



Denton County Master
Gardener Association

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Buds from the Board

BY CHERYL HUCKABEE, PRESIDENT

October is one of my favorite months for gardening, and it's packed with opportunities to grow your garden and gardening knowledge! Be sure to visit our [Monthly Gardening Tips](#) page for advice on the best tasks to tackle this month.

We have some exciting events lined up, too. Join us for our [October monthly meeting](#) on October 9th at the Global Spheres Center to learn how to make a beautiful succulent centerpiece in a pumpkin—a perfect fall project! Don't miss our annual Fall Into Gardening event on October 19th, which will feature garden tours, presentations, information booths, and even activities for kids. Learn more and register to attend [here](#).

If you've been thinking about becoming a Denton County Master Gardener, join us at our information meeting on October 11th from 10 am to noon at the Global Spheres Center. You can learn more about what it means to be a Master Gardener in this issue and at the meeting.

October is also a great time to plant perennials and trees, so don't forget to visit these plant sales hosted by our sister Master Gardener Associations: the [Japanese Maple Sale](#) hosted by the Dallas County Master Gardeners starting October 9th or the Collin County Master Gardeners' [Fall Plant Sale](#) on October 26th.

We hope to see you out this October. Enjoy all that this wonderful season has to offer!



Community Strong Farm Sanger *If you build it, they will come*

BY LIZ CHANEY

The Community Strong Farm, located in Sanger, TX, provides food education and produce to the community through its relationship with the Sanger High School Food Store and other local relief organizations. Students and volunteers from the community and Denton County Master Gardeners provide labor to the Farm. So far, The Farm has planted potatoes, tomatoes, peppers, okra, radishes, onions, melons, beans, and more.

Although production has done well, it would do better with an increase in the number of bees. Unfortunately, the Community Strong Farm is not in a pollinator-attracting environment. One needs to be created. This will require strategic planning providing execution and education regarding soil preparation, pollinator habitat creation, and sustainability.

The designated area for the pollinator habitat is on a slope along one side of the barn, with a square footage of approximately 720 square feet. Currently, the soil is clay held together by tall grasses which are to be replaced with mulch using Aggie Horticulture methods (refer to link below). Although placement of the mulch should be easy with the farm equipment, it will require a substantial amount of mulch. Fortunately, enough mulch exists on site to convert the rock-hard clay into a productive nutrient-rich environment for plants.



Approximately 75% of food crops in the United States are pollinated by bees. Butterflies are not significant pollinators. For food production, bees are your garden's best friends. About 4,000 species of bees live in North America and approximately 1,000 live in Texas. The common native bees are Bumble Bees, Carpenter Bees, Digger Bees, and Leaf Cutter Bees, but the most prolific is the Western Honey Bee. All these bees are "generalist" in that they do not require a specific flower for nectar but take food where it is available. Therefore, by attracting native bees to nectar-rich plants, bees will also pollinate food crops like tomatoes, potatoes, squashes, melons, beans, and more.

Community Strong Farm Sanger (Cont.)

The trick is selecting the correct plants to provide food for all seasons while also providing overwintering homes. Most bees are solitary in that they do not create hives. Instead, they nest in the ground among dried vegetation or dead wood, all except the bumble bee, which forms small hives in the wild. Plant criteria will be nectar-rich perennials that can tolerate full sun, low water requirements, and nesting potential. Native plants might include the following flowering perennials: Sages, Hairy Sunflower, Maximillian Sunflower, Texas Lantana, Turks Cap, Milkweeds, Coneflowers, Yarrows, and Spiderworts. Ground cover plants could include horse herb, clover, trailing lantana, and Frogfruit, while trees, shrubs, and grasses could include Texas Redbud, Vitex, Texas Kidneywood, and Lynn's Legacy Cenizio.



In addition, dead logs from trees on site will be added for overwintering. Water will be provided by a rainwater-capturing irrigation system, with additional support from the onsite well. The use of olla irrigation would also be an option. Of course, this depends on the availability of plants, Texas weather, and volunteers.

The Community Strong Farm is open to members of the public and Denton County Master Gardener volunteers on Mondays from 8:00-10:00 am. In addition, the last Saturday of every month is a Community Work Day that is open to the public from 9 am-12 pm. Please plan to come work on the Community Strong Farm to build a new community for pollinators and grow our existing crops.



Photos Courtesy DCMGA Intern Liz Chaney

Community Strong Farm Sanger (Cont.)

Resources

University of Arizona Cooperative Extension, “Irrigating with Ollas” (May 2021), Amy Nickel and Andrew Brischke

<https://extension.arizona.edu/sites/extension.arizona.edu/files/pubs/az1911-2021.pdf>

Native Plant Society of Texas, Native Plant Database

<https://www.npsot.org/resources/native-plants/native-plants-database/>

National Library of Medicine, National Center for Biotechnology Information, “Overview of Bee Pollination and Its Economic Value for Crop Production” (August 2021)

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8396518/>

University of Texas at Austin, Department of Integrative Biology, College of Natural Sciences, The Jha Lab, “Native Bees”

<https://w3.biosci.utexas.edu/jha/outreach/native-bees#:~:text=Approximately%2020%20C000%20bee%20species%20have%20been%20described%20worldwide%2C,North%20America%2C%20and%20nearly%201%2C000%20live%20in%20Texas.>

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, Easy Gardening, “Mulching,” Joseph Masabni

<https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/2013/09/EHT-073.pdf>



What to Plant in October

- Early October is the prime time to plant bluebonnet seeds
- Garlic can be planted through October.
- Most trees can be planted in October – ornamental, shade, and fruit.
- Cool season annuals like pansies add great color to the landscape.
- Apply preemergence herbicide to lawns to avoid spring weeds.
- Mulch all bare soil.

For more monthly tips:

<https://www.dcmga.com/maintain-and-solve-problems/maintain/monthly-gardening-tips/>

You're Invited

October 2024, Monthly General Meeting & Program

"Pumpkin Perfection: Learn to Craft Your
Own Succulent Centerpiece!"



Craft stunning fall centerpieces with succulents! Join Dallas County Master Gardener Roseann Ferguson for step-by-step instructions on creating long-lasting succulent-decorated pumpkins.

October 9, 2024, 10 am
Global Spheres Center
7801 S Interstate 35E, Corinth, TX 76210

Plant of the Month - Lamb's Ear

BY IVY SUMMERFIELD

Sensory overload can describe our feelings when we discover the perfect plant. Three of the five senses are immediate reactions, sight, smell, and touch. The fourth sense, taste, is debatable depending on the plant. Finally, the fifth sense, hearing, is something I venture to bet some of us have never thought about when it comes to a plant. Research has shown that plants can hear sound waves and make sounds. Plants can hear caterpillars chewing and set up the appropriate defenses. They can also hear a pollinator using their flowers as “ears” and responding within minutes by sweetening the nectar.

I first came across Lamb's Ear (*Stachys byzantina*), while visiting Mount Vernon, Washington DC. This led me down a path of collecting the plant and educating myself through videos and articles about this fuzzy, soft-to-touch, grey-green, low-growing, fast-growing plant that threw me for a loop finding out it is classified as an Herb. All along I had only seen it as a ground cover. Although classified as an Herb, today's use is mainly in landscaping applications such as borders, ground covers, and rain gardens.

While researching this plant, I discovered a poem by Joy Neal Kidney that I did not realize would have such a profound impact and message. I contacted Joy to get permission to use her poem and asked her what her inspiration was. She gladly allowed me and explained that she went to Bosnia with a family that came to Iowa as refugees of the Bosnian war. While there, she was home alone and approached by two neighboring ladies. Joy's poem ever so gently explains what happened during that encounter.



Photos Courtesy DCMGA Member Ivy Summerfield

Lamb's Ears by Joy Neal Kidney

*The women in blousy dimijes,
scarves hiding long hair,
don't speak English.
I with short hair, wearing jeans,
don't speak Bosnian.
Nearby grows a fuzzy, grey-green plant.
As I stroke its softness,
I bleat, “Baa-a-a.”
With my hand, waggle an ear.
They look at each other for a moment,
then laugh. No dictionary needed.*

Lamb's Ear (Cont.)



