

Denton County Master Gardener Association

THE ROOT

Grow With Us 



Rose Arbor at Secluded Sanctuary, 2025 DCMGA Garden Tour

WHAT'S GROWING ON

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Buds from the Board

BY RAEELINE NOBLES, PRESIDENT

I've always thought of February as my dream month when I take time to look through magazines and books to get ideas to ignite my imagination for my own space. Inspirations in mind, I walk the gardens and envision what changes and additions I want to plan for and prepare over the next two months. I take my not so fancy garden plans with me so I am reminded of what I already have in place and the size of each plant. Last year's photos also help with planning for color needs. The list of ideas can get quite long, but better to have too many than not enough. I can find a way to include a little of everything in the end!

Take time to walk your gardens. With a lot of plants in hibernation mode, you'll see more of your hardscape and decorative garden items so any changes needed or wanted will become clearer. You'll be reminded of how important mulching fallen tree leaves into the garden is to help amend our clay and sandy soils, and leaving native plants alone after they have died back so that wildlife have places to burrow for warmth and seeds to eat. There's a lot of life in winter gardens. So put on those jackets and mittens and enjoy it all! For assistance in planning your gardens for Spring, check out our dcmga.com website. There's great information on planning, preparing, choosing plants – you name it! We also have excellent volunteers at our Help Desk. Our website has a Help Desk online form to submit questions for a timely response. Click on "Contact Us" under the Connect section for the form.

Oh! And don't forget to prune back your roses. A handy reminder is Valentine's day as the deadline to at least get started on this important job before roses begin new growth. Also, make plans to trim back your native grasses in February/March. It helps with air circulation in the warmer months, as well as allowing more sunshine in so the grasses start new growth sooner. Cutting back two-thirds is the usual rule of thumb. More answers to winter/spring pruning can be found through our Help Desk!

On another proud note, we want to congratulate all of our honorees and award winners from our 2025 DCMGA Awards banquet held in January. We have so many talented Master Gardeners in our ranks, it is truly a difficult task to decide who is awarded. Each awardee is committed to sharing valuable horticultural information to inspire our community to learn and engage in sustainable, eco-friendly gardening. We are most grateful for their many contributions to our mission of community education. We also had three members receive their 20, 25, and 30-year service pins: Gerry Peacock (20), Gresha Leamon (25), and Joan Stanley (30). Each of these individuals participated in many evolutionary changes in our organization, and we hope for many more years of their wisdom and experience!

Buds from the Board (Cont.)

It was also humbling to honor seven new Texas AgriLife Extension Emeritus members from our retired ranks. What they achieved during their tenures is awesome and their institutional wisdom is unmatched. Georgiana McCoig, Phyllis Minton, MaryAnn Moreland, Mary Morrow, Claud and Shirley Singer, and Laurel Wallace were awarded the highest honor Texas AgriLife bestows on its volunteers and we couldn't be prouder of them all! In addition, 39 members of the Class of 2024 Interns graduated from a year-long Internship, receiving their formal transition to Certified status. A loud round of applause for their achievement! We already know they are great and can't wait to see where they take their training on behalf of Denton County and DCMGA!

Happy dreamy February, everyone - Enjoy your garden walk abouts and dream big!

~ Raeline



What to Plant in February

- Seed potatoes (mid-February), dahlias
- Trees, shrubs, and other permanent crops
- Asparagus crowns are available at nursery centers; this is the best month to plant them
- Start seeds indoors for warm-season plants such as tomatoes, peppers, and eggplant
- Put out cool-weather transplants (broccoli, cabbage, Brussel sprouts and cauliflower)
- Start cool-weather seeds outdoors (include beets, carrots, lettuce, and spinach)
- Peach and plum trees need to be pruned to an open center

For more monthly tips:

[https://www.dcmga.com/maintain-and-solve-problems/maintain/
monthly-gardening-tips/](https://www.dcmga.com/maintain-and-solve-problems/maintain/monthly-gardening-tips/)

2025 Garden Tour Preview

Denton, Oak Point = Four Gardens + One Community Garden

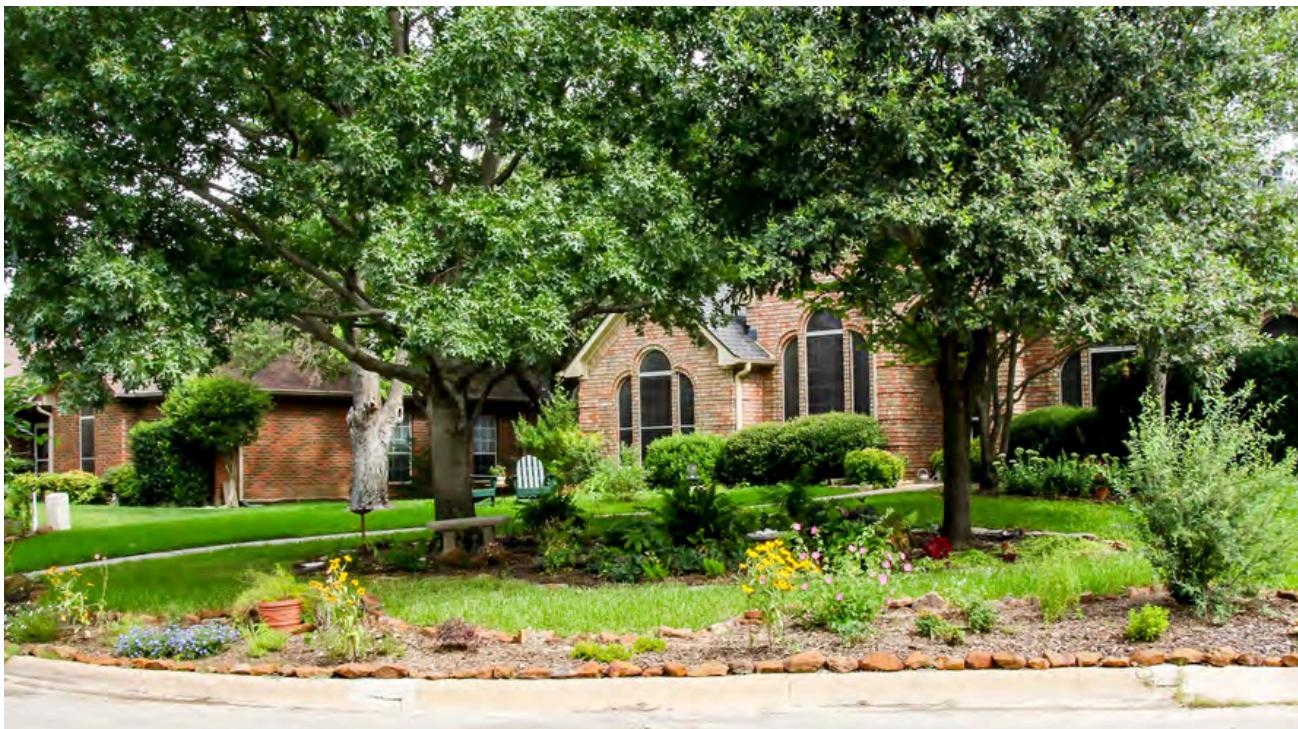
May 10, 2025

Enjoy Seasonal creeks, Texas Native plants, Rain Gardens, Water Conservation & Management, Shade gardening, Raised Vegetable beds, Fruit trees, Berries & Grapes, Cacti & Succulents, Fragrant Roses, Community Garden, Hügelkultur, Chickens, High Tunnels, Perennials & Annuals, Pollinator gardens. Our Annual Garden Tour has it all. Watch for ticket information in early February.

New this year! As you explore the gardens, watch for posters featuring the Digging Deeper logo scattered throughout the landscapes. These posters offer quick facts on a variety of popular garden topics. Each one also includes a QR code that links to more detailed articles and fact sheets, allowing you to explore topics further. You can read the articles right in the garden or take a photo of the QR code to read later at home. Additionally, enjoy hands-on activities at each garden, presented by Denton County Master Gardeners.

Garden Tapestry

This is a northeast Denton home garden with modest proportions. It includes natives and ornamentals, perennials and annuals. Highlights include the butterfly and bee pollinator garden, sun and shade gardens and cloistered back garden. This is managed by one person with very basic tools. Plants are chosen for texture, color, and beauty.



Garden Tapestry's front yard has a little of everything - sun, shade, large trees, and pollinator plants.

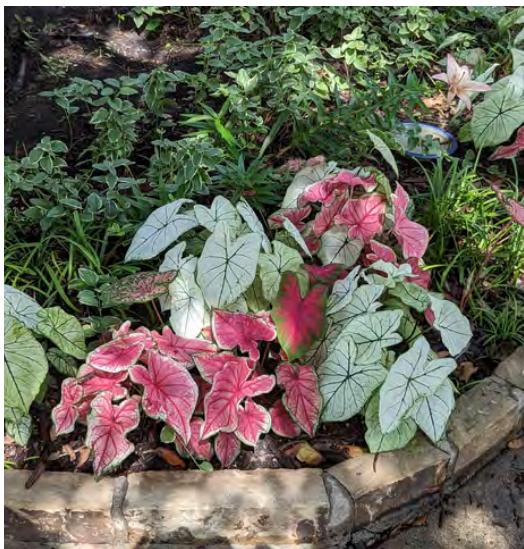
2025 Garden Tour Preview (Cont.)

One very special feature of this garden is the Redbud Tree. This is the traditional tree of Texas Woman's University, where the homeowners have deep ties. The Redbud thrives in this yard and even produces a few volunteers in the surrounding area. You might see a little green heart here and there around the garden, which is likely a redbud seedling.

