

Denton County Master Gardener Association

THE ROOT

Grow With Us 



WHAT'S GROWING ON

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Buds from the Board

BY RAELENE NOBLES, PRESIDENT

I love the stories people tell me. Tales of dreams and great ambitions. Accounts of heroism in facing fears; some very real, others conjured up from long past experiences. Visions of success and the dreams that did come true after hard work, tenacity, and just a little luck. Hurdles they have overcome, lessons they have learned, or people who have influenced their lives both in good and not-so-good ways. And aspirations – oh, the aspirations they hold on to so tightly as they continue to reach for their star one determined stretch at a time.

Their stories tell me more about who they were, who they are, and who they hope and work to become. Fascinating tales pull me in as I learn their value to the world, perhaps clearer to me than themselves. I learn new things; new depths of how unique individuals truly are in their courage and determination to make a place for themselves in a not-so-giving world. I also learn that no matter how unique we each may be, we do share some commonalities worth nurturing.

Just like people, every garden tells a story, too. Yes, even yours. Especially yours! I'd venture to say it tells many stories. Every garden has a past, present, and future. Each of these frames holds a grand narrative full of dreams, adventure, imagination, and no doubt blood, sweat, and tears. Lessons are learned through trials and tribulations, and again, just a touch of luck. Books are read, classes are taken, and other gardeners share their wisdom. All of these are brought back to the garden to continue the grand experiment and begin a new chapter in the history of your garden – A new story to tell folk who walk by or through it and hopefully, they take with them a new lesson as your gift to them.

Last month I invited you to do a walkabout in your garden to begin planning, scheming, and dreaming of what you want your soon-to-be spring garden to become. I enjoyed my time doing all those things and I hope you did, too. This time I invite you to go into your garden to rediscover its story of what it was when you began your journey creating it. Think about that.



Buds from the Board (Cont.)

All the learning you did before you began, all the work you invested. Remember all the successes you enjoyed and even the utter failures you may have shed more than a few tears over. I am almost certain you will be amazed at how far your garden has come as you look at what it is today. How far you have come, how much you have learned even in the failures – especially the failures. And the realization of how much more there is to learn; always more and more to learn. And like your garden, always new ways to grow.

In the end, your garden is a vital part of your story. No matter if that chapter is big or small, it's an important one worth revisiting and sharing. Who knows what someone hearing it may take back to their own garden and remember you with kindness.

Enjoy the stories your garden whispers to you of its past and present. Even more, enjoy March 20 as spring officially begins its bloom of future tales for you to grow.

~ Raeline



What to Plant in March

- Trees, shrubs, groundcovers and vines
- Perennials that are cold-hardy
- Cool-season flowers such as snapdragons and petunias
- Continue outdoor seed planting of vegetables such as beets, carrots, and most greens
- Late March plant bean seeds outdoors
- If grass is growing actively, start your fertilization schedule
- Finish major pruning of trees. Fruit trees can be pruned just as the buds are starting to appear

For more monthly tips:

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



DCMGA Education Scholarship

If you know a student who is headed toward a college degree in Horticulture or a related field, please let them know about this DCMGA scholarship opportunity. DCMGA is seeking to identify and reward highly motivated students who show strong commitment and dedication to reaching their goals. One (1) \$5000 scholarship will be awarded to either a graduating high school student OR a college/university student.

The Application and Scholarship Guidelines for undergraduate/graduate students can be obtained by emailing dcmga.scholarship@gmail.com. All applications and supporting documentation are due on or before March 24, 2025, 11:59 pm. Questions can be directed to dcmga.scholarship@gmail.com.



The Root Editor Change

This March 2025 issue of *The Root* is my last as Editor. Seven years ago, our first issue (April 2018) totaled 10 pages. Eighty-four months later, this month's e-magazine is 43 pages. Over the 7 years, I collaborated with 4 DCMGA presidents, 5 Communications Directors, and the most dedicated Communications Team an editor could hope for. I thank you all for your contributions to *The Root*.