Photo Courtesy Joy Neal Kidney

An exchange with Joy Neal Kidney's Bosnian host, Asima, and her neighbors, who spoke no English, led to the eventual writing of the Lamb's Ear poem. Here Asima is seen raking hay, wearing her dimije, as mentioned in the poem.

Lamb's Ear now had an even deeper meaning to me. I realized not only could all my senses be touched, but the last sentence of the poem - "No dictionary needed" - spelled out that a plant represents life, beauty, and nourishment (in some cases) and an ability to connect humans most profoundly. Three people of different cultures and countries came together in a moment of peace and laughter. My obsession with this plant now focused on how I could bring plants and people together. One way was by sharing great stories, such as the one Joy shared with me, and the other was by researching and educating others. With that said, it gives me great pleasure to bring you everything I have researched about Lamb's Ear.

History

It's said to have originated in Turkey, Caucasus, and Iraq. Knowledge of where a plant originates comes into play when understanding the plant and its needs and characteristics. Giving you the name of a country is great until you realize not every square inch of that country has the same climate, same soil, or the same amount of rainfall each year. While researching Lamb's Ear, I wanted to find the earliest publication of the plant. In the Biodiversity Heritage Library, the world's largest open-access digital library, I found an article published in 1896 in Berlin that mentioned Lamb's Ear. Written in German, I translated the article to English and discovered that the passing of 128 years still has not changed how Lamb's Ear was described then and how it is described today, 'woolly, leaves are oblong and flowers are tandem'.

Description

Richard G. Hawke gives an amazing description of Lamb's Ear in the opening line of his article "The Comparison Study of Cultivated Stachys," stating "Soft silvery and a low, spreading habit are desirable traits of lamb's ear (*Stachys byzantina*) that contribute to its popularity in

Lamb's Ear (Cont.)

gardens everywhere." Lamb's Ear is a herbaceous perennial mostly used as ground cover, lining borders, and flower beds. Lamb's Ear is in the Lamiaceae family. Specialized gardens, such as a Child's Garden, incorporate Lamb's Ear due to its ability to encapsulate all five senses. Other such gardens that incorporate Lamb's Ear for its traits and habits are Butterfly Gardens, Rain Gardens, Cottage Gardens, and Containers. Lamb's Ear attracts butterflies and pollinators and is fragrant, for the most part. Leaf type is simple. Leaf arrangement is opposite and rosulate. The leaf shape is elliptical, lanceolate, and oblong.

Characteristics and Care

Type - Herbaceous Perennial, Ground cover

Light Exposure - Full Sun, some afternoon shade

Hardiness Zones - Zones 4-8

Soil - Well-drained soil, Shallow rocky soil

Water - Dry to medium

Fertilizer - None

Maintenance - Low to none

Size - Medium plant (12-24 inches)

Shape and form - Creeping, mounded, upright

Spread formation - Stems rooting at the nodes

Division - Every 2-4 years

Bloom time - May to July

Leaf color/type - Wooly grey-green foliage, soft and fuzzy to the touch.

Flower color - Pink to purple

Fruit - If pollinated, an oblong brown nutlet

Tolerance - Occasional drought, deer and rabbit resistant

Uses; Wound Dressing & Culinary

Historically, Lamb's Ear was used in the Civil War by injured soldiers on wounds (as a naturally antibacterial dressing). It shows potential for modern antibiotic-resistant staph infections.

Let's be real, it's not every day I walk out to my garden and think of how I can make a meal with a particular ground cover! I read reviews about Lamb's Ear being in salads, soups, and stews, and even found a tea recipe. In 1992, it was the Herb of the Year for the International Herb Association. With that said, I consider this an up-and-coming Herb. As the saying goes, don't knock it till you try it!



Vilmorin's Blumengärtneri - Biodiversity Heritage Library

An 1896 German article describes Lamb's Ear: 'woolly, leaves are oblong and flowers are tandem'.

Lamb's Ear (Cont.)

Growing – Seeds or Division

You can start new plants by planting seeds or by division, which is much faster. Remove a clump of Lamb's Ear from your existing plant. Pull apart clusters, paying attention to the root system. You may now pot up or plant directly into the ground.

Cultivars

- Big Ears (Helen Von Stein) – Large leaves, Evergreen in areas with mild winters, work well in most gardens.
- Cotton Boll – Evergreen, good for Sensory Gardens, plant around roses, use as a groundcover.
- Silver Carpet – Leaves are low growing, good for Rock Gardens

There are numerous cultivars of Lamb's Ear. If you are interested in more information, contact the Denton County Master Gardener Association Help Desk.

<https://www.dcmga.com/maintain-and-solve-problems/maintain/garden-help-desk/>



Lamb's Ear is easily divided and potted up for new plants!



Lamb's Ear is susceptible to fungal disease, so do not overwater.

Insect and Diseases

Lamb's Ear can be susceptible to fungal diseases, including powdery mildew, root rot, Leaf spot, or crown rot. Monitor your plants closely and do not overwater. Prune back spent leaves to promote air circulation to promote a healthy growing Lamb's Ear plant.

Lamb's Ear (Cont.)

Conclusion

This article is dedicated to Joy Neal Kidney, for permitting me to use her poem. Lamb's Ear has been incorporated into my landscape and garden because I am obsessed with its texture and colors. It never occurred to me that a connection with someone I never met could be made over a plant. I wholeheartedly hope this article inspires you to view your plants in a new light and to think of other cultures around the world that are growing the same plant. My connection now with Lamb's Ear is no longer just in my yard. It spans to Iowa and over to Bosnia. For that, I am grateful.



There are numerous cultivars of Lamb's Ear.

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<https://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/PlantFinder/PlantFinderDetails.aspx?taxonid=267776>

Lamb's Ear (Cont.)

Resources (Cont.)

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<https://extension.psu.edu/creating-a-sensory-garden>

University of Minnesota Extension, “Creating a butterfly garden”

<https://extension.umn.edu/landscape-design/creating-butterfly-garden#nectar-plants-for-adult-butterflies-1258361>

Wisconsin Master Gardener, “Stachys byzantina ‘Big ears’”

https://mastergardener.extension.wisc.edu/files/2015/12/Stachys_byzantinaBigEars.pdf

Virginia Tech University Libraries, “Virginia Cooperative Extension Gardener Handbook,”

(Chapter 1: Botany) - <https://pressbooks.lib.vt.edu/emgtraining/chapter/1/>

Denton County Master Gardener Association, Plant Facts, “Lamb’s Ear Stachys byzantina”

<https://www.dcmga.com/wp-content/uploads/docs/plant-facts-flowering-plants/pf-lambs-ear.pdf>

National Museum of Civil War Medicine, “The Pry House Medicinal Garden”

<https://www.civilwarmed.org/pry-garden-4/>

Joel Lane Museum House, “Lamb’s Ear”

<https://www.joellane.org/history/the-gardens/lambs-ear>

Virtual Library of Phoenix Landscape Plants, “Stachys byzantina”

<https://www.public.asu.edu/~camartin/plants/Plant html files/stachysbyzantina.html>

Wisconsin Horticulture Division of Extension, “Lamb’s Ear, Stachys byzantina, ‘Cotton Boll’”

<https://hort.extension.wisc.edu/articles/lambs-ear-stachys-byzantina-cotton-boll/>

Royal Horticulture Society, “Stachys byzantina ‘Primrose Heron’”

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/84020/stachys-byzantina-primrose-heron/details>

University of Illinois Extension, hortanswers, “Groundcover, Lamb’s Ears”

<https://web.extension.illinois.edu/hortanswers/plantdetail.cfm?PlantID=581&PlantTypeID=6>

Texas Tech University, TTU Plant resources, “Lamb’s Ear”

https://www.depts.ttu.edu/plantresources/Pages/directories/landscape-info-sheets/herbaceous-info/Stachys_byzantina.php



October Is Garlic Time

BY DONNA HULL

As the heat of summer slowly subsides, the joy of fall gardening comes into full play. And high on the list of characters in the garden repertoire should be garlic! October is the time in North Texas to plant garlic cloves that will be harvested late next spring as fully developed bulbs, then enjoyed for months beyond. The U.S. is the largest importer of garlic in the world, despite the fact that in 2023, American farmers planted somewhere between 24,000 and 26,000 acres of garlic, mostly in California. These plants are loved first and foremost for their culinary gifts, but it cannot be forgotten that garlic has medicinal properties that are being studied around the world for their potential benefits. Here is a brief recount of garlic's origins and everything you need to know about how to grow a successful crop.