Coleus is a garden-friendly annual, and it can be a perennial if kept inside in the winter. Coleus propagates easily. These plants are scattered around in beds, bringing vibrant red color, texture, height, and sometimes a purple flowery spike. They provide royal flourishes in the green tapestry. Oxalis, with its unique shamrock shape dots the landscape, and it thrives in spring and fall



Redbud Tree surrounded by pollinator plants & rosemary.



Shade loving caladiums, coleus, and leopard plants thrive in this beautiful garden.

Various herbs including basil and rosemary are included in this garden. The owners enjoy the smells and tastes of basil that remind them of Italy. Rosemary is used in herbal arrangements and in cooking. It was even used in their daughter's wedding bouquet.

Many gardening techniques are showcased throughout this space. It is truly a place of peace, quiet, contemplation, learning and joy.

2025 Garden Tour Preview (Cont.)



Hügelkultur raised beds in the cloistered backyard solve a drainage problem and improve the soil.

Garden Tapestry
DIGGING
deeper
Learning Opportunities

Lasagna Gardening
Composting
Hugelkultur (the finished product)



In The Veggie Patch: Beets

BY IVY SUMMERFIELD

Every week, I have the pleasure of eating lunch with my grandson. For two and a half years I watched his mother prepare lunches for him that included items from each food group. He never fussed; he just ate what was given to him. At a certain point, he decided he would share something from his plate with me. Wait for it ... of all things, he gave me a BEET!!! I have hated this vegetable my entire life. But I knew that I loved this child so much I would eat the beet and pretend I liked it even if I had to excuse myself from the table. Much to my surprise, I enjoyed it! I went home and added beets to my spring garden planner. Spring arrived and I planted more than any family needs. I had enough to make several new dishes plus canning some. I was so excited to share my new recipes with my grandson, only to find out after that season that he no longer ate them!



mg stanton/CC BY-NC-ND 2.0/via Flickr

'Chioggia' Beets

Nutrients and Benefits

Beets are a cool season crop. Their leaves and roots are both edible and each portion provides different yet essential vitamins and minerals for our body. Both leaves and stems of various colors are excellent sources of Vitamin A, providing more vitamins and minerals than the root portion. The round red to pink ball-shaped vegetable – what we call the “beet” – has both Vitamin A and C. This root is also high in sugar. (1)

Beets are stated to have the following health benefits: blood pressure control, improved athletic performance, promotion of weight loss, anti-cancer agents, reduction of inflammation, improved digestive health, and help with diabetes. (2) According to the National Library of Medicine, more research will be needed to verify these attributes. However, it is interesting to see how one vegetable can inspire so much research. Although I have been fascinated with the general knowledge and research around beets, my real goal is to get you planting this promising vegetable that isn't always the most attractive!

Planting, Disease, and Care

Being a cool season crop, you will want to consider planting beets in your spring garden. In North Texas, you have another opportunity in the fall for a second planting. Just note that if

In The Veggie Patch: Beets (Cont.)

inclement weather occurs, you should be prepared to shelter them. The planting steps read like a recipe:

Step 1. Have your soil tested (3)

Step 2. Amend your soil if needed per your soil test

Step 3. Soil

- Beets do best in sandy soil in the spring and heavier soil in the fall because sandy soil warms faster than clay soil. (4)
- Heavier soils need to be amended with plenty of compost to allow good root development. (5)
- Ideal pH levels = 6.0-7.0
- Soil should be well-drained.
- Before planting and while working your amendments into the soil, add a cup of fertilizer for every 10 ft row. A 10-20-10 fertilizer is recommended by Texas A&M AgriLife.



Beet Greens in the Garden

Step 4-7 - Planting, Watering, Fertilizing & Care (6)

For seeds to sprout, the temperature must be minimum 40F

- Plant seed per directions on your seed package. Texas A&M AgriLife Extension recommends creating furrows. Then seeds should be planted 1-2 inches apart in each row. Germination should take place in 7 - 14 days.
- Transplants are another way to plant beets. Start seeds early, approximately 4-6 weeks before the last frost so they are ready to go in the ground shortly after the last frost.
- If the temperature starts to get warm, cover with a light topping of mulch.
- Water weekly if it does not rain, keep soil moist but not soggy, and ensure that your soil is well-draining.
- Per Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, fertilize 1 tablespoon per 10 ft row, around the plant once the plant gets 4 - 6 inches tall.
- Keep weeds and other plants out of your garden bed because beets need all the moisture and nutrients they can get. You can work the soil around the plant, however, do not disturb the roots.

Step 8 - Harvest (7)

- Beets need about 60 days to reach 1 1/2 inches in diameter which is the perfect size to harvest for consumption, canning, and cooking.
- They can be stored in a polyethylene bag for several weeks.
- They can be stored in a root cellar if dug before the floor freezes in the fall.

In The Veggie Patch: Beets (Cont.)

- To store, cut the tops off 1 inch above the root if storing in a root cellar.

- Beets store best at 32 degrees and 92% humidity.

Step 9 – DISEASE AND INSECT (8)

- Some diseases include Downey mildew, Leaf Spot, Seedling damping off, and Nematodes.
- Insects range from aphids, beet armyworms, fleas, beetles, leafhoppers, and webworms.
- Pest Management is vital.
- Your first indication will appear on your leaves. Assess and remove any insects and proceed with pest management.

Step 10 – ENJOY!



'Detroit Dark Red' Beets

Varieties

According to the Denton County AgriLife Extension office, there are many varieties of beets to consider: Chioggia, Detroit Dark Red, Pacemaker II, Red Ace, and Ruby Queen. (9) Is one better than any other? That, my friend, I cannot tell you, because I am just starting my journey. I hope you try each one and let me know by sending a message to the Denton County Master Gardener Help Desk. (10) I would love to hear from you.

My journey researching beets took me to multiple articles that shared the benefits and explained how this cool season vegetable should be planted. From North to South, East to West, techniques only differed on when to start the seeds. If you can buy seeds that are grown locally, all the better. If not, then do your research and choose seeds that should do well in our climate, starting with the varieties listed above.



Beets Grown By The Author

In The Veggie Patch: Beets (Cont.)

Resources

(1) Michigan State University, MSU Extension. "How to Grow Beets."
https://www.canr.msu.edu/resources/how_to_grow_beets. Accessed January 19, 2025.

(2) National Institutes of Health, National Library of Medicine. "Beetroot as a functional food with huge health benefits: Antioxidant, antitumor, physical function, and chronic metabolomics activity." <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8565237/>. Accessed January 19. 2025.

(3) Texas A&M AgriLife Extension. "Submittal Forms and Payment Information."
<https://soiltesting.tamu.edu/sample-page/submittal-forms/>. Accessed January 19, 2025.

(4), (6), (9) Masabni, Joseph. "Easy Gardening. Beets." Texas A&M AgriLife Extension.
<https://agrilifeextension.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/how-to-grow-beets.pdf>. Accessed January 19, 2025.

(5) Utah State University, Yard and Garden Extension. "How to Grow Beets in Your Garden."
<https://extension.usu.edu/yardandgarden/research/beets-in-the-garden>. Accessed January 19, 2025.

(7) University of Arkansas, Agriculture and Natural Resources. "Home Gardening Series Beets."
<https://www.uaex.uada.edu/publications/PDF/FSA-6063.pdf>. Accessed January 19, 2025.

(8) Masabni, Joseph. "Beet-Commercial and Specialty Crop Guides." <https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/vegetable/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/2011/10/beets1.pdf>. Accessed January 19, 2025.

(10) Denton County Master Gardener Association. "Contact Us."
<https://www.dcmga.com/connect/contact-us/>. Accessed January 19, 2025.



In The Veggie Patch: Asparagus

BY JANICE YODER SMITH

This month we include a bonus In the Veggie Patch article, Asparagus! February is the optimum time to plant Asparagus. We hope this bonus article will inspire you to purchase some roots and start growing this delicious vegetable!

Asparagus, *Asparagus officianalis*, is a vegetable loved by many. Home growers say that freshly picked asparagus spears taste much better than that those found in a grocery aisle. Those who have only seen asparagus spears may be surprised that asparagus plants produce attractive, fern-like foliage supporting beneficial insects including ladybugs, lacewings and bees.

Varieties

While asparagus can be grown from seed, agricultural extension documents

recommend planting 1-2-year-old root

crowns. Local nurseries and reputable online suppliers will have specific varieties of crowns available in late January into February. Recommended varieties of asparagus for North Texas include Jersey Gem and Jersey Giant which resist Fusarium wilt, a fungal disease. UC157 tolerates warmer temperatures. Apollo, Atlas, Jersey Gem, Martha Washington, Purple Passion, and UC 72 round out the recommendations. Growing asparagus from seed is possible, but growing from one- or two-year old crowns (root structures) provides better yields sooner. Asparagus is dioecious, meaning that it has separate male and female plants. Both sexes are required in the garden for successful reproduction.