Starting with the April 2025 issue, *The Root* is in the skillful hands of Cheryl Huckabee. I'm grateful she stepped forward and I look forward to working with her as a contributor!

~ Karen Gibson



Meet Our New Denton County Extension Agent – Horticulture: Erin Smith

Erin E. Smith is a Texas native who grew up in Tyler, Texas. She has worked in the horticultural industry since she earned her Bachelor of Science degree (Horticulture) and Master of Science degree (Agriculture) from Stephen F. Austin State University. She has held roles ranging from research technician for the Texas Super Star program to lead horticulturist for a national retail nursery. Erin's expertise spans ornamental horticulture, large-scale crop production, and rose cultivation, with additional experience consulting for the Tyler Rose Garden and judging national rose trials.

Passionate about education (as well as roses!), Erin is excited to work with Texas Master Gardeners, Junior Master Gardeners, and Master Naturalists to inspire a love of learning and horticulture in others.

We are very excited to have her at the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension office, and we look forward to working together in the days ahead. Welcome, Erin, from the Denton County Master Gardener Association!



**Sandra Erp,
Extension
Administrative
Assistant, and Erin
Smith, Denton
County CEA-Hort,
at last month's
Volunteer
Opportunity Fair**



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, Hugelkultur, 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.

Alice in Cactusland

You could say that the title of this whimsical garden says it all, but you'd be missing too much, so read on! Alice in Cactusland is, true to its name, full of succulents and cacti, arranged along pathways that move you through the landscape into an enchanted "Alice in Wonderland" sculpture garden. It is also full of unique art pieces, many of which were created by the gardener and homeowner in her art studio located on the premises. The cactus collection includes several new varieties of Chinese cacti planted in imperfectly perfect hand-made terracotta pots. Everywhere you turn on this property, you will see new and different varieties of succulents. The art studio will also be open on Garden Tour day, so be sure not to miss it.



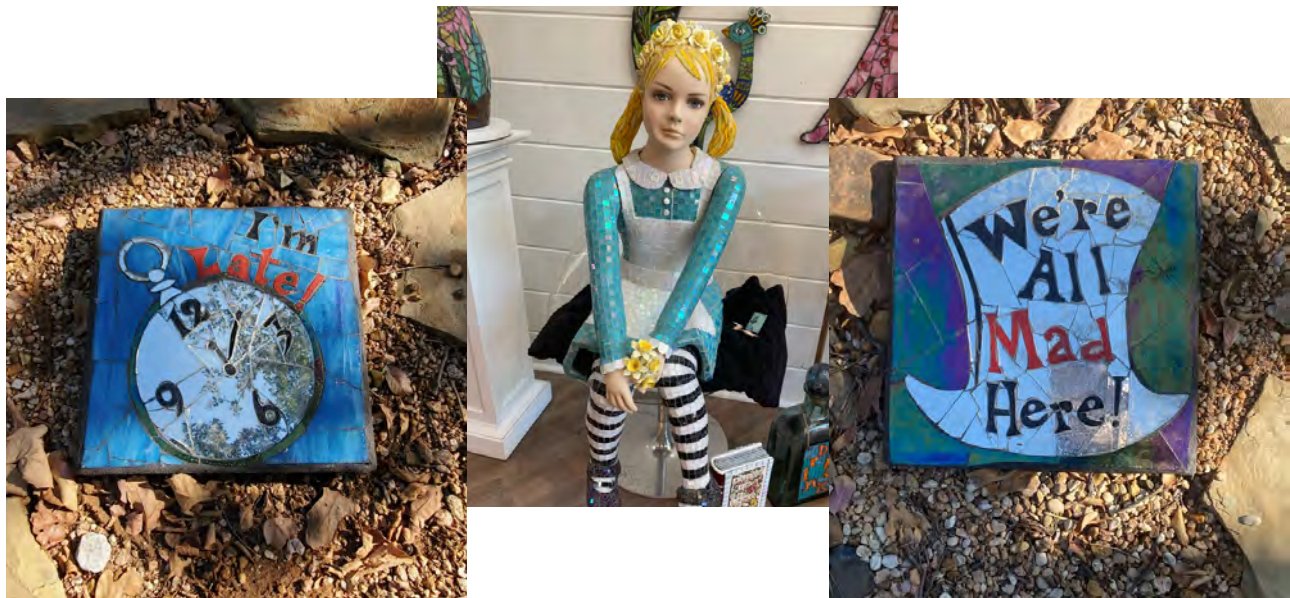
This mid-century gem sits beneath towering oaks, surrounded by lush gardens and thriving raised beds—a perfect blend of nature and design!