Origins and History

Garlic, *Allium sativum*, is a member of the Family Amaryllidaceae. This family includes many well-known bulb plants such as Amaryllis, daffodils, and snowdrops. The genus *Allium* of this family includes the vegetables that we know so well in the kitchen - leeks, onions, chives, shallots and garlic. *Allium* is one of the oldest known horticultural crops, and while there is no specific knowledge of when garlic was first "discovered", archaeological records show that it was used in China as early as 3000 BC (or earlier). Garlic was even sent off to the afterlife with King Tutankhamen who ruled from 1334 BC to 1325 BC. The plant itself is believed to have originated in Central Asia, where "wild garlic" (garlic that is grown without the assistance of humans) is still found today. Wild varieties do not include domesticated *A. sativum*, but a wild relative, *A. vineale*, does occur in North America. This wild variety was most likely introduced to the colonies inadvertently in shipments brought from Europe.

There are two distinctive varieties of cultivated garlic - hardneck and softneck. Most wild species are hardneck, but a few softneck species are known as well. Hardneck garlic (subspecies *ophioscorodon*), also known as "topset garlic" produces rigid, edible stalks that are topped with a cluster of small bulb-like structures called bulbils; thus the name, "topset" garlic. Hardneck varieties tend to take longer to mature, and do best in cold climates, although some newer varieties can be grown in Texas. The second variety, softneck (subspecies *sativum*) garlic, is also known as "artichoke" garlic, or "silverskin" due to its papery exterior.



Photos Courtesy DCMGA Member Donna Hull

Freshly Harvested Garlic

October Is Garlic Time (Cont.)

As the name implies, this variety has a more flexible neck, or stalk. It does not produce as many seed stalks (scapes) as hardneck garlic. Softneck is better for warm climates in general and tends to store longer. It is, therefore, the type of garlic sold in our grocery stores.

There is another “garlic” which is often found at our stores, however, and that is Elephant Garlic. Elephant garlic, *Allium ampeloprasum*, is actually not a true garlic and is more closely related to the leek. If you’ve ever seen it, you know why it’s called “elephant” garlic! Its bulbs are very large, with only 4 cloves to a bulb. This “garlic” is less cold hardy, and can struggle with some of our most severe cold snaps here in North Texas. It does have a milder taste, however, and many prefer to use it in cooking.

The medicinal properties of garlic are the subject of many studies. It has been touted as a cure for a long list of ailments, ranging from gastrointestinal discomforts to cancer to cardiovascular diseases. It is a good source of potassium, selenium, and manganese. Most of its potential curative power is due to its very high concentration of sulfur compounds, including alliin, which becomes the compound allicin when the clove is crushed. Allicin is known to have antibacterial properties, and is believed to be the source of many of garlic’s therapeutic promise. It is important to know that the jury is still out on many of garlic’s proposed curative abilities, but there are solid studies that link garlic to positive outcomes in reducing blood pressure and possibly cholesterol. As always – don’t self-medicate and talk to your doctor if you are interested; garlic may also act as a blood thinner that doesn’t interact well with other medicines.

Growing Garlic

Choosing the right variety of garlic is important in North Texas. As noted above, softneck garlic tends to do better here, although some newer varieties of hardneck garlic have approximately the same number of days to harvest. Look for varieties that have, on average, 240 days to maturity. Good choices include California Early, California Softneck, French Mild Silverskin, Mexican Purple, and New York White. Plant cloves in October, when the soil temperature is less than 85°F. Fall planting allows the cloves to develop roots and send up the first leaves before freezing temperatures arrive. Growth will be slow in the cold months, then will resume in the spring as temperatures warm. Be aware that growth ceases when the soil temperatures reach 90°F.

Garlic needs a location with full sun (6-8 hours at least per day) and soil that is well-drained (sandy or clay loams) with a pH of 6.0 to 8.4. If the soil is clay-rich, it is important to amend the soil with compost or compost-manure; bulbs growing in clay will likely rot sitting in wet soil. For this reason, many North Texas gardeners plant their garlic cloves in raised beds or even

October Is Garlic Time (Cont.)

containers. The addition of compost or compost-manure is an additional benefit not just for soil quality but for nutrition – garlic is known as a “heavy feeder”, meaning it requires fertilization for successful growth.

Garlic is grown from bulbs that you can buy at the plant nursery or from online suppliers. Do not break apart the bulb into cloves until it is time to plant – they can dry out if separated too soon, and they need their moisture to develop the stalks in the fall. Do not buy bulbs from the grocery store. Although some organic bulbs may be usable (provided they are free of fungal issues), garlic bulbs produced commercially go through a variety of treatments to ensure their long-term viability for transportation and storage. Some of these treatments include using chemicals to prevent or slow the cloves from producing stalks..

When ready to plant, break apart the bulb into cloves, removing the paper covering. Use only the larger cloves, and take the smaller ones indoors for cooking! Plant in furrows, with the pointed side up, leaving 1-1.5 inches of soil over the top of the point. Space the cloves 4-6 inches apart. Water at least 1 inch of water per week during growth periods, and side dress with fertilizer in the spring when growth re-starts. Mulch the soil to keep it cool and moist, and weed your garden!! Garlic does not compete well with weeds, so keep the weeds out of the garlic beds. Stop watering about one week before harvest to allow the bulbs to dry before digging up.



There are very few insects that are willing to take on the sulfur-bearing compounds found in garlic, but armyworms, cutworms, mites, and thrips are willing pests. Water-soaked beds due to heavy rains and/or poor drainage will lead to fungal issues, including pink root, downy mildew, powdery mildew, Botrytis, purple blotch and white rot. Avoid issues by starting off with good soil, amended with plenty of compost.

Harvesting Garlic

Garlic is ready to harvest in North Texas in mid-May to early June. As the garlic matures, it will send up scapes (particularly in April and May) which should be cut so that the plant puts energy

October Is Garlic Time (Cont.)

into the bulb below and not the seeds and flowers up top. Scapes are edible, and a great addition to salads or stir fry. As garlic matures, the leaves around the outside of the plant will begin to turn yellow then brown. When 40-60% of the outer leaves have turned brown, it is time to harvest. Dig up the first bulb; if they are not quite ready (still small), leave the rest and try again in a week. But be careful if it is a wet spring with heavy rains - sometimes it is best to just bring them out of the soil if they are otherwise ready to harvest.

After the Harvest

As with other onions and other members of the Allium genus, brush only the bigger clumps of dirt off the bulbs as they are harvested, but do NOT wash them. Lay the bulbs, stalks and all, on trays to dry ("cure") in a cooler, ventilated area out of the sun (around 75°F if possible). You can also tie them in bunches of 4-6 bulbs and hang them in a cool, dark, well ventilated place. Allow them to dry fully, which will take 3-4 weeks. Then cut off roots and the dried stalk, and store in a cool, dark place. Well-cured garlic should last six months or more. An excellent article on storing and freezing garlic has been written by the Cornell Cooperative Extension (see references below) and provides great information on preserving garlic. Use your homegrown garlic as called for in all of your recipes and enjoy the harvest!!!



Garlic leaves will begin to turn brown as harvest approaches

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October Is Garlic Time (Cont.)



The author with freshly harvested garlic.

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Planting Trees In The Fall

BY RUSS ALLEN

Our goal is the “Right Tree, Right Place!”