Purchase 2 year-old crowns, which are larger and will produce more harvestable spears in the next 2 years.
Joey Williamson, ©2016 HGIC, Clemson Extension

Planting, Disease, and Care

North Texas (zone 8a) gardeners should plant the crowns in early February. Consider that these plants may live 15-25 years and don't like to be moved after their third year when choosing a location. A bed of heavily composted clay or sandy loam soil, pH 6.5-7.5 and in full sun is the best location for asparagus. If yellow nutsedge can grow in the area considered, that location is too wet for asparagus. Experts recommend making 4-12" deep furrows in rows about 5 feet apart. Place crowns, roots down, at the bottom of a furrow. Separate crowns about 12-14". Then cover the top of crown with 1-2" of compost and 2-3" of soil. Over the growing period, add more soil around the stem as it grows. Gardeners must be patient because first year of growth needs to be allowed to fully "fern" so that root development goes well. Harvests will be small the first two years that asparagus is in the garden.

In The Veggie Patch: Asparagus (Cont.)

Companion planting helps limit the number of insect pests that may harm asparagus plants. They have similar light, soil, and moisture requirements as the desired crop. Scents from their leaves or chemicals from their roots repel harmful insects. Asparagus beetles cause much of the loss of asparagus. Tomatoes repel those beetles. Parsley, basil and marigolds help repel pests, too.

Asparagus provides much nutrition in just 15-20 calories per single 3-ounce serving (about five medium (5-7") spears. It is enriched in vitamins A, C, E K and folate and important minerals including calcium, magnesium, phosphorous and potassium. A high fiber and inulin content helps human gut bacteria digest food.

The initial challenges of growing asparagus are offset by the nutrition and beauty it provides. Please check out the resources listed here for more information, including the answer to why eating asparagus makes urine smell badly for some people.

Resources

Path to the Plate Asparagus, HY-PU-232,
Texas AgriLife Extension

<https://www.dcmga.com/ah-path-to-plate-asparagus/>

Easy Gardening Asparagus, EHT-066, Texas
AgriLife Extension

<https://www.dcmga.com/asparagus/>

All About Asparagus, Extension Education in
Austin County

<https://austin.agrilife.org/health-hints/all-about-asparagus/>

Companion Planting, West Virginia Extension

<https://extension.wvu.edu/lawn-gardening-pests/gardening/garden-management/companion-planting>

Companion Plants, Somervell County Master Gardeners

<https://txmg.org/somervell/news/108170>

Photo credits: Asparagus, Clemson Extension, <https://hgic.clemson.edu/factsheet/asparagus/>



Plant of the Month

Flowering Quince: A Timeless Garden Gem

BY CHERYL HUCKABEE

Flowering quince (*Chaenomeles speciosa*), sometimes called Japonica, is a delightful and hardy shrub that has been gracing gardens for centuries. With its vibrant blossoms and rugged charm, this “old-fashioned shrub” is often one of the first plants to bloom in spring, making it a favorite among gardeners. Whether you’re drawn to its historical roots, its showy flowers, or its utility as a barrier plant, flowering quince has much to offer.

A Plant with a Storied Past

The history of flowering quince is as colorful as its blooms. Carl Thunberg first described the Japanese species (*Chaenomeles japonica*) in his 1784 *Flora Japonica*. Initially, it was thought to be a type of pear because of its numerous stamens and striking flowers. By 1796, a related Chinese species was introduced to England, where it was mistakenly identified as the same plant. This Chinese version quickly gained popularity in English gardens and made its way to the U.S. by the 1830s. The true Japanese Japonica didn’t arrive in England until 1869. Today, the two species – *Chaenomeles speciosa* and *Chaenomeles japonica* – have been hybridized into over 150 cultivars.

Popular in rural America during the late 19th century, flowering quince remains nostalgic, often found on old homesteads. Its ability to withstand neglect and thrive in various conditions has cemented its place as a garden classic.

Characteristics and Cultivars

Flowering quince is a deciduous shrub of the Rosaceae family, typically reaching 4 to 8 feet in height and width. Its branches often form a tangled, spiny mass, though some modern cultivars are thornless. The flowers appear in late winter to early spring, ranging from single blossoms to lush doubles in red, pink, and white shades. After flowering, the shrub may produce small, hard, pear-like fruit that’s suitable for making jelly. Among the most popular modern cultivars are:

- ‘Texas Scarlet’: A compact, 3-foot plant with bright red flowers.
- ‘Cameo’: A double-flowered variety with peachy-pink blooms reaching up to 5 feet.
- Double Take Series: These thornless varieties boast large, double blooms and no fruit, including ‘Scarlet Storm’ and ‘Pink Storm’.



Flowering Quince ‘Texas Scarlet’

Flowering Quince (Cont.)



Flowering Quince in full bloom.

Growing and Caring for Flowering Quince

This hardy shrub is easy to grow and thrives in USDA Zones 4 through 8. Plant it in well-drained soil with medium moisture. While it tolerates shade, flowering quince performs best in full sun, producing a more abundant display of blooms. Regular pruning is essential to maintain its size, shape, and flower production.

Pruning Tips: After flowering in spring, remove about one-third of the oldest wood and any weak growth at ground level. This encourages the development of flowering spurs for the next season. The entire plant can be pruned back to 6–12 inches for a more uniform look.

Wildlife and Warnings

Thanks to its dense, twiggy branches, flowering quince attracts hummingbirds and provides shelter for them. However, rabbits may damage the plant, and its spines can be a hazard in areas frequented by children.

A Burst of Spring Color

Whether used as a barrier plant, in groupings, or as part of a shrub border, flowering quince is a versatile and reliable addition to the garden. Its early blooms and historical charm make it a timeless favorite for gardeners seeking beauty and resilience.

Resources

Oregon State University. “*Chaenomeles speciosa*. Landscape Plants.”

<https://landscapeplants.oregonstate.edu/plants/chaenomeles-speciosa>. Accessed December 30, 2024.

North Carolina Extension Gardener Plant Toolbox. “*Chaenomeles speciosa*. Common Flowering Quince, Flowering Quince.” <https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/chaenomeles-speciosa/>. Accessed December 30, 2024.

Warmund, Michele. “Common Quince, *Cydonia* versus Flowering Quince, *Chaenomeles*.” (n.d.) Integrated Pest Management, University of Missouri. <https://ipm.missouri.edu/MEG/2018/9/quince/>. Accessed December 30, 2024.



Container Gardening

BY TRISH PERCY & JUDY ALLEN

Does the idea of planting a full-scale garden seem overwhelming? Do you have space limitations that prevent in-ground garden beds? How about shade or sun issues that make gardening a challenge? Maybe you have clay soil that needs amending to make it acceptable for most plants. The answer is containers. Containers take up smaller spaces, they are movable, and the best planting medium can be used.

Containers give us the flexibility to put plants where they grow the best, rather than where there happens to be a flower bed that might not have optimal conditions. Different pots can add interest as well as the plants, with height, color, and design to draw the eye.

Often, we have a location we'd like to spruce up, but no room for in-ground plantings. Think of a corner of a deck or patio, the alcove by your front door, or even steps leading to your deck or pool. Containers offer us flexibility without commitment. We can try it out and move it if we decide it either isn't thriving or just doesn't feed our soul there.



How about culinary herbs? We can grow them year-round in north Texas, but it's nice to be able to shuffle them based on the time of year. In the winter they may love the warmth of a sunlit wall behind them, but in the summer, they will want shade and more shade. Or we can move them indoors to a sunny window during a freeze! Keeping some containers of herbs near your back door is a plus. The closer to the kitchen, the better. When a recipe calls for a fresh herb, it can be steps away and easily accessible. Do you love mint? Be sure it is grown in a large pot or container to keep it from taking over your entire yard.

We have clay soil that can be difficult to work when wet; growing tomatoes in 5-gallon or larger containers lets us grow them anywhere that has access to sun and water. Weeds are much easier to control as well. Choose bush or container-friendly varieties. Remember that containers



Container Gardening (Cont.)

tend to dry out faster than in-ground beds, so keep an eye on moisture levels. In the colder months, containers can be several degrees cooler than if growing inground. Therefore, if freezing temperatures are in the forecast, add some protection to vulnerable container plants. Also, you may need to fertilize more often for the best crop. Containers can be a great way to have a vegetable garden in a small space.

A cut-flower garden can be a reality for those who have less than favorable conditions. You can fill your home with colorful flowers and memorable fragrances. Many annual varieties will thrive in containers – zinnias, daisies, sunflowers, and cosmos are favorites in the summer. They can withstand multiple cuttings and keep on producing. Roses can also be successfully grown in containers and will often bloom for months. Feel free to cut some beautiful blooms to enjoy. Many spring and fall flowering plants, both annuals and perennials, will thrive in containers as well. Look for transplants in your local garden stores and peruse seed catalogs for ideas.

Many types and sizes of containers are abundant in the marketplace. From small terra cotta pots to gorgeous ceramic containers, the choices are endless. How about planting in metal horse troughs? They are extremely durable and will last for many years. There are plastic pots in all sizes and prices as well. There are so many choices available that it can be a challenge when choosing. The most important thing to remember when gardening in any type or size container is how important good drainage is. All containers need drain holes in the bottom. There is nothing worse than discovering that your plants are drowning due to poor drainage.



There are many varieties of vegetables that are specifically bred for containers. Growing carrots in our clay soil is more than a challenge. Growing them in containers with great potting soil and compost changes everything. Better germination, larger roots, and better results are almost a guarantee. Read the seed and plant labels for the best choice when it comes to container gardening. There are hundreds of choices available. Check out your local garden center for plants or buy seeds that fit the size of your gardening space.

Container Gardening (Cont.)