2025 Garden Tour Preview (Cont.)

Alice in Cactusland is also home to a fig tree orchard, a “Five Pear Espalier,” and beautiful, full-grown rose plants. The orchard has 4 or 5 different varieties of figs, including Texas Everbearing, Black Mission, Brown Turkey, Celeste, and Little Miss Figgy. The espalier on the property supports a dwarf “Five in One” pear tree growing in a pot. This pear has been grafted to grow 5 varieties of pears on one small rootstock tree and demonstrates espalier training and pruning. Roses include a Peggy Martin that is full of blooms annually and a 20-year-old Zephirin Druin that has a long history with the family.



Lovely roses tucked into the corner.



These vibrant mosaics bring Alice's adventures to life with whimsical color and charm.

There are so many opportunities to observe and learn on this property – the DCMGA Succulent Team will be on site to answer questions, discuss succulent propagation, and provide practical solutions to drainage and space challenges. But most of all, Alice in Cactusland is a perfect place to enjoy the the benefits of both art and nature, thoughtfully connected together.

2025 Garden Tour Preview (Cont.)



A thriving collection of cacti and succulents bringing beauty and charm!

Alice In Cactusland

DIGGING
deeper



**Learning
Opportunities**

**Succulent Propagation
Therapeutic Gardening
Drainage**



In The Veggie Patch: Crimson Clover

BY LIZ CHANEY

It's that time of year when gardeners are itching to plant but, as the weather is a bit unpredictable, planting too early could put your valuable seeds or plants at risk. This is the benefit of cover crops. Large quantities of seeds can be purchased at inexpensive prices, it prepares the soil for future planting, and can aid in erosion control. Crimson Clover is a versatile cover crop that provides all of this and more.

Origin and Benefits

Crimson Clover (*Trifolium incarnatum*), is native to southeastern Europe and southwestern Asia Minor with an introduction to the United States in the 1800s. This cool-weather annual legume is used as a nitrogen fixer, erosion and compaction fixer, and a nutrient for early pollinators.

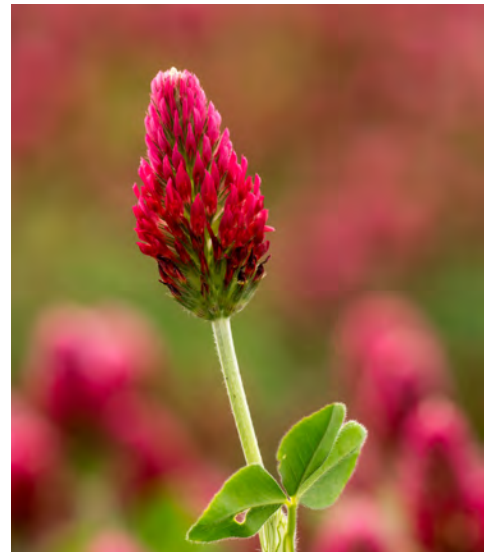
Plant Requirements

Soil: needs a soil temperature of 42 degrees Fahrenheit but will tolerate temperatures as low as 10 degrees Fahrenheit once established

Light: does best in full sun but is not heat tolerant

Germination: a germination period of 7-14 days

Growth: 12-20" in height, depending on conditions



Crimson Clover
Blossom

Maintenance and Care

As it matures, Crimson Clover will develop a strong root system that can prevent erosion and compaction as well as weed suppression. The beautiful crimson flowers will provide nutrients to early arriving pollinators attracting them to your garden.