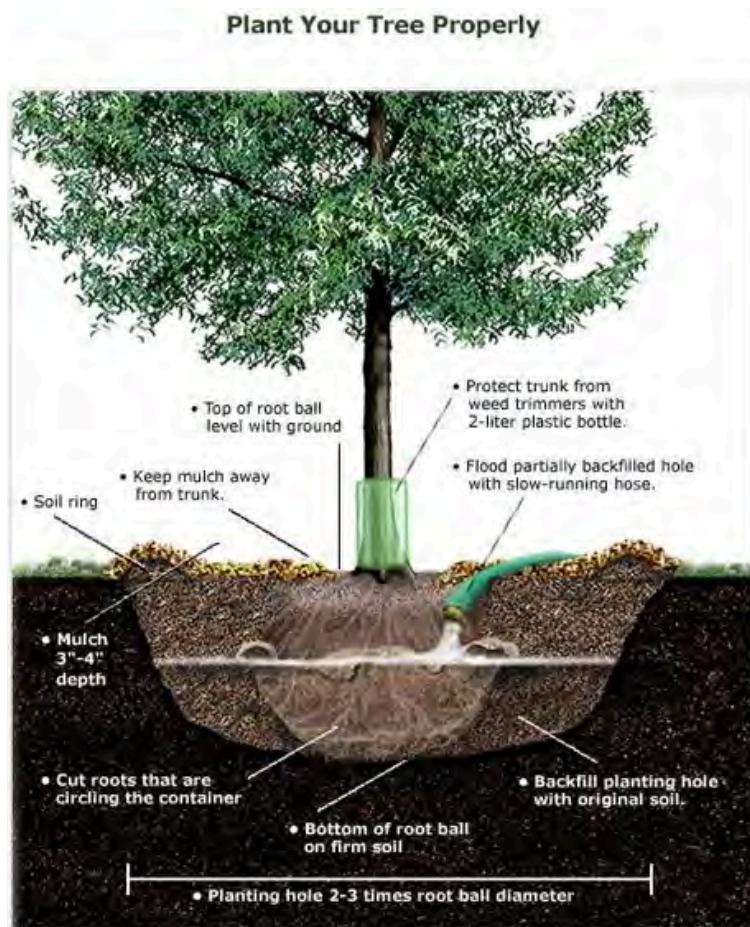
It sounds simple, but this goal has a lot of moving parts. Planning needs to come first!

Right Tree. What is your goal? Summer shade and Winter sun (Deciduous trees), screen between neighbors (Evergreen Trees), more color (flowering or leaf color), to attract pollinators, or your favorite ornamental.

Right Place. Do you have a place selected? At the tree's maturity, how close will it be to structures? Is the area typically dry or wet; have you called 811 to determine if there are underground or overhead service lines, investigated City Codes or HOA rules; where is nearest water; soil conditions, and potential effects on surrounding plants?

Generally, the best Season to plant trees is fall and winter when they are dormant. The tree is alive but resting and does not have to support leaves or fruit!

Let's dig! The hole should be at least one and one-half times the diameter of its growing pot. Dig a square hole or cut edges & holes in the sides to prevent circling roots. Scrape off the surface grass, taking the roots another half the diameter wider than the hole, and stack it separately from the soil of the hole. Then mark the hole diameter. Locate the tree's root flare. The root flare is where the trunk swells and the major roots begin to show. This may also be a grafted root stock which must remain above soil level. Measure the distance from the top of these first roots to the bottom of the pot. Dig the hole no deeper than the top of the root flare plus a couple inches shallower. The top of the root flare should be showing at or just above the ground level.



Tree Planting Graphic Courtesy Texas Forestry Service

Illustration Copyright © Robert O'Brien

Planting Trees In The Fall (Cont.)

Before you plant your tree, do a water drainage test. Fill the hole with water to test how long it takes to totally drain. Twenty-four hours or under is ok, over twenty-four hours, do some further research for planting in clay soil. Inspect the root ball. If the roots are growing in a circle around the trunk or root ball, try to straighten them out. If a root won't straighten out, cut it off. Spread the smaller roots out away from the trunk.

Hold your tree vertically straight with the top of the root ball at or above ground level. Backfill the hole with the soil you took out. Dampen as you backfill, keeping the roots stretched out toward the sides, and softly compact the soil. Take the grass you cut and stack upside-down around the outer edge of the planting area as a water berm. Water in the planted area to dampen. During this first Fall & Winter water in 1" every 3-4 days. Make sure water is draining away from the tree. It should be damp but not soaked!

Your tree will "Sleep the First year, Creep the Second & Leap the Third year!"

Texas A&M Forest Service, "Put the Right Tree in the Right Place to Maximize Benefits to Landscape" (Nov. 2022)

<https://tfsweb.tamu.edu/content/article.aspx?id=32600>

Nashville Tree Conservation Corps, "Sleep, Creep, Leap: Stages of Growth in Newly Planted Trees" (Nov 2021)

<https://www.nashvilletreeconservationcorps.org/treenews/sleep-creep-leap-stages-of-growth-in-newly-planted-trees>



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>

Why You Should Become A Master Gardener

BY CHERYL HUCKABEE

If you love gardening, want to learn more about sustainable practices, enjoy making friends with similar interests, and value giving back to your community, becoming a Master Gardener might be perfect for you! Beyond enhancing your personal gardening skills, the Master Gardener program offers a rich blend of education, community service, and social engagement. Here's why you might want to consider joining this incredible volunteer program:

Expand Your Gardening Knowledge

The Master Gardener program offers in-depth horticultural training led by some of the best educators in the field. For example, if you're accepted into the Denton County Master Gardener program, you'll receive 70 hours of instruction on topics like plant development, soil nutrition, Texas trees, and water conservation. You'll also learn about cutting-edge topics like Earth-Kind® landscaping and rainwater harvesting. This education will give you the tools to share your knowledge with others and make you a better gardener.



Connect with a Passionate Community

Gardening can sometimes feel like a solitary activity, but as a Master Gardener, you'll become part of a vibrant community of people who share your passion. The program fosters friendships and partnerships, as you'll be working side-by-side with other gardening enthusiasts on community projects, events, and workshops. From helping at community gardens, sharing your knowledge through presentations or workshops, and supporting our annual events, you'll have plenty of opportunities to bond with others over a shared love for plants.

Give Back to Your Community

One of the core values of the Master Gardener program is public service. As a Master Gardener, you can apply your knowledge to projects that benefit your local community. Whether it's teaching youth about edible gardening, assisting in landscape design, or participating in local beautification efforts, your contributions can make a tangible difference in people's lives. Volunteering has also been shown to improve your own quality of life, with studies noting that spending time in nature reduces stress, lowers blood pressure, and enhances mental well-being.

Why You Should Become A Master Gardener (Cont.)

Be Part of a Prestigious Program

Master Gardeners are volunteers associated with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, one of Texas' leading land-grant universities. As such, Master Gardeners are given special training in horticulture based on research-backed principles. By joining, you'll represent this respected institution committed to spreading knowledge about sustainable gardening. After completing your first year, which includes 70 hours of training and 70 hours of volunteer service, you'll earn the coveted title of "Master Gardener."

Personal Growth and Continuous Learning

Becoming a Master Gardener is just the beginning. You'll continue to learn and grow even after you complete your initial training. Master Gardeners are required to complete ongoing education to stay up to date with the latest gardening techniques and research. This continuous learning ensures that you remain informed and can contribute valuable knowledge to your community through required volunteer service each year.



How to Get Started

If this sounds like the right opportunity for you, the first step is to apply to the Denton County Master Gardener program. The application period runs from August to October each year. People accepted to this highly competitive program will participate in weekly training sessions from January to May.



For those who love gardening, thrive on learning, and are passionate about serving their community, the Master Gardener program offers a meaningful way to blend all three. You'll have a lasting impact on your community's environmental well-being and improve your gardening skills.

Interested? Visit our [Become a Master Gardener](#) page to learn more and start your journey toward becoming a Master Gardener today!



Gardening Grandma Says...

BY BARBARA BROWN

Humans transitioned from hunting and gathering to growing their food about 12,000 years ago. Over the millenniums they found some tricks to increase their harvest. What they learned they passed down to their children. Today, some of us are fortunate to have a grandmother, aunt, or neighbor who continues the tradition of sharing old-fashioned gardening wisdom. Much of that shared knowledge is helpful but sometimes it was just a superstition with a long history. The Gardening Grandma series of articles puts these tips and tricks to the test of modern science by answering the question, “Does it really work?” Or, is it a myth?

“Gardening Grandma says, “You must talk to your plants! That will help them grow bigger and stronger!”

Truth or myth? Let's find out.

The theory that plants benefit from human conversation dates back to an 1848 book, *Nanna* (Soul-life of Plants), by German professor Gustav Fechner. The idea's longstanding popularity has led to several experiments to determine if talking to plants improves their growth and production.