What could be more beautiful than a lovely pot full of blooming flowers? Everything from ornamental grasses to spring annuals elevate the appearance of an area. Why not plant your container using the Thriller, Filler, Spiller technique. For the Thriller, put in larger, taller plants that create drama and add a vertical element. If the pot is to be viewed from all sides, then the thriller should be planted in the middle, otherwise place it in the back. Next, for the Filler, choose shorter, mounding plants that will fill the space around the Thriller. Lastly, add your Spiller. These are trailing plants that hang over the edge of the planter. Experiment and choose plants based on their water and sun exposure needs.

Don't be afraid to try something new in a pot. The only limitation is your imagination!

Resources

Container Gardening or Porta-Growing, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, Bexar County

<https://bexar-tx.tamu.edu/earth-kind-horticulture/best-plants-for-bexar-county-south-texas/container-gardening-or-porta-growing/>

Container Gardening Offers Many Benefits, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, Galveston County

<https://galveston.agrilife.org/files/2012/03/08-19-2015-Container-Gardening-Offers-Many-Benefits-by-Dr.-William-M.-Johnson.pdf>

Container Gardening, Gardening Basics, Denton County Master Gardener Association

<https://www.dcmga.com/garden-basics-container-gardening/>

Container Gardening Using the Thriller, Filler, Spiller Planting Technique

<https://www.provenwinners.com/Container-Design>



Rooted in North Texas: A Newcomer's Guide to Gardening Success

BY CHERYL HUCKABEE

Conquering North Texas Soil: Tips for Thriving Gardens in a Challenging Landscape

Welcome to our gardening series for North Texas newcomers! Dig into this eight-part article series to learn from seasoned Master Gardeners who've mastered taming our unique climate and soil challenges.

Gardening in North Texas presents unique challenges due to unpredictable weather, scorching summers, and varying soil types. This article explores the different soils in the region and offers tips for improving soil quality using compost, amendments, and proper drainage.

Denton County has three primary soil regions: the Blackland Prairie with dark clays, the Eastern Cross Timbers region made up of sandy loam, and the Grand Prairie, which has a mix of clays, limestone, and silty loams. Depending on your location, you may encounter more than one soil type in your landscape.

Soil: Nature's Ultimate Powerhouse for Thriving Gardens

Soil is vital for plant growth, providing essential nutrients and water while supporting beneficial organisms. Well-aerated soil allows roots to grow deeper, making plants more drought-resistant and better able to access nutrients. Healthy soil also supports beneficial microbes that help plants thrive and naturally control pests.

The first step in gardening success is understanding your soil through a soil test. A test reveals pH levels, nutrient content, and overall health, guiding decisions on fertilization, amendments, and plant selection. Regular testing helps maintain soil health and ensures plants get the nutrients they need without over-fertilizing, which can harm both plants and the environment. [Learn more about soil testing.](#)

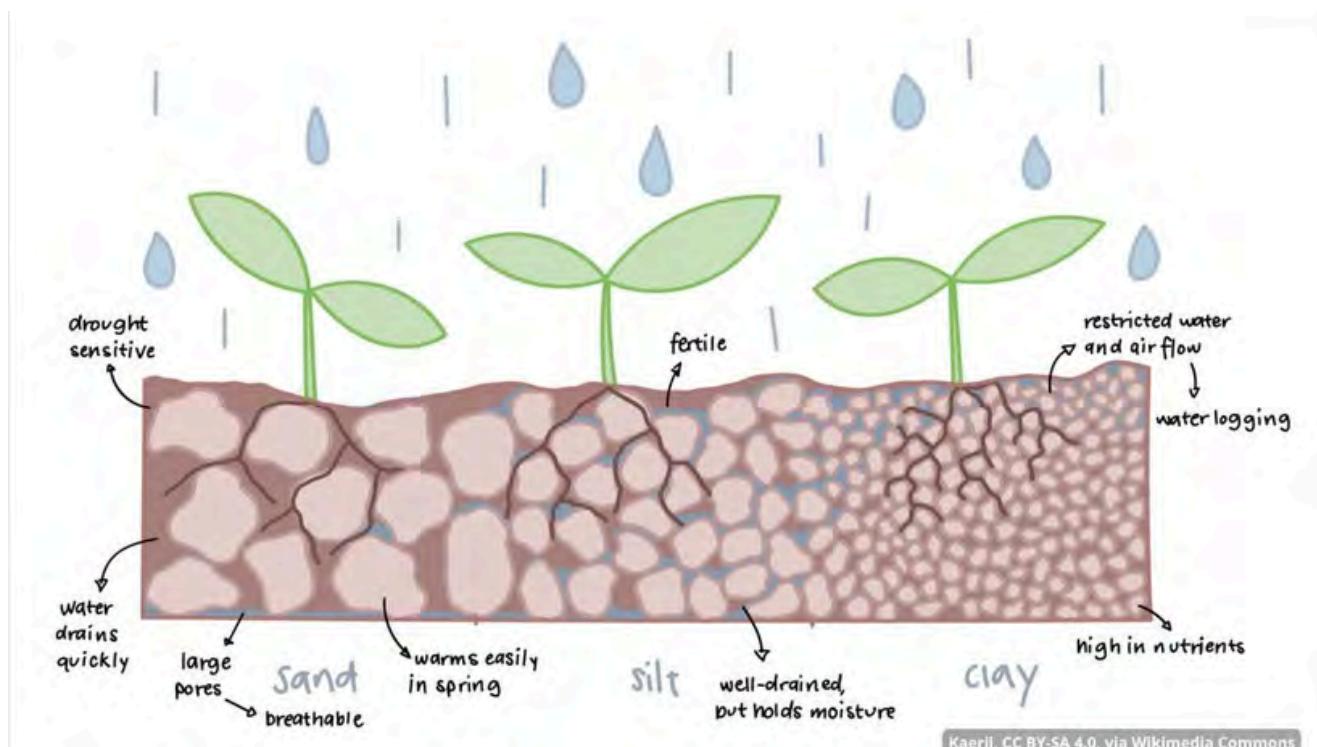
North Texas Soil Types and Gardening Strategies

Clay soils, known for their fine texture and water-holding ability, can be a challenge. They are nutrient-rich but tend to become compacted when wet, making it difficult for roots to grow. Improving clay soil for gardening is about enhancing its structure and adding nutrients to support healthy plant growth. The most effective and budget-friendly method is adding organic matter like compost, which you can make yourself. Each spring and fall, work 2–3 inches of compost lightly into the top 2–3 inches of soil to keep it rich and workable. Cover

Rooted in North Texas - Conquering North Texas Soil (Cont.)

crops like clover or beans are another great option—they can be turned into the soil or left on top as mulch to decompose naturally. For a long-term solution, consider incorporating expanded shale, a porous material that breaks up dense clay, improves drainage, and boosts aeration. While it's pricier, you only need to do it once, and combining it with compost ensures even better results for lighter, more plant-friendly soil.

Sandy loam, with a mix of sand, silt, and clay, is a favorite for many gardeners due to its excellent drainage and fertility. To improve sandy loam soil for gardening, focus on boosting its ability to retain moisture and nutrients. Regularly mix in organic matter like compost, aged manure, or leaf mold to enrich the soil and improve its structure. Adding a layer of mulch helps conserve moisture and regulate soil temperature, creating a more stable environment for plants. Opt for drought-tolerant or sandy-soil-friendly plants to ensure they thrive naturally in these conditions. Since sandy soils drain quickly, water deeply but less often to encourage roots to grow deeper. Avoid adding clay to sandy loam, as it can lead to compaction and poor drainage, which are not the intended improvements.



Kaerli, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Soil Types and Characteristics

Rooted in North Texas - Conquering North Texas Soil (Cont.)

Limestone soil, made from weathered limestone rock, is often rocky, stony, or gravelly and alkaline, meaning it has a higher pH. While it drains well, it can be difficult for plants that prefer acidic or nutrient-rich soil. To improve it, add organic matter like compost or aged manure to boost nutrients and improve moisture retention. You can also lower the soil's pH by adding sulfur, peat moss, or pine needles, which helps plants that prefer more acidic conditions. If the soil is too compacted, adding sand or gravel can improve drainage, but be careful not to overdo it. Finally, since limestone soil is often nutrient-poor, a balanced fertilizer based on soil tests can help support plant growth.

Silty loam, a mix of silt, sand, and clay, is considered ideal for gardening due to its nutrient-rich composition and good drainage. However, it can sometimes become compacted and retain too much moisture. Silty loam is a good soil for gardening but can sometimes become compacted and hold too much moisture. Add organic matter like compost or well-rotted manure to improve and enhance soil structure, prevent compaction, and boost nutrient availability. If the soil holds too much water, incorporate sand, perlite, or small gravel to improve drainage, but be careful not to add too much sand. To prevent compaction, avoid walking on the soil when it's wet, and consider using raised beds. Aerating the soil occasionally with a garden fork or aerator can also help oxygen and water reach the plant roots.

You Can Turn Your Tough North Texas Soil into a Garden Paradise

Gardening in North Texas presents unique challenges, but with a bit of knowledge and effort, you can work with the local soil to create thriving plants. Whether you're dealing with clay, sandy loam, limestone, or silty loam, each soil type requires specific care to improve its structure, drainage, and nutrient content. Regular soil tests are key to understanding your soil's specific needs, helping you make informed decisions about amendments, fertilizers, and plant selection. By enhancing your soil's health with organic matter, proper aeration, and thoughtful amendments, you'll create a beautiful and sustainable garden for years. Happy gardening!

Sources and Resources

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<https://www.dcmga.com/wp-content/uploads/docs/garden-basics-prepare/gb-soil-testing.pdf>

Rooted in North Texas - Conquering North Texas Soil (Cont.)

