spurgin for his Red Lily
- Grand Champion – Youth – Bibi Arenas for her Santa Rosa Plum
- Reserve Grand Champion – Adult – Lynda Harvey for her Sweet Heart Tomatoes
- Reserve Grand Champion – Youth – Rowyn Shirey for her Purple Ruffle Basil
- First Runner Up – Adult – Melissa Weaver for her Variegated Cuban Oregano
- First Runner Up – Youth – Leryn Shirey for her Mexican Torch Sunflower



**Fruit Entries Display Ready  
for the Judges**



**2023 Interns Martha Cantrell,  
Molly Stingley, and Donna Hull**

Thanks to the 42 volunteers who worked that day helping the vendors set up their spaces, registering the entries, setting the entries on the plates and vases, placing the entries on the tables, judging, providing the PA system, providing education, and doing whatever was asked of them. Thanks, too, to all those who worked so hard planning the event. A few mistakes were made that will be corrected next year, but overall, it was a fun and successful day.

## 2023 DCMGA Fruit, Vegetable, Herb and Flower Show Recap (Cont.)



**DCMGA**  
**HELP DESK**  
Question of the Month



Help Desk Team Contact Information  
940-349-2892  
master.gardener@dentoncounty.com

**BY HELP DESK TEAM**

*Q: I bought 5 holly trees last year to put along the back fence. Although they struggled at first, they survived. But this year they all died. Why? The Eagleston holly bushes/trees were expensive and I do not want to make the same mistakes if I replace them. What should I have done?*

**A:** Eagleston holly can be challenging to grow in our North Texas soils. According to Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service's Ask Extension, "Eagleston Holly, like most *Ilex x attenuata* hybrids, seems to do best in parts of Texas with slightly acidic soils and consistent rainfall.

If you choose to replace the Eagleston holly, you can try to improve your chances of successfully growing them by altering your soil and watering schedule. Unfortunately, most of the native soils in North Texas are alkaline (have a pH greater than 7) with a significant amount of clay. If that is the case for your soil, you can try adding soil amendments to increase the acidity including adding lots of organic material. However, research has shown that soils usually return to their native state in a short time. You will also need to provide

consistent water, at least one inch per week or more to replicate the Eagleston Holly's need for consistent water. Unfortunately, the city water supply in most of North Texas is also alkaline.

To understand your existing soil, we recommend getting a soil test through [AgriLife Soil Testing Lab](#) or an independent soil testing lab. Alternatively, you can use the services of a certified arborist (<https://www.treesaregood.org/findanarborist>) for their recommendations on making your soil conducive to successfully growing Eagleston holly.

The good news is that there are varieties of holly that do well in North Texas as an alternative to the Eagleston holly. Here are some recommended varieties of holly prepared by Dr. Steven George, AgriLife Extension Horticulturist: (<https://aggie-hort.tamu.edu/archives/parsons/publications/NORTHCEN.html>), Texas Superstar plants: (<https://texassuperstar.com/plants/>) and the Native Plant Society of Texas database: (<https://npsot.org/resources/native-plants/native-plants-database/>).



Photo Courtesy DCMGA Member Barbara Brown

- Small shrub (3 – 6 ft) in sun to partial shade: Dwarf Burford Holly, (*Ilex cornuta* 'Burfordii Nana')
- Medium shrub (6 – 9 feet): Agarita [native] full sun, (*Mahonia trifoliolata*)
- Large shrub or small tree (9 feet plus): Deciduous Holly [native] (*Ilex decidua*), Mary Nell Holly (*Ilex* cv. 'Mary Nell'), Nellie R. Stevens Holly (*Ilex* cv. 'Nellie R. Stevens'), Possumhaw Holly [native] (*Ilex decidua*), Yaupon Holly, (*Ilex vomitoria*)

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](mailto:master.gardener@dentoncounty.gov).

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



# **Resources & Education Opportunities**

*for Master Gardeners and the Community we serve can be found on the Calendar at Upcoming Events.*

**For non-DCMGA events, check out this list of  
Continuing Education Opportunities.**

## DCMGA Members & Interns

**Plan Your Week (PYW) is emailed each Friday.  
It has the most current VS/CE Opportunities.**

## 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>




## DCMGA

### Upcoming Events



**Aug 3** Fall is the perfect time to grow vegetables in North Texas. Learn how to start a fall vegetable garden from Denton County Master Gardener Barbara Brown. Presented in partnership with Keep Lewisville Beautiful. Lewisville Grand Theater 6-7PM

**Aug 9** Please join us for our Monthly Meeting & Program, "Texas Mycology: Yes, You Can Grow Mushrooms in Texas." Sebastian Tabibi, President of the North Texas Mycological Association, will share the biodiversity of fungi in North Texas and the surrounding region and how to grow them. The monthly business meeting will follow Global Spheres 10AM-12PM

**Aug 12** Introduction into Permaculture: In this class, you will learn how this works, along with essential guidelines, ethics, principles, and strategies that will wrap your head and heart around this amazing land stewardship lifestyle! Global Spheres 9AM-12PM

**Aug 12** Rainwater collection: Understanding how rainwater behaves on your property will allow you to use it efficiently and experience success in your landscape. You will learn the importance of watersheds and rainwater harvesting, followed by a rain barrel set-up demonstration. Presented in partnership with Beulah Acres Agroforest. Global Spheres 1-4PM

**Aug 17** Keyhole gardens hold moisture and nutrients due to an active compost pile placed in the center of a round bed. Learn how to start a low maintenance vegetable garden from Denton County Master Gardener Lynda Harvey. In partnership with Keep Lewisville Beautiful. Lewisville Grand Theater 6-7PM

**Aug 24** No More Monoculture Lawns: Sponsored by the Trinity Forks Chapter, Native Plant Society of Texas, Zoom only. 6:30-8:30PM See DCMGA calendar for details.