However, before accepting the results of these experiments as proof positive that talking to plants makes them grow more vigorously, consider this caveat from Washington State Master Gardener Carol Barany. “Until there is additional peer-reviewed, scientifically validated research, these investigations are at best considered ‘pseudoscience’. (ed. However) the intriguing observations could spark more rigorous, university-based research.”



Here are a few of the fun experiments that have been done to assess the possible causal link between human speech and plant growth:

- Mythbusters: “Talking helps plants grow.” Seven small greenhouses were set up on the M5 Industries roof. Four were set up with stereos playing endlessly looping recordings Two of negative speech, two of positive speech, a fifth with classical music and a sixth with intense death metal music. A seventh greenhouse, used as a control sample, had no stereo. The greenhouses with the recordings of speech grew better than the control, regardless of whether such talk was kind or angry. The plants in the greenhouse with the recording of classical music grew better, while the plants in the greenhouse with the recording of intense death metal grew best of all.” ([MythBusters Episode 23: Exploding House](#))

Gardening Grandma Says... (Cont.)

- “In a 2009 study, the United Kingdom’s Royal Horticultural Society learned that tomato plants responded favorably to female voices — rather than male voices — after listening to volunteers read to them over a 30-day period. In an ironic twist, the winning tomato listened to Sarah Darwin, great-great-granddaughter of Charles Darwin, read *On the Origin of Species.*” (Alleyene, Richard. [Women's Voices Make Plants Grow Faster Finds Royal Horticultural Society](#). Telegraph, June 22, 2009.)
- “The Denver Museum of Nature and Science opened a special exhibition in 2013. The Museum invited its Twitter followers to Tweet at a plant through the project's official website. More than 4,000 Tweets; some kind and nurturing, some angry and insulting, were turned into robotic speech and read to one indoor plant. A plant in another greenhouse got the silent treatment. Accounting for every other variable, the more social plant in the Denver study had greener, larger leaves and was 12.5 percent taller.” (<https://s3.wp.wsu.edu/uploads/sites/2083/2023/07/23-07-09-Talking-to-Plants.pdf>)
- South Korea's National Institute of Agricultural Biotechnology proposed that two genes involved in a plant's growth response are turned on by music played at 70 decibels. “This is about the level of a normal conversation,” says Marini (Penn State horticulturist). The Korean researchers found differing responses depending on the frequency of the sound. The higher the frequency, the more active the gene response. (<https://www.psu.edu/news/research/story/probing-question-does-talking-plants-help-them-grow/>)

Truth or myth? Although the question has not been resolved scientifically, many gardeners find that talking to their plants is a calming and pleasurable experience for them.

Sources and Other resources:

- “Talking to Plants” by Carol Barany: <https://s3.wp.wsu.edu/uploads/sites/2083/2023/07/23-07-09-Talking-to-Plants.pdf>
- Rich Marini, Penn State's horticulture department report: <https://www.psu.edu/news/research/story/probing-question-does-talking-plants-help-them-grow/>
- JJung, Jihye et al. [Beyond Chemical Triggers: Evidence for Sound-Evoked Physiological Reactions in Plants](#). Frontiers in Plant Science, 9, 25, 2018, doi:10.3389/fpls.2018.00025
- Kiss, John Z. [Up, Down, And All Around: How Plants Sense and Respond to Environmental Stimuli](#). Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America, 103, 4, 829-830, 2006, doi:10.1073/pnas.0510471102



Tried and True Bulbs for the North Texas Garden

BY PAM SPOONER

When you think of planting bulbs*, you may only be considering daffodils, grape hyacinths, and tulips which are all lovely, but you'd be missing these easy-to-grow and carefree beauties. Often spotted at the site of disappeared homesteads, their continued appearance long after the gardener has gone testifies to their longevity. It's best to buy from Southern growers so as to have plants used to our climate. Passalongs from friends and family are even better!

Amaryllis (*Hippeastrum x johnsonii*)

Height: 1-2 ft.

Sun/Shade: Sun to Part Shade

Bloom Time/Color: March/April-red-pinks-white & combinations

More Info: <https://travis-tx.tamu.edu/2020/12/21/the-gift-of-amarillys-bulbs-by-yvonne-schneider/>

Notes: Plant in sheltered area and protect in winter



Caladium (*Caladium spp.*)

Height: 12-30"

Sun/Shade: Dappled shade (protect from hot sun)

Bloom Time/Color: Insignificant bloom/ leaves in pinks-white-green & combinations

More Info: <https://hgic.clemson.edu/factsheet/caladium/>

Notes: Colorful leaves are the appeal; dig and store in frost free location or treat as annual (* a tuber)



Crinum (*Crinum spp.*)

Height: 1-4 ft.

Sun/Shade: Sun with moist soil or part shade

Bloom Time/Color: Summer/pinks- white & combinations

More Info: <https://www.txsmartscape.com/plant-search/crinum-lily>
<https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/crinum/>

Notes: Tough! May not bloom for 1-2+ years after planting



Elephant Ear (*Alocasia sp./Colocasia esculenta*)

Height: 2-10 ft.

Sun/Shade: Shade

Bloom Time/Color: Insignificant bloom/Large leaves are the appeal

More Info: <https://hgic.clemson.edu/fun-with-elephant-ears-in-the-garden/>

Notes: Tropical! Dig up and store in frost free location (* a corm)



Tried and True Bulbs for the North Texas Garden (Cont.)

Rain Lilies: (*Habranthus robustus*), (*Zephyranthes candida* or *Z. grandiflora*)

Height: 6-12"

Sun/Shade: Sun to part shade

Bloom Time/Color: Late Spring through Fall/white-pinks-yellow-copper

More Info: <https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/habranthus/>
<https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/zephyranthes/>

Notes: All: Blooms pop up after rain



Naked Ladies: Surprise Lily (*Lycoris squamigera* or *L. aurea*) (golden) or (*L. albiflora*) (white)

Oxblood Lily (*Rhodophiala bifida*)

Spider Lily (*Lycoris radiata*)

Height: 1-2 ft.

Sun/Shade: All: Partial shade/Plant where foliage gets winter sun

Bloom Time/Color: Late Summer & Fall/rose-pink (Surprise Lily)

Late Summer/ red-pink-white (Oxblood Lily)

Fall/red-pink-yellow-white (Spider Lily)



More Info: <https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/lycoris-squamigera/>
<https://txmg.org/hendersonmg/plant-library/lily-oxblood-schoolhouse-lily/>
<https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/lycoris-radiata/>

Notes: All: Funnel shaped flowers; flower stalks bloom with no foliage; after flowering, leaves appear, remain through winter, and die back in spring.
 Exotic looking blooms; leaves emerge after flowering and die back in Spring

Summer Snowflake (*Leucojum aestivum*)



Height: 1-2 ft.

Sun/Shade: Deep shade (no direct sun)

Bloom Time/Color: Late winter to mid-Spring/white with green markings

More Info: <https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/leucojum-aestivum/>

Notes: Resembles the famous European Snowdrop (*Galanthus* sp.); grow Snowflakes instead.

Spiderlily (*Hymenocallis* spp.)



Height: 1-3 ft.

Sun/Shade: Sun to part shade

Bloom Time/Color: April-May/white

More Info: <https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/hymenocallis/>

Notes: Exotic looking blooms; grows anywhere from wet ditches to flower beds

Tried and True Bulbs for the North Texas Garden (Cont.)

Additional Resources

- Ogden, Scott, *Garden Bulbs for the South*, Timber Press, 2007.
- Welch, William C. and Greg Grant, *Heirloom Gardening in the South*, Texas A&M University Press, 2011.



Membership Renewal



Mark Your Calendars: It will soon be time to renew your DCMGA membership for 2025!

- When: October 1 – December 15, 2024
- On-Time Renewals fee: \$20

Procrastinators, Beware:

- Late Renewal (Dec 16 – Dec 31, 2024): Add \$15 to your fee
- Super Late Renewal (After Jan 1, 2025): A \$20 late fee is added to your renewal fee (Ouch!)

Important:

- If you miss the December 31, 2024 deadline, your status goes Inactive on January 1, 2025.

Stay in the Loop:

- Keep an eye on your emails and Facebook for updates from Member at Large, Raeline Nobles (rnobles2@verizon.net).