Sources and Resources (Cont.)

Masabni, J., The Texas A&M University System, Lillard, P., McCraw, B. D., & Cotner, S. (2014). Easy gardening [Guide]. Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. <https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/2013/09/EHT-076.pdf>

Smith, D. (2003). Expanded Shale - A new Possibility for Amending Clay Soils [Press-release]. https://gregg.agrilife.org/files/2011/09/expanded_shale_15.pdf

Soil Health. (n.d.). USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. Retrieved December 30, 2024, from <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/conservation-basics/natural-resource-concerns/soils/soil-health>

Soil management and health. (n.d.). UMN Extension. <https://extension.umn.edu/soil-and-water/soil-management-and-health>

USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service. (2008). General Soil Map of Texas. In General Soil Map of Texas. https://maps.lib.utexas.edu/maps/texas/texas-general_soil_map-2008.pdf



**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.**

What Are These Creatures? Grubs! Grubworms!

BY JANICE YODER SMITH

Digging in a garden or removing sod may expose a creamy white, worm-like creature. If inspection reveals that creature has 6 legs, it cannot be a caterpillar. Is this creature's head darker than its body? Does it have a dark grey or brown color on the other end? Does it keep curling up into a C-shape?

If "Yes" is the answer to each of those questions, the creature is most likely a grub (grubworm). Grubs are the larvae of beetles. Thousands of kinds of beetles with their own varieties of larvae exist. The most common grub in north Texas gardens is the June beetle (*Phyllophaga* species) larva. Other names for June beetles include June Bug, May beetle, and May bug.



Photo Courtesy Photo by Bart Drees.
https://landscapeipm.tamu.edu/files/2010/06/grubs_1g.jpg

White Grubs, the Larval Form of "June bugs."

their landscape until they wake up to landscape damage caused by hungry armadillos hunting for grubs. Anyone concerned about grub damage can spot-check their property by digging one-square-foot holes about six inches deep in several locations. If there are less than five grubs per square foot, they are unlikely to cause significant harm to plants or turf grasses. Low numbers may benefit plants by improving soil aeration and permeability as they burrow. Some turf types can tolerate up 15-20 grubs per square foot if moisture and light requirements for them are met.

Grubs feed on roots of plants just below the surface. They prefer the roots of turf grasses but also eat roots of other newly germinated plants. High numbers of grubs feeding can result in dead turf in a short time. Typically, grub-damaged turf can be rolled up like a rug. Young garden transplants or seedlings damaged by grubs leaves stems lying on the ground.

Grub sightings may occur year-round but peak from April through September. Most adults will emerge between the end of May and early July in north Texas. Grubs retreat deeper into the ground during winter for protection.

Gardeners may not realize they have grubs in

What Are These Creatures? Grubs! Grubworms! (Cont.)

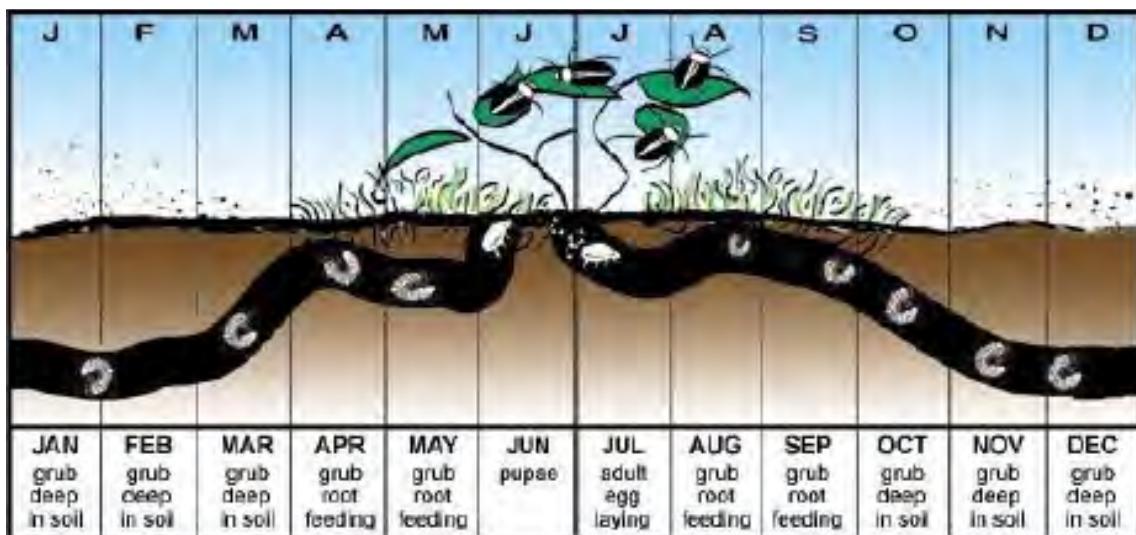


Image by Krischik et al. JB management in MN UMES bulletin.
<https://ncipmhort.cfans.umn.edu/sites/ncipmhort.cfans.umn.edu/files/2021-10/JB%20life%20cycle.jpg>

June Bug Emergence Cycle

Using Integrated Pest Management (IPM) strategies to control grubs reduces the likelihood of environmental harm while protecting turf and plants. IPM methods are generally recognized as safe (GRAS) to use in food-growing spaces. Some IPM methods provide localized control.

Grub infestations tend to be in small areas, allowing efficient application of IPM. Some people smash or drown grubs as they find them. Others gather grubs and place them in a feeder or a shallow pan for birds, toads, or lizards. Some choose to carefully follow directions to apply a specific beneficial nematode, *Heterorhabditis bacteriophora*, to kill grubs. Providing a welcoming environment for Scolid wasps that lay eggs inside the grubs to feed their larvae helps limit grub numbers, too.



Photo by Kevin Frank
https://www.canr.msu.edu/uploads/images/Plant%20Ag/GrubsInTurf2_KevinFrank.jpg

Grubs in Turf

What Are These Creatures? Grubs! Grubworms! (Cont.)

Correctly timing IPM or application of other grub controls is critical. Early larval stages are most susceptible to chemical controls. Gardeners choosing chemical grub control have better success by applying a chemical control about five weeks after the peak June bug emergence.

Resources

Texas AgriLife Extension, (accessed 08 January 2025)

<https://landscapeipm.tamu.edu/ipm-for-turfgrass/pests-turfgrass/grubs/>

“Grubworm, White Grubs” Texas AgriLife Extension (accessed 08 January 2025)

<https://texasinsects.tamu.edu/grubworm-white-grubs>

“Japanese Beetles in Yards and Gardens” University of Minnesota Extension (accessed 09 January 2025)

<https://extension.umn.edu/yard-and-garden-insects/japanese-beetles#:~:text=Life%20cycle,late%20June%20or%20early%20July>

“Integrated Pest Management” Gardening Basics Series, Denton County Master Gardeners Association

<https://www.dcmga.com/garden-basics-integrated-pest-management-ipm/>

“Sampling Methods, Landscape IPM,” Texas A&M AgriLife Extension (accessed 09 January 2025)

<https://landscapeipm.tamu.edu/what-is-ipm/ipm-concepts/sampling-methods>

“*Heterohabditis bacteriophora*, Beneficial Hb Nematode”, Cornell College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (accessed 11 January 2025)

<https://cals.cornell.edu/new-york-state-integrated-pest-management/outreach-education/fact-sheets/heterorhabditis-bacteriophora-beneficial-hb-nematode>

“Grubworms” Gardening Basics Series, Denton County Master Gardeners Association (accessed 11 January 2025)

<https://www.dcmga.com/garden-basics-grubworms/>



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 can use holiday dates to remind you when to plant your vegetables.”

Truth or myth? Let’s find out.

In North Texas, there is some truth to this old-time gardening advice. So, let’s look a bit deeper.

Why are holiday-based gardening reminders helpful? With our busy lives, sometimes your what-you-need-to-do list needs some nudging. Fortunately, the coming of a holiday is pushed thoughtfully by ubiquitous holiday-themed store displays, social media, and TV advertisements.

Which holidays are good candidates?

- Valentine's Day: potatoes, onions, and peas
- Easter: tomatoes, green beans, and peppers
- 4th of July: fall tomatoes and black-eyed peas
- Halloween: cruciferous vegetables and salad greens



In general, these holiday-based dates are within professionally recommended guidelines for planting vegetables. However, successful vegetable gardeners rely on many factors to decide when to put seeds and transplants into their garden such as soil temperature and consistent ambient temperatures, recent and forecast precipitation.

Successfully starting plants from seed

The Alabama Cooperative Extension recommends: measuring soil temperature as a method to determine when seed planting is most likely to be successful: “[Soil Temperature Conditions for Vegetable Seed Germination](#)”. You can purchase a soil thermometer at local nurseries and garden centers.

Gardening Grandma Says... (Cont.)

Successfully growing (vegetables from) transplants

“Most plants tolerate normal temperature fluctuations. In general, foliage plants grow best between 70 degrees to 80 degrees F. during the day and between 60 degrees to 68 degrees F. at night. Most flowering plants prefer the same daytime temperature range, but grow best when nighttime temperatures range from 55 degrees to 60 degrees F. Lower nighttime temperatures help the plant: recover from moisture loss, intensify flower color, and prolong flower life. Excessively low or high temperatures may cause: plant stress, inhibit growth, or promote a spindly appearance and foliage damage or drop. Cool nighttime temperatures are actually more desirable for plant growth than high temperatures. A good rule of thumb is to keep nighttime temperatures 10 to 15 degrees lower than daytime temperatures.” <https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/ornamental/a-reference-guide-to-plant-care-handling-and-merchandising/light-temperature-and-humidity/>

The recommended date range for planting vegetables in North Texas as provided by Denton County Master Gardener Association via Texas A&M AgriLife: “Planting Schedules”: <https://www.dcmga.com/select-and-grow/grow/>.