**Aug 26** Vegetable 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. It is easier if you follow gardening procedures and strategies and explore possibilities. Partnership with Beulah Acres Agroforest. Global Spheres 9AM-12PM

**Aug 26** Composting Class: Soil quality is key for a prosperous garden, and composting is the best way to build nutritious soil for your plants. In this class, you will learn all about it! Presented in partnership with Beulah Acres Agroforest. Global Spheres 1-4PM

**Aug 27** Preserving The Harvest: There's nothing more satisfying than growing your own food and preserving it to use all year long. Denton County Master Gardener Barbara Brown will share tips and tricks for preserving your harvest. Presented in partnership with Greater Dallas Organic Garden Club. North Haven Gardens 2:30-3:30PM

**Aug 29** Succulent Team Field Trip To Rooted In - 10AM-11:30AM

# AUBREY LIBRARY GARDENING SERIES

Location- Aubrey Area Library

226 Countryside Dr., Aubrey, TX 76227

**Jumpstart your gardening this Fall with our free  
educational series on the 3rd Thursday**

**Brought to you by Denton County Master Gardeners!**

*Fall is the best time to have a  
garden. Find out why and  
how to extend the season  
with fresh veggies!*

*Learn how to create safe  
spaces for your pups while  
keeping your landscape  
beautiful.*

*Follow these steps for putting  
your yard to sleep for the  
Winter.*

**AUGUST 17**

7-8:00pm

**Fall Vegetable Gardening**

*Cheryl Huckabee*

**SEPTEMBER 21**

7-8:00pm

**Dogscaping**

*Carol Arment*

**OCTOBER 19**

7-8:00pm

**Put your Landscape to Bed**

*Mike James*



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. We seek to provide reasonable accommodation for all persons with disabilities for this program and ask that you notify the Denton County AgriLife Extension Office of the auxiliary aid or service that will be required.

**KEYNOTE SPEAKER**  
**Steve Huddleston**



Steve will present suburban landscape design for homeowners. For 26 years, Steve served as the senior horticulturist for the Ft. Worth Botanic Garden. He is now the public relations manager for the Botanical Research Institute of Texas. He co-authored Easy Gardens for North Central Texas, a Master Gardener favorite.

**Presentations, & demonstrations, & information booths to help you grow!**

Let us take you on a gardening journey. Learn from Master Gardener experts how to plan and grow the garden of your dreams.

**Plan & Prepare Your Landscape**  
Native Plants  
Cacti & Succulents  
Small Space Gardening  
Soil & Composting  
Vermiculture

**Select & Grow Your Plants**  
Native Plants  
Cacti & Succulents  
Plant Propagation  
Vegetable Gardening & Herbs  
Texas Superstar® Plants

**Maintain Your Landscape & Solve Problems**  
Rainwater Harvesting  
Fertilizing  
Drip Irrigation  
Caring for Garden Tools  
Ask A Master Gardener

**Gardening Fun**  
Art in the Garden  
Garden Photography

**Kids Zone Activities**  
Grow Cards  
Pumpkin Decorating  
Plant People  
Suck-a-Bug

**Garden Tours**  
Israel Prayer Garden  
Beulah Acres Agroforest  
Community Garden  
Potager Garden  
Beulah Barnyard

**PRESENTED BY:**  
**DENTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION, & BEULAH ACRES**

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 30**  
**8:15 AM-2:00 PM**  
**GLOBAL SPHERES CENTER**  
**7801 S I-35, CORINTH, TX**

**Fall Into Gardening**

**SCANN THE QR CODE OR GO TO [DCMGA.COM](http://DCMGA.COM) TO REGISTER TO ATTEND**



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.

### 2023 Board of Directors

President	Cheryl Huckabee
Vice-President - Projects	Kelli Bixler
Secretary	Missy McCormick
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Communications Dir. - Systems	Judy Allen
Education Director	Daniel Arenas
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Past President	Kathryn Wells

### 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

August 9 General Meeting & Program, "Texas Mycology: Yes, You Can Grow Mushrooms in Texas" - Global Spheres, Corinth

**Check the Calendar**  
[DCMGA Events Calendar](#)



### Contact Information

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**Content**  
The Submission deadline for the September edition of *The Root* is Tuesday, August 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](mailto:dcmga.communications@gmail.com).

Unless otherwise attributed, all photos are courtesy of Denton County MGA.