Membership Renewal QR Code

The Traveling Gardener

Beyond Denton County - Asheville, NC

BY VANESSA FITZGERALD

I am a homebody who loves to travel. When I am not in my garden, I am dreaming and scheming about it— I love being inspired by my travels. I have a newly built home and my yard is a blank slate, which is both a blessing and a challenge. The dream garden in my head is full of vignettes from the different places I've lived or visited. This brings me to my visit last year to Asheville, North Carolina. Mid-October was a great time to go, as many of the flowers were still in bloom and the leaves on the trees were beginning to turn beautiful shades of reds, oranges, and yellows.

My first stop was the Biltmore Estate. It is surrounded by beautiful, thoughtful, and colorful gardens designed by landscape architect Frederick Law Olmstead, the designer of New York City's Central Park and Washington DC's United States Capitol Grounds. Vanderbilt also hired renowned Forester Gifford Pinchot to develop a forest management plan for his land. Pinchot later served as the first Chief of the United States Forest Service and founded the [Society of American Foresters](#). German Forester Dr. Carl A. Schenck followed after Pinchot and expanded his forest management plan. Driving through the estate grounds, I was struck by its lush beauty. It was hard to believe that the land was once exhausted by over-farming and over-cut forests.



Photos Courtesy DCMGA Member Vanessa Fitzgerald

The Traveling Gardener

Beyond Denton County - Asheville, NC (Cont.)

The French Renaissance-style mansion was breathtaking, yet more than anything else, I found myself looking through its windows to take in the view! I was grateful I could take my time exploring the gardens.

Adjacent to the mansion is the Italian Garden. This formal garden offers peaceful reflecting ponds, statues, manicured hedges, stone walls, and benches to sit and take it all in. From there, I walked to a long pergola predominantly covered in wisteria that beckoned me to majestic views of mountains and rolling hills.

My walk continued past American Beautyberry bushes to the Walled Garden, which has stunning colors every season. I was delighted to find so many different varieties of roses still blooming and they filled the air with a sweet aroma. Within the Walled Garden, the Conservatory was an impressive glass-ceilinged structure. Stepping inside was like being transported to an entirely different location. The air was warm, humid, and perfumed. Exotic orchids and tropical plants were living works of art. I made two rounds through it and discovered new gems both times.



The Traveling Gardener

Beyond Denton County - Asheville, NC (Cont.)

I would love to visit again when the azaleas and spring bulbs are in bloom. I'm not sure there is an ideal time of year to go as the gardens are intentionally designed to have color and interest all year round. Check out Biltmore's Bloom Report to see what each season features.

Beyond Biltmore, Asheville hosts the North Carolina Arboretum – a 434-acre public garden with miles of walking trails, educational programs, exhibits, and events. The gardens and trails were a wonderful way to reconnect with nature.

After a nice 4-mile trail walk, I spent some time strolling the gardens. My favorite spot was the Quilt Garden which is replanted each season in a traditional quilters block pattern that changes every two years. In October, the jewel-toned mums created a beautiful display. There was a lovely viewing point that allowed me to fully appreciate the design from above.



The Bonsai Exhibition Garden at the Arboretum was a special experience and a great way to pause and really absorb the detailed presentations. I saw many traditional bonsai as well as those inspired by the trees found in and around the Blue Ridge Mountains. Seeing so many different trees artfully represented to show appreciation of the Southern Appalachian culture is something you won't really find anywhere else. Plenty of signage along the exhibition encouraged me to look deeper and glean more from the experience.

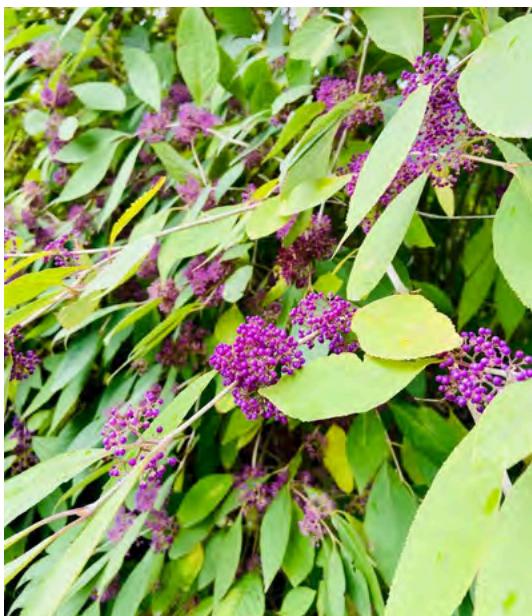
So, what am I taking away from these two experiences as I work on my long-term landscaping plan? While I would love to have it all, four main ideas have inspired me. I've always loved wisteria but now I'm pretty sure

The Traveling Gardener

Beyond Denton County - Asheville, NC (Cont.)

I can't live without it. Texas Wisteria will do well here with proper care and attention. It is important to avoid Asian wisteria varieties that are aggressive and more damaging to structures. I'd love a pergola one day but until then, I planted my Texas Wisteria along a fence line where I don't have neighbors behind me. The purple-blue flowers will bloom from May to June and provide a focal point along the back of my yard.

Next, I've been seeing a lot of American Beautyberry at the homes of my Master Gardener friends. At the Biltmore, it was planted in large groupings, almost like a hedge, making the purplish berries really pop out against the green foliage. I would like to do something similar to soften areas of my yard and bring in fall and winter pops of color. The seeds and berries are important food sources for many species of birds, which will have the added benefit of drawing in some wildlife.



At the Arboretum, I was struck by a beautiful color combination of a blue variety of sage interplanted with deep crimson-red sunflowers. I think this would be easily achievable in my yard with native sages or salvias. I loved the shape and height of the sunflower, but it was the deep red color that really caught my eye.

Lastly, I have a 5x8 rectangular flower bed that may be well suited to create some kind of quilt block pattern. I'm not a quilter but I like this idea in a smaller, more manageable space. It would be a conversation piece and something fun to experiment with seasonally. It would be a quick and easy project to use colorful pansies in the fall and enjoy the pattern all winter and early spring.

The Traveling Gardener

Beyond Denton County - Asheville, NC (Cont.)

As many gardeners can attest, our ideas and dreams are often bigger than our yard, time, and budget. Breaking things down into manageable projects that work with my property is a good way to start. I look forward to visual reminders of special places as I bring in ideas from my travels, tweak them a bit, and make them Texas-friendly. Happy gardening!

Resources

Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, Find Plants database

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

Native Plant Society of Texas, Native Plant Database

<https://www.npsot.org/resources/native-plants/native-plants-database/>

The North Carolina Arboretum

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

Biltmore Estate, Gardens & Grounds

<https://www.biltmore.com/visit/biltmore-estate/gardens-grounds/>

Editor's Note: As this October issue wraps up, Western North Carolina, including Asheville, are experiencing devastation from the aftermath of Hurricane Helene. Please keep them in your thoughts and prayers and, if able, donating to relief efforts as the area residents begin to recover and rebuild.



North Texas Gardening

Timely articles from [DCMGA](#) and [The Root](#)



[Save Those Leaves \(10/2022\)](#)

[Plant of the Month Leatherleaf Mahonia \(10/2020\)](#)

[Plant Facts - Autumn Sage Salvia greggii](#)

[Gardening Basics - Growing Wildflowers from Seed](#)



Friends We Will Miss

BY RAELINE NOBLES

Remembering Mr. Ray Roberts A Humble Hero, A Great Gardener

On August 29th, 2024, DCMGA lost retired DCMGA member Mr. Ray Roberts. Born in 1931, he joined the Marines at the age of 14 because he dreamed of flying airplanes. While he didn't quite qualify for his age, his ambition eventually came true when he transferred to the Army Air Corp which later morphed into the Air Force. He was a man of adventure and honor in his many flights for the post WWII Berlin Airlift, the Cuban Missile Crisis, and Vietnam, where his plane was shot down behind enemy lines. His stories were always humble, but anyone listening could feel the many dangers he overcame on behalf of his country and others in need.

Not all of Ray's flying experiences were dangerous. In civilian life he was a private pilot having fun taking Lear jets for a spin for corporate and private clients. He was an entrepreneur as well, again with stories of adventure and fun. He and his wife, Linda, and daughter eventually settled on a small farm near Denton where they lived the good life with vegetables and his two beloved mules who gave him fits of frustration with their antics. He sat as a director on several boards and that's about the same time we got to know Ray when he joined DCMGA in 2014 as an Intern.