All experienced North Texas vegetable gardeners expect some challenges from nature, so we wish you patience and eventual success!

Photos Courtesy DCMGA Member Barbara Brown



Lettuce and Spinach



Potatoes



DCMGA Education

BY ELLEN GAUNTT

Welcome to News from your Education Committee!

We're here to bring you our first quarterly report and answer your questions on what's happening in Education. Your Education Committee: Ellen Gauntt (DCMGA Education Director), Alison McMahon, Jessie Kaur, Lee Ann Yates, Martha Cantrell, and Tammy DeWet. We meet the third Monday of every month at 4:00 on Zoom, please join us!

Texas Master Gardener Advanced Training:

“The goal of Advanced Training is to equip Extension Master Gardeners with specialized knowledge to enhance county educational programs of the Texas AgriLife Extension Service. Advanced Training is intended for public education purposes, not personal use.” [Advanced Training Program Information - Texas Master Gardener Program](#)

- To attend Advanced Training, you must be a currently certified Master Gardener. Interns may request to get on the waitlist, but cannot attend until they are certified.
- The courses planned for this year are: Irrigation and Water Management (formerly Rainwater Harvesting), Earth-Kind (Collin County), Junior Master Gardener National Leadership Training (virtual), Organics, Vegetables (Denton County!), Plant Propagation (Tarrant Count), Turf Grass, Greenhouse Management, Plant Pathology (virtual), Herbs (Brazos County) and Tree Care (Tarrant County).
- The only courses currently open for registration are Junior Master Gardener NLT (February 18 &19, virtual) and Tree Care (March 27 – 29, Tarrant County). Don’t ask when the others are scheduled, because we don’t know! MGs at the top of the waitlist will be notified as soon as we hear anything.
- You MUST be on the DCMGA waitlist to be approved to take a course and only 2 per county are allowed to register, so we start with those at the top of the list.
- How to get on the waitlist: email gaunttellen@gmail.com. You may also get on the waitlist for courses not being offered this year: Budding and Grafting, Compost, Entomology, Junior Master Gardener (not the conference) and Texas Superstars.

DCMGA Sub-Committee Projects:

- Advanced Training: This group is planning the state approved AT Vegetables course that DCMGA is hosting this fall. Currently they meet monthly by Zoom.
- Scholarship: DCMGA is awarding a new \$5000 scholarship to graduating high school students or college students who are pursuing a horticulture (or related) degree. This group has been preparing the documents and procedures and will be involved in the selection process. Letters are going out to schools January 15, 2025 and applications (with documentation) will be due on or before March 24, 2025, 11:59 pm.

DCMGA Education (Cont.)

- Educational Handouts: There are many handouts available for use by the Speakers Bureau, Ask A Master Gardener Booth and other events. This group has been researching and updating our resources.
- Speaker Resources: We are planning to post on the DCMGA website a list of CE topics and speakers that are available for Project Managers, monthly meetings and special events to contact. Please contact Ellen if you have any speaker suggestions!
- Advanced Learning: This is still in the planning stages, but we want to offer more in-depth learning opportunities for our Master Gardeners. These would be 2-4 hour quarterly classes with instructors from AgriLife, A&M or similar. We can use your help with this group if you want to volunteer.

As you can see, most of our work involves working from home doing research, emails or planning. If you want to be involved with the Education Committee OR any of the projects OR just want more information, email Ellen at gaunttellen@gmail.com. We welcome all suggestions!



It's Time To Prune Your Fruit Trees!

BY RUSS ALLEN

Yes, it's time to prune many of our fruit tree varieties: Peaches, Plums, Nectarines, and Persimmons!

It's always an "emotional" time for me...You understand...cutting off limbs....



Here are two links to help you thru your Fruit Tree Pruning Experience:

[fruit tree pruning tamu - Google Search](https://www.google.com/search?q=fruit+tree+pruning+tamu)

<https://www.facebook.com/100064670354847/videos/whats-growing-on-with-pruning-fruit-trees/4007228492643961/>



Wings of Achievement & Fronds of Growth The 2024 Graduation & Awards Ceremony

BY RAELINE NOBLES

January 15 was a grand day for the Denton County Master Gardener Association at the Denton Civic Center! Over 155 members gathered for our annual Awards and Graduation Ceremony to honor and celebrate some of our most outstanding members and community partners. The event also recognized the graduating Class of 2024 Interns. We invite you to join us in congratulating these exceptional members! Here are some highlights from the ceremony.

Texas Emeriti Master Gardeners,

is our way of giving a huge shoutout to our retired members who've given over 5 years of exemplary service to DCMGA and our community. Our newest Texas Emeriti Master Gardeners: Georgiana McCoig (2015), Phyllis Minton (2010), Maryann Moreland (2000), Mary Morrow (2001), Claud Singer (2008), Shirlee Singer (2008), Laurel Wallace (2009).



Back Row: Zach Davis, County Master Gardener Program Coordinator, Georgianna McCoig, Phyllis Minton, Maryann Moreland, Mary Morrow
Front Row: Shirlee and Claud Singer

You Are Amazing!

The 2024 Graduation & Awards Ceremony (Cont'd)

Honorary Master Gardener,
is awarded to awesome individuals, who
are not members, but who've made
outstanding contributions to the Denton
County Master Gardener Association and
the community.



Honorary Master Gardener
Lori Giesler, Flower Mound First
Baptist Community Garden

We Appreciate You!

Community Partner Award,

honors those outside of DCMGA who excel at teaming up with us, promoting sustainable
horticulture, and getting the community involved.



Our 2024 amazing partner the City of Lewisville Roots for Wings Program
Left to Right:: Michele Rawleigh, Master Gardener; Mary Morrow, Master
Naturalist; Marcus Gallegos, Assistant Parks & Recreation Director; Chris
Chastain, Preserve & Greenbelt Manager; TJ Gilmore, Honorable Mayor.

The 2024 Graduation & Awards Ceremony (Cont'd)

Special Merit Award,

our outstanding veteran and intern members are the real MVPs, showcasing service to DCMGA and our community in every possible way.



Special Merit Awards (Veteran)
Top row: Becky Collins (2023),
Karen Gibson (2017), Jeff
Hardgrave (2023), Debby Ishee
(2017), Trish Percy (2012)

Special Merit Awards (2024 (Intern)

Top row: Dina Busch, Maria Chapa,
Melanie Harris

Bottom Row: Traci Horton, Ruvan
Nanayakkara, Jacy Williamson



Way to Go!

The 2024 Graduation & Awards Ceremony (Cont'd)

Project Manager/Leadership Award,
given to the veteran and intern members who've been an amazing leader in a DCMGA Project,
Event, or Special Interest Group.



Project Manager/Leadership Awards

From left: Carolyn Stoy (2018), Clare Harris (2024), Harry Gornick (2024)

Educator Award,
is all about honoring a veteran or intern member who's seriously committed to spreading
knowledge in Denton County through DCMGA.



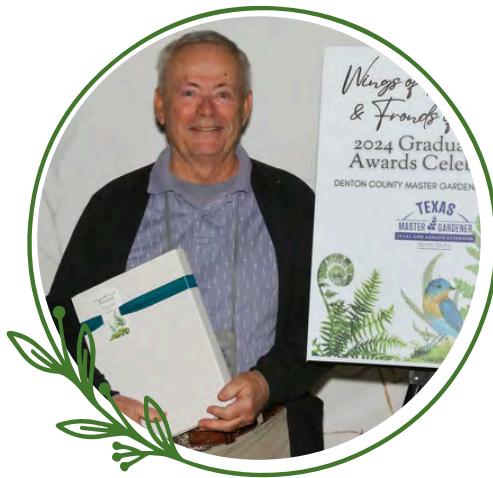
Educator Awards

From left: Beverly Duncan (2018), Meaghan Dawson (2024)

Kudos!

The 2024 Graduation & Awards Ceremony (Cont'd)

Award of Excellence,
is a special award given to a veteran member
who goes above and beyond for DCMGA and
the community.



Award of Excellence:
Dale Powell (2011)

Janet Laminack Distinguished Service Award,
is a special recognition honoring veteran members who've been absolute champions for DCMGA and the community.



Janet Laminack Distinguished Service Award: Tammie Gurley (2014)

John Cooper Educator Award,
is awarded to a veteran member committed to educating Denton County citizens in every way possible during their time with DCMGA.



John Cooper Educator Award:
Pam Spooner (2018)

Celebrating the Graduation of the Class of 2024!

Cynthia Aguilera
Susan Anderson
Kelly Bailey
Dina Busch
Liz Chaney
Maria Chapa
Janice Criswell
Meaghan Dawson
Donna Esposito
Alice Fraga
Andrea Garner
Harry Gornick
Ashley Gray

Chuck Guarnaccia
Patricia Gunnison
Pam Hancock
Clare Harris
Melanie Harris
Rene Henderson
Rene Hillard
Sharon Hobble
Traci Horton
Eric Houston
Butch Jones
Irene Myers
Ruvan Nanayakkara

Ann Marie O'Lone
Jill Olhausen
Krystal Palyu
Susan Parr
Dan Peak
Brianne Pegoraro
Joni Pritchett
Jud Sherman
Barbara Smith
Nikki Solis
Madeleine Stanford
Jamie Sutherland
Jacy Williamson



Class of 2024

Congratulations!

Legacy of Dedication: Celebrating DCMGA's Longtime Members!

5 Years Class of 2019

Linda Barker Lela Khan
Robert Bender Cindy Landry
Elsie Anne Berry Lisa Lebsack
Linda D'Amanda Diane Sloan
Sheila Daniel Debbie Smith
Claudia Duckworth Joanne Spurgin
Mary Harned Beth Stowell
Anne Haynie Dawn Marie Tallman
Cassie Hudson Deborah Williams

10 Years Class of 2014

Leah Anderson Joanne Fell
Marion Arndt Tammie Gurley
Susie Barber Linda Hay
Reagan Branstetter Yetska Jackson
Ellen Diers Jolayne LaCour
Sharrie Ely Barbara Prins

15 Years Class of 2009

Diane Almand
Liz Moyer
Mary Morris
Dee Payne
Marti Wingo

20- 24 Years Noble Oaks Gerry Peacock (2003)

25- 29 Years Majestic Oaks Gresha Leamon (1999)

30+ Years Majestic Oaks

Joan Stanley (1994)

Spectacular!



Looking Ahead To March

You're Invited

March 2025, Monthly General Meeting & Program
"Backyard Chickens for a Healthier Garden"



Learn how to enhance your garden with chickens! Join Tarrant County Master Gardener Joann Grope for "Backyard Chickens," a step-by-step guide to natural fertilizing, pest control, and fresh eggs.

March 12, 2025, 10 am
Global Spheres Center, Solomon's Porch
7801 S Interstate 35E, Corinth, TX 76210



January Fun

Frostweed Ice Ribbons in the garden of DCMGA Member Kathryn Wells (left) and a newly-minted DCMGA Volunteer snowman found in DCMGA Member Linda D'Amato's yard (right).



Pass-Along Marking

BY LIZ MOYER

Avoid Plant Sale Prep Horror!

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

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



Photo Courtesy DCMGA Member Liz Moyer
Knife Marker

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

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



North Texas Gardening

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

[Potato Gardening Starts Now \(02/2022\)](#)

[Roses - Plant of the Month \(02/2021\)](#)

[Seed Starting \(02/2020\)](#)

[Let's Talk Birdie \(02/2020\)](#)

[Plant Facts - Lamb's Ear](#)

[Gardening Basics - Rainwater Harvesting](#)

[Gardening Basics - Fruit Trees for North Texas](#)

Branch Out This Spring: Tree Seedlings for Sale from the Denton County Soil & Water Conservation District!

The Denton County Soil & Water Conservation District (DCSWCD) is once again offering tree seedlings for sale. Thirteen species are available for purchase. Planting a conservation tree not only adds beauty and shade to your property but also provides numerous benefits, including oxygen production, windbreaks, soil protection, and wildlife habitat.

Trees must be picked up on Friday, February 28, 2025, at the North Texas Fairgrounds in Denton from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. To place an order, please mail or submit the order form on [pages 46 & 47](#) to the Denton County Soil & Water Conservation District. When ordering, be sure to understand the size and condition (bare root, potted) of the trees ordered. **Orders are reserved upon payment and quantities are limited, so please order soon.**

The sale is a DCSWCD project. DCMGA only participates in the distribution of the trees and providing advice and educational materials to customers on planting and maintenance of the trees. Any questions should be directed to DCSWCD at 940-383-2691, ext 3.

Species available:

Oak Trees - Bur Oak, Mexican White Oak, Shumard Oak, and Live Oak

Conifer Trees - Austrian Pine, Afghanistan Pine, Italian Stone Pine, Deodor Cedar

Fruit & Nut Trees - Black Cherry, Pecan, Mexican Plum

Ornamental Trees - Vitex, Desert Willow

A copy of the order form may also be downloaded at

<https://www.dcmga.com/tree-seedling-sale-2025-dcswcd/>



*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 HELP DESK

Question of the Month



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

BY HELP DESK TEAM

Q: While cleaning up some leaves and branches under my cottonwood tree, I noticed several holes in the bark near the tree base. Any idea what is causing this and what I should do?

A: It is possible that your tree is under attack from cottonwood borers (*Plectrodera scalator*), also called long-horned borers. Signs of cottonwood borer damage include discoloration and noticeable tunnels or cracking in the bark. Young branches may die and fall off. Mature Cottonwood Borers are one of the largest insects in North America, measure 1 3/4" long and 1/2" wide, and appear in May through July. These borers may also attack other young, soft-wood trees. By the way, the cottonwood borer has a painful bite.

What to do about cottonwood borers?

"Chemical control is based on preventing the adults from laying eggs or from young larvae from boring into the tree. Thoroughly spray the lower trunk and saturate the soil around the base of the tree in late June or early July, and again late in July with permethrin."

<https://hnr.k-state.edu/extension/horticulture-resource-center/common-pest-problems/documents/Cottonwood%20Borer.pdf>

From Colorado State Extension Service, "With very limited exceptions it is not possible to control wood borer larvae that have already entered the plant where they become well protected. However, all wood borers will emerge from the tree or shrub when they reach the adult stage and become vulnerable to treatment. At this point, insecticides sprayed onto the trunks can kill adults as they crawl on the bark and very young borers that emerge from eggs laid on the surface. This can prevent damage that could be produced by the next generation of the insect."

<https://extension.colostate.edu/topic-areas/insects/shade-tree-borers-5-530/>

Other potential tree borer problems to look out for:

Although not your current tree problem, we also want to remind readers of another



Mature Cottonwood Borer

serious tree borer concern: the Emerald Ash Borer. “This invasive beetle from Asia has killed millions of ash trees across the United States, including all 16 native species. It was first discovered in Texas in 2016. EAB is responsible for killing millions of ash trees across the country. Ash trees are widespread in the United States and all 16 native ash species are susceptible to attack.” <https://tfsweb.tamu.edu/eab/>

For more information see: Emerald Ash Borer: <https://www.dcmga.com/wp-content/uploads/docs/garden-basics-solve/gb-emerald-ash-borer.pdf>

Resources and references:

“Cottonwood Borer” from Field Guide to Common Texas Insects:

<https://texasinsects.tamu.edu/cottonwood-borer/>

“What a Bore: Cottonwood Borer Beetle”

<https://dallascountymastergardeners.org/what-a-bore-cottonwood-borer-beetle/#:~:text=Cottonwood%20trees%20are%20very%20fast,a%20month%20or%20two4>

“Cottonwood Borer”

<https://extension.okstate.edu/programs/digital-diagnostics/insects-and-arthropods/cottonwood-borer-plectrodera-scalator/>

“Insect Borers of Trees and Shrubs”

<https://entomology.ca.uky.edu/ent43>



Mature Emerald Ash Borer

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.



Pruning Roses

February has North Texas gardeners preparing their roses for spring.

February 14 is the traditional time for our area to start rose pruning. A few weeks after their February pruning, rose bushes will start putting out the new growth that shows us spring is here and beautiful roses will soon follow.



LATE WINTER PREP FOR YOUR SPRING TURF

TIME TO APPLY PRE-EMERGENT TO YOUR NORTH TEXAS LAWN

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

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

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

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

REMEMBER, TIMING IS KEY

DON'T MISS THE BRIEF WINDOW FOR TREATMENT

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

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

Over fertilizing and over watering can lead to more weeds and disease in your turf.

Annual and Broadleaf weeds can be treated after they emerge.

HerbPublicationSCS200713.indd (tamu.edu)
Turfgrass Weeds | AggieTurf (tamu.edu)

MORE INFO FROM TEXAS A&M

To learn more about weed identification and treatment for cool and warm season weeds, be sure to visit http://publications.tamu.edu/TURF_LANDSCAPE/PUB_turf_Herbicide%20for%20Weed%20Control%20in%20Turfgrass.pdf

Refer to <http://AggieTurf.tamu.edu> for more information on turfgrasses and identification tools for common turfgrass weeds and insects.

Denton County Master Gardener Association
Questions? Contact our Help Desk
email: master.gardener@dentoncounty.com
PHONE: 940-349-2892

TEXAS
MASTER GARDENER
TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION
Denton County

Pruning roses may sound a bit intimidating to the uninitiated, but it really is an easy process. Roses in the landscape are tough plants and can take quite a trim. Just as all gardeners do not garden in exactly the same manner, all rose growers do not prune in exactly the same way. The basic techniques are important but really, you can't go wrong. Don't be afraid to tackle this garden task. This garden chore will encourage new growth and blooms, clear out any dead wood, and shape the plant so it will look lovely in your garden.