Ray was very involved as a Master Gardener, volunteering for the Plant Sale, Fair Oaks, and a host of other projects. People interviewed for this article expressed the joy they experienced in working with him and becoming his friend. Always willing to help, always ready to go. He often took photographs at our events and projects. His sense of humor, his friendly approach to people, and his savvy, calm problem solving was a joy to be around. The stories of his life were the best to listen to. He never boasted, but if asked, he would tell you a story, and it was always a great one. He was a humble hero in so many ways. We are proud of his many contributions with DCMGA, his military career, and his entrepreneurial spirit Americans are known for.

Whenever I spoke with Ray, he always had two constants: a grin and spark of mischief in his eyes. "What are you thinkin' about, Ray?" He would just chuckle. "Oh, I just got an idea I'm



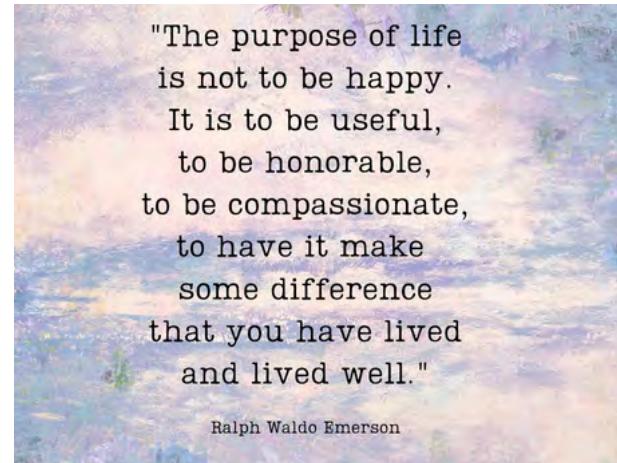
Ray Roberts

Friends We Will Miss (Cont.)

workin' out." We miss you already, Mr. Roberts. We miss you; we miss your stories; we miss that sparkle of mischief. Safe flying, friend. Fly high as you look for your next adventure.

Many thanks to those who offered their thoughts about Ray and to [Gay Campbell's November 2017 story in The Root](#) on Ray's heroic past. All were inspiring for this article. Ray is survived by his wife, Linda, and six

children, all of whom have their own adventures. In a recent note to Dale Powell, the family wrote, "Ray had a wonderful time with you and the others. Gardening was such a passion of his and he had great fellowship with everyone in your group!"



Resources & Education Opportunities for Master Gardeners and the Community we serve can be found on the Calendar at [Upcoming Events](#).

For non-DCMGA events, [Continuing Education Opportunities](#).

DCMGA Members & Interns

Plan Your Week (PYW) has the most current VS/CE Opportunities and is sent via VMS every Friday.

D C M G A
HELP DESK
Question of the Month



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

BY HELP DESK TEAM

Q: My landscape is being invaded by ants. Small ones with little dirt mounds and some big ones, maybe fire ants. Is there anything I can do to get rid of them?

A: First, I want to mention that according to iNaturalist, “Collectively, ants are considered to be beneficial in our environment. As a group, they till more earth than earthworms, thereby reducing compaction. Many, like imported fire ants, are predators (and omnivores) and actually reduce population levels of other insect and arthropod pests like ticks, chiggers, caterpillars and beetles. Some ant species, however, are considered pests because of their local abundance, and ability to bite and sting.”

https://www.inaturalist.org/project_lists/91271-Texas-Antss-Check-List

To remove ants pests, there are chemical treatments that effectively kill them. However, selecting the right treatment depends on the type of ant you need to remove and whether the ants are indoors or outside.

Removing fire ants: Because they can be aggressive and have a painful sting, you may want to remove them to protect adults and children. Texas A&M recommends a two-step method to deal with fire ants:
(<https://fireant.tamu.edu/controlmethods/two-step/>)

1. Broadcast a bait insecticide over your entire yard sometime between late August and mid-October.
2. Treat individual, problem mounds with an approved mound drench, granule, bait, or dust insecticide.

How to remove other types of ants from your yard or garden: “When anthills in the lawn appear above the grass tops the mound can be raked or “washed” flat as needed (use a forceful stream of water from the garden hose to disperse the soil on a regular basis). The need for such maintenance will be greatest during periods of prolific ant nesting activity such as during periods of wet spring weather. If necessary, as a last resort, you can spot-treat anthills in the lawn with an insecticide such as Sevin, bifenthrin, permethrin, cyfluthrin, or esfenvalerate. Rake the anthill flat and sprinkle granules onto the soil surface or drench the mound area with diluted solution.



Read and carefully follow the instructions on the insecticide label." Iowa State University: <https://yardandgarden.extension.iastate.edu/how-to/how-manage-ant-mounds-lawns-gardens-and-pastures>

Removing ants from inside your home:

The first and most important step to reducing problem ants occurring inside a home is to eliminate sources of food and water. Keep the counters clean of food and spills. Make sure any trash cans that contain food have tight lids. Ants also need water so be sure to stop dripping faucets and remove water from condensation spots. Check your cupboards for any spills that might be attractive and remove them.

Treat your home perimeter with an insecticide barrier such as insecticide sprays or dusts on the soil immediately adjacent to the building. Indoors, you can create an ant bait by combining some acceptable food into which a small amount of an insecticide is incorporated. Be sure no children are exposed to this baited food. There are also several commercial ant baits for indoor use are available at nursery and garden centers.

How to tell the type of ant:

The right treatment to use depends on the type of ant you need to remove. The listed resources below and the attached picture will help you identify your type of ant and provide detailed instructions on treatment techniques.



SEPTEMBER TURF TIP

TIME TO APPLY PRE-EMERGENT TO YOUR NORTH TEXAS LAWN

MID-SEPTEMBER THROUGH EARLY OCTOBER

THERE'S A SPECIFIC TIME-FRAME TO APPLY



Apply Fall pre-emergents when soil temperatures drop to around 70F for 4-5 consecutive nights or when nighttime lows are 60-65F. This will vary a lot from year to year and region to region. For North TX, this is typically between mid-September to early October. Your time is limited!

STOP THE GROWTH OF COOL WEATHER WEEDS

ONCE THE COLD WEATHER USHERS IN WITH RAIN AND A COLD FRONT – IT'S TOO LATE

A pre-emergent application will inhibit the seeds before they can "emerge" or germinate in the cooler weather.



REMEMBER, NOW IS THE TIME

DON'T MISS THIS BRIEF WINDOW FOR TREATMENT



If you miss this deadline, then the cool-season annual seeds will germinate and it will be another year before you can treat them.



WHAT TO APPLY

CORN GLUTEN MEAL OR BENEFIN?

Corn Gluten Meal can have a success of up to 60% if it does not receive rain for five to seven days after it is applied. Benefin will only be effective if applied in the short time frame from mid-September to October. To read more about these options, visit <https://aggieturf.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/Preemergence-Herbicide-Guide-4.pdf>



CHECK OUT MORE INFORMATION

ANOTHER RESOURCE 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

Denton County Master Gardener Association

Questions? Contact our Help Desk

email: master.gardener@dentoncounty.com

PHONE: 940-349-2892

**TEXAS
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Denton County

More info:

“Managing Household Ant Pests”

<https://www-aes.tamu.edu/files/2014/06/Managing-Household-Ant-Pests.pdf>

“Ants in the Home”

<https://extension.colostate.edu/docs/pubs/insect/05518.pdf>

“Pests of Homes, Structures, People, and Pets”

<https://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn7411.html>

“Got Ants? Eliminate them with IPM”

<https://extension.psu.edu/got-ants-eliminate-them-with-ipm>

Types of ants in north Texas

From sources across the web

 Carpenter ants	▼	 Pharaoh ant	▼	 Fire Ants	▼
 Tapinoma sessile	▼	 Tetramorium immigrans	▼	 Acrobat Ants	▼
 Yellow crazy ant	▼	 Argentine ant	▼	 Little black ant	▼
 Garden Ant	▼	 Red imported fire ant	▼	 Leaf cutter ants	▼
 Thief ants	▼	Google search results			

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.