To read this complete article, visit the [February 2022 issue of The Root.](#)



Denton County Master Gardener Association

Upcoming Events

Page 1

Please see calendar for updated information at: DCMGA.com

Feb 3

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 a short education on the tasks of the day. Come lend a hand. Public is invited!
1350 Milam Rd E. Sanger, Monday Mornings 9AM-11AM

Feb 3,10,17, 24

Flower Mound Library Spring Series-Free

Feb 3rd- Sick Plants 911

Plants can't tell you when they have an infection. Learn to identify common signs of plant virus, bacteria, fungus, or nematode issues and what to do about it.
Speaker: Lynda Harvey- Denton County Master Gardener.
Registration Link. <https://fmlibrary.libnet.info/event/11740298>

Feb 10th - Landscaping with Earth-Kind®

Earth-Kind® Design is an approach to landscaping that is both earth-friendly and practical. This presentation serves as an introduction to sustainable design & installation techniques.
Registration Link. <https://fmlibrary.libnet.info/event/12490391>

Feb. 17th- Healthier Happier Yards

Much of our water usage is wasted due to inefficient irrigation systems or overwatering. Blake Alldredge will provide tips and tricks on watering methods to keep your yard looking great all summer long, especially now that residents may have water use restrictions.
Registration Link. <https://fmlibrary.libnet.info/event/1249279>

Feb-24th- Cooking Thyme

Join us for a hands-on class where you'll discover the art of cooking with herbs and spices! Learn how to enhance your dishes with flavor and nutrition, and create your own personalized spice blend to take home.
Speaker: Chandani Kothari, County Extension Agent, Family and Community Health Agent.
Registration Link. <https://fmlibrary.libnet.info/event/12490742>

**PLEASE REGISTER FOR ALL CLASSES. SEE FULL INFORMATION ON OUR CALENDAR
AT DCMGA.COM**



Flower Mound Library 3030 Braodmoor Ln. Flower Mound 7PM-8:30PM

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

Upcoming Events

**Feb 11**

Plant Propagation - Starting From Seed

Get ahead of your gardening needs by starting seeds. Learn from Denton County Master Gardener Cindy Helm about the appropriate amounts of light, water, temperature and humidity needed to stimulate seed growth. Also learn about the different supplies needed and little tips to successfully start seeds indoors.

The Barn Room 101 - 310 Highland Village Road

Highland Village, 10AM-11AM

Feb 11

Companion Planting

Ever wonder if planting certain plants together would be good for them? You are right! Just as people have friends, so do plants. Denton County Master Gardener Treva McFadden will guide you on all the garden gossip!

Lewisville Public Library, 1197 W. Main St. Lewisville, 6PM-7PM

Feb 14

Gardening Techniques

Gardening can be a fun and productive hobby, but not it feels like work! Let Bonnie Ambrose, Denton County Master Gardener, clue you in on some labor saving ideas to bring more enjoyment and productivity to your landscape.

Denton Sr. Center 509 Bell Ave, Denton 9AM-10AM

Feb 21

Natives in the Suburbs

As we all struggle to maintain our landscapes in our weird weather, more and more of us have discovered the joy of Texas native plants. They will stand up to our climate and soils and even improve the soil!

Denton County Master Gardener and Native Plant Society educator Liz Moyer

Rosemeade Recreation Center 1330 E Rosemeade Pkwy

Carrollton, TX 6PM-7PM

Feb 27

Founder of Nature Preservation in Texas

Sponsored by the Trinity Forks Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas, On-line and in-person. Amy Martin, an experienced journalist and nature author, will present her latest work about Ned Fritz, a prominent Texas environmentalist. Her presentation will highlight Fritz's significant contributions to nature preservation, including his efforts to save the Trinity River and the Great Trinity Forest.

See <https://www.npsot.org/chapters/trinity-forks/tf-events/> for details.

Free, but registration is required for Zoom participation.

Register at <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/O3MOpFeKTYmq7lwngfH2HA>
Your confirmation email will contain the meeting link.

Ann Stuart Science Complex 1201 Old Main Circle, Denton 6:30PM-8:PM

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.

Growing in knowledge, growing in service!

Volunteer Opportunity Fair

(DCMGA Members Only)

February 12, 2025

9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

at

Global Spheres Center

Solomon's Porch

7801 S. Interstate 35E

Corinth, TX 76208

Denton County Master Gardener Association

Educating and inspiring Denton County residents
through research-based horticulture to promote
eco-friendly gardens and enduring landscapes
that enrich our communities.



"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."

GARDENING SERIES

HOSTS: FLOWER MOUND PUBLIC LIBRARY & DENTON MASTER GARDENERS

FREE!

02/03, 7 p.m. SICK PLANTS 911!

Plants can't tell you when they have an infection. Learn to identify common signs of plant virus, bacteria, fungus, or nematode issues and what to do about it.

Speaker: Lynda Harvey is a Denton County Master Gardener since 2006 and is a Specialist for Earthkind®, Entomology (Insects), Vegetables, and Plant Propagation. She is certified in Native Landscape Maintenance by the Native Plant Society of Texas, and Natural-Organic Certification by Texas Organic Research Center.



02/10, 7 p.m. LANDSCAPING WITH EARTH-KIND®

Earth-Kind® Design is an approach to landscaping that is both earth-friendly and practical. This presentation introduces sustainable design and installation techniques.

Speakers: The Denton County Master Gardener Earth-Kind® Design Team of instructors has over 30 years of combined knowledge, experience and service as Master Gardeners. Their additional certifications include Native Plant Landscapes, Rainwater Harvesting, Water Shed, Texas Superstar Plants, and Earth-Kind.



02/17, 7 p.m. HEALTHIER, HAPPIER YARDS

Tips and tricks on watering methods to keep your yard looking great all summer long, especially now that residents may only water up to two days per week.

Speaker: Blake Alldredge is a Water Education Coordinator with the Upper Trinity Regional Water District since 2014. He coordinates the District's Water Conservation and Watershed Protection planning and outreach programs and assists customer cities and utilities in their efforts.



02/24, 7 p.m. COOKING THYME

Join us for a hands-on class where you'll discover the art of cooking with herbs and spices! Learn how to enhance your dishes with flavor and nutrition, and create your own personalized spice blend to take home.

Speaker: Chandani Kothari, County Extension Agent, Family and Community Health Agent. Chandani holds a master's degree in public health and is passionate about empowering families and communities.



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Phone Number
972.874.6200

Registration is REQUIRED
flowermound.gov/libraryevents

Flower Mound Public Library
3030 Broadmoor Ln.





TREE SEEDLING SALE

Denton County Soil & Water Conservation District

Plant A Conservation Tree!

The Denton County Soil & Water Conservation District is once again offering tree seedlings for sale. 14 species are available for purchase. Plant a conservation tree and add beauty and shade to your property as well as many other benefits. Trees provide oxygen, windbreaks, soil protection, and wildlife habitat to benefit the landscape.



Bur Oak



Mexican White Oak



Black Cherry



Shumard Oak



Pecan



Live Oak



Austrian Pine



Afghanistan Pine



Vitex



Mexican Plum



Desert Willow



Deodara Cedar



Italian Stone Pine

Mail or submit orders to Denton County SWCD, 525 South Loop 288 Suite C-1, Denton, Texas 76205. If you have any questions, please phone 940-383-2691 Ext 3 or visit the USDA Service Center in Denton. Orders are reserved upon payment and quantities are limited, so please order soon.

(order form on back)

2025 TREE ORDER FORM
DENTON COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
Phone: (940) 383-2691 Ext. 3
LIMITED QUANTITIES - ORDER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

ADDRESS: _____ STATE: _____

CITY: _____ ZIP: _____

E-MAIL: _____ PHONE: _____

BAREROOT: \$3 per tree (12-18 inch top, bare root)

| | Quantity | x | \$3.00 | = | Cost |
|-------|----------|---|--------|---|-------|
| Pecan | _____ | | | | _____ |

CONTAINER: \$4 per tree (6-12 inch top, 10 cubic inch)

| | Quantity | x | \$4.00 | = | Cost |
|----------------------|----------|---|--------|---|-------|
| American Beautyberry | _____ | | | | _____ |
| Afghan Pine | _____ | | | | _____ |
| Austrian Pine | _____ | | | | _____ |
| Black Cherry | _____ | | | | _____ |
| Deadora Cedar | _____ | | | | _____ |
| Italian Stone Pine | _____ | | | | _____ |

POTTED: \$12 per tree (1-4 foot top, one gallon)

| | Quantity | x | \$12.00 | = | Cost |
|-------------------|----------|---|---------|---|-------|
| Bur Oak | _____ | | | | _____ |
| Live Oak | _____ | | | | _____ |
| Mexican White Oak | _____ | | | | _____ |
| Shumard Oak | _____ | | | | _____ |
| Desert Willow | _____ | | | | _____ |
| Mexican Plum | _____ | | | | _____ |
| Vitex | _____ | | | | _____ |

Total No. of Trees _____ **SUBTOTAL:** _____

8.25% TAX: _____

TOTAL DUE: _____

PAYMENT DUE AT TIME OF ORDER Cash Check # _____

Comments:

Make checks payable to Denton County SWCD. Mail or submit orders to Denton County SWCD, 525 South Loop 288 Suite C-1, Denton, Texas 76205. Orders are filled on a first come first serve basis, so place your order early! **Trees must be picked up on Friday, February 28, 2025 at the North Texas Fairgrounds in Denton from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.**



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.

2025 Board of Directors

| | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
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| Vice-President | Jeff Hardgrave |
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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

February 12 Volunteer Fair, Global Spheres (Members Only)

March 12 General Meeting & Program, "Backyard Chickens for a Healthier Garden" by Tarrant County Master Gardener Joann Grope, Global Spheres, Corinth. Open to the Public



Contact Information

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension
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611 Kimberly Drive
Bldg. B
Denton TX 76201-9026

Office: 940.349.2883

Help Desk:
940.349.2892
master.gardener@dentoncounty.gov

Webmaster:
dcmga.webmaster@gmail.com

Communications:
dcmga.communications@gmail.com

Website:
<https://dcmga.com>

Content
The Submission deadline for the March edition of *The Root* is Saturday, February 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 Donna Hull at doctorhulld@gmail.com.

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