PAGE 1 OF 2

OCTOBER DCMGA Upcoming Events

(ALWAYS CHECK THE DCMGA CALENDAR FOR UPDATED INFO!)

OCT 3 *Flower Mound First Baptist Community Garden Work Days*
Learn and grow veggies to help the community. Wear comfortable shoes, hat, and sunscreen. Bring water
1901 Timber Creek Flower Mound -- Thursday Mornings 9AM-11AM

OCT 5 *Outdoor Insect and Flower Photography Workshop*
Master Gardener Lea Sage Watson will entertain and educate as you learn the best techniques for capturing those beautiful images of your landscape and insect guests. This is an outdoor event.
4100 Arbor Creek Dr. Carrollton 12-2PM

OCT 7 *Community Strong Farm*
Growing Vegetables for Linda Tutt High School Student Run Grocery & First Refuge Food Bank. All tasks from soil prep to harvesting as the season dictates. We will give short education on the tasks of the day.
1350 Milam Rd E. Sanger, Monday Mornings 8AM-10AM

OCT 9 *Monthly Meeting and Program -Pumpkin Perfection*
Get crafty with succulents. Create stunning Fall Centerpieces. Join us for an interactive presentation while crafting the perfect autumn decoration. Dallas County Master Gardener Roseann Ferguson will guide us through the process. One hour program is followed by our general meeting.
Global Spheres Center 7801 S. Interstate 35E, Corinth 10AM-12PM

OCT 11 *Trees*
Trees are the single most valuable plant in your landscape. Carol Rowley, Denton County Master Gardener, will help you with selection, through planting and pruning, to keep your trees healthy and growing.
Denton Senior Ctr 509 Bell Ave, Denton 9-10AM

OCT 11 *CLASS OF 2025 INFORMATIONAL MEETING*
ARE YOU INTERESTED IN BECOMING A DENTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER? YOU'RE INVITED TO OUR INFORMATIONAL MEETING TO FIND OUT THE DETAILS, MEET CURRENT MASTER GARDENERS, AND ASK QUESTIONS.
GLOBAL SPHERES CENTER 7801 S INTERSTATE 35E, CORINTH SOLOMON'S PORCH 10AM-12PM

OCT 12 *The More the Merrier-Houseplant Propagation*
Is your piggy bank suffering a loss due to numerous trips to the garden center? Consider propagating your plants from the garden. Denton County Master Gardener Linda Barker will help you get started.
Carrollton Public Library, 1700 Keller Springs Rd, Carrollton, 10:30AM.

TEXAS MASTER GARDENER
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Denton County

"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 COOPERATING."

PAGE 2 OF 2

OCTOBER DCMGA Upcoming Events

(ALWAYS CHECK THE DCMGA CALENDAR FOR UPDATED INFO!)

OCT 12 **Turf Alternatives**
 Let Carol Rowley, Denton County Master Gardener, give you some examples of potential alternatives to water-guzzling turf grasses. You can have a beautiful "lawn" without draining our lakes!
 Denton South Branch Library, 3228 Teasley, Denton 11AM-12PM

OCT 19 **FALL INTO GARDENING EVENT**
 GET READY FOR A FUN-FILLED DAY AT THE FALL INTO GARDENING EVENT. HOSTED BY THE DENTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION, BEULAH ACRES, AND UPPER TRINITY REGIONAL WATER DISTRICT! JOIN US ON THE LEARNING LANE FROM 8-11 AM FOR EXCITING DEMOS ON DRIP IRRIGATION, PLANT CARE, KIDS ACTIVITIES, AND MORE. ENJOY GUIDED TOURS OF BEAUTIFUL GARDENS, AND DON'T FORGET TO CHECK OUT OUR PLANT POT SALE TO SUPPORT DCMGA PROGRAMS.
 STAY FOR KEYNOTE PRESENTATIONS BEGINNING AT 11 A.M., INCLUDING TALKS BY CBS TEXAS METEOROLOGIST JEFF RAY AND TONI MOOREHEAD, TARRANT COUNTY MASTER GARDENER AND OWNER OF SIGNATURE GARDENS.
 CHOOSE FROM A VARIETY OF PRESENTATIONS BY GARDENING EXPERTS FROM 12:15- 2:15 P.M., INCLUDING SELECTING TREES, SOIL AND COMPOST, WATERWISE GARDENING, AND NATIVE PLANTS.
 LEARN MORE AND REGISTER NOW ON THE [FALL INTO GARDENING PAGE](#). REGISTRATION IS \$15 FOR ADULTS (AGES 16+) AND \$8 FOR CHILDREN AGES 6 TO 15. THIS INCLUDES LUNCH, SO YOU CAN RECHARGE AND KEEP LEARNING!
 BRING THREE NON-PERISHABLE FOOD ITEMS FOR A CHANCE TO WIN A FABULOUS GARDENING GIFT. IT'S A WIN-WIN!
 DON'T MISS OUT ON THIS FANTASTIC EVENT! SEE YOU THERE!

GLOBAL SPHERES CENTER, 7801 S. INTERSTATE 35E, CORINTH, 8AM-3:15PM

NOV 2 **TREES-TREES-TREES**
 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!
 AFTER THE CLASS PRESENTATION, WE WILL GO OUTSIDE AND PLANT A TREE TOGETHER, DEMONSTRATING PROPER TREE-PLANTING PROCEDURES THAT YOU CAN REPLICATE YOURSELF. WHEN IS THE BEST TIME TO PLANT A TREE? YESTERDAY!
 \$12 FOR PRE-REGISTRATION, \$15 AT THE DOOR. PRE-REGISTRATION IS HIGHLY RECOMMENDED FOR THIS POPULAR CLASS:
[HTTPS://WWW.SIGNUPGENIUS.COM/GO/10C0C4CA5AE29A3F9C07-TREE#/](https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C4CA5AE29A3F9C07-TREE#/)
GLOBAL SPHERES CENTER, 7801 S. INTERSTATE 35E, CORINTH 9AM-12PM

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Scan the QR Code to Register
www.dcmga.com

Fall Into Gardening

PRESENTED BY:

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

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 19
8:00 am - 3:15 pm

GLOBAL SPHERES CENTER, 7801 S I-35, CORINTH, TX

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:

JEFF RAY, CBS TEXAS METEOROLOGIST “Changing Weather, Changing Gardens”	TONI MOOREHEAD, OWNER SIGNATURE GARDENS “Blooms & Beyond: Year-Long Color for Your Garden”
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Presentations, Demonstrations, Information Booths & Kids Activities to Help You Grow!

\$15 Adults (ages 16+)
\$8 Kids (ages 6 -15)
Includes lunch

Donate 3 non-perishable food items to enter to win a gardening door prize!

Register on dcmga.com
No refunds. The event will be held rain or shine.

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AGRILIFE
EXTENSION**

**BEULAH
ACRES**
REGIONAL WATER DISTRICT

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



Denton County Master Gardener Association



JOIN US TO LEARN MORE

General Meeting & Program
October 09, 2024, 10 am-noon

2025 Prospective Intern Informational Meeting
October 11, 2024, 10 am-noon
(Although optional for applicants, if you are chosen to participate, this meeting or a make-up meeting in January will be required.)

Both at the Global Spheres Center
7801 S I-35, Corinth

Scan the QR code or go to dcmga.com/become-a-master-gardener for details & to apply



Now Recruiting for Our 2025 Intern Class

Want to Be a Master Gardener?

Online Applications Available Aug 19- Oct 21 at dcmga.com

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



Mission Statement

As Master Gardeners, our mission is to educate and inspire Denton County residents through research-based horticulture, to promote eco-friendly gardens and enduring landscapes that enrich our communities.

Extension EO/EEO Statement

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

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Social Media

Facebook:

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

Instagram:

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

X (formerly Twitter):

<https://twitter.com/DentonCountyMGA>

Pinterest:

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

YouTube:

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

Save the Date

October 9 DCMGA Monthly Meeting & Program "Pumpkin Perfection: Learn to Craft Your Own Succulent Centerpiece!" by Dallas County MG Roseann Ferguson

October 19 Fall Into Gardening, Global Spheres, Corinth.
Register on dcmga.com



Contact Information

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Content
The Submission deadline for the November edition of *The Root* is Tuesday, October 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 jupiterjudyjudy@gmail.com.

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