Providing Nitrogen by Turning or Tilling Into the Soil

As the warm summer heat arrives, the clover will die. Afterwards, it can be turned or tilled into the soil providing nitrogen to future fall/winter plantings. In addition, it is not frost or cold-weather-tolerant. Therefore, if Crimson Clover is planted in the fall it will die with the winter weather thus providing nitrogen for spring planting, such as those nitrogen-loving tomatoes. A three-week time period is best between tilling/turning and planting another crop to allow the breakdown and stabilization of microbes.

In The Veggie Patch: Crimson Clover (Cont.)



Resources

UC Davis, Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education Program, "Crimson Clover"

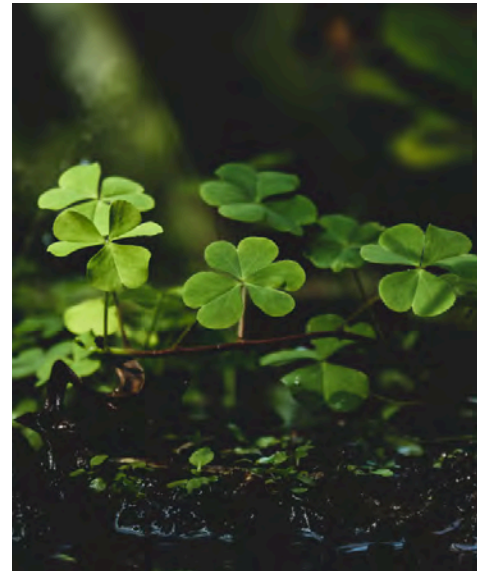
<https://sarep.ucdavis.edu/covercrop/crimsonclover>

USDA, "Crimson Clover"

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/sites/default/files/2024-04/Crimson%20Clover%20Crop%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf>

USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service, "Crimson Clover"

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/sites/default/files/2024-04/Crimson%20Clover%20Crop%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf>



**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>

Plant of the Month – Rain Lilies

BY JANICE YODER SMITH

Gardeners searching for a reliable, low-growing border or container plant may find rain lilies will serve them well. These plants can survive north central Texas heat, droughts, periodic deluges, and even some light freezes. Some rain lilies remain during mild winters. They thrive in sand, loam or clay soils with adequate drainage. Rain lilies prefer full sun but benefit from some afternoon shade in hot summers. They may be planted in mass in transition areas between a sunny lawn and the deep shade of a deciduous tree. They may also replace a portion of a lawn. They may be periodically mowed to comply with local codes.

A Lily of Many Names

Other names for rain lilies include Zephyr lily, fairy lily, magic lily, and rain flower. Blooms typically appear within a day or two of a steady rain that followed several sequential dry days. Rain lilies in consistently moist irrigated beds may not bloom. Balance allowing the soil to dry for several days with providing 0.5-1” of water a week to get irrigated rain lilies to flower.

Rain lily species that usually fare well in north central Texas are most often classified into the *Habranthus*, *Zephyranthes*, or *Cooperia* genera.

Two native Texas rain lilies, *Cooperia drummondii* and *Cooperia pedunculata*, are now considered *Zephyranthes* species. Non-native

rain lilies that generally do well in north central Texas include *Zephyranthes grandiflora* with pink to white blooms and *Zephyranthes candida* with white blooms. *Habranthus robustus*, sometimes called Argentine lily, produces pink blooms. Most of the *Zephyranthes* and *Cooperia* species have very narrow leaves that slightly resemble some grasses and sedges. Many *Habranthus* species have wider, strap-like leaves with nearly triangular tips.

Choose rain lily species known to grow in soil, light, and moisture conditions similar to those where they will be planted. Species most at home in the Texas Hill Country may grow well in some sites on the greater DFW area, but those from the Rio Grande may only survive a short time in northern Denton County even with extra care.

Where to Find Rain Lily Bulbs

Rain lily bulbs and seeds may be available at local Master Gardener or Native Plant Society of Texas plant sales or through online vendors. Plant your acquired rain lily seeds or bulbs within



Rain Lily (*Cooperia pedunculata*)

Yarbrough, Kim, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center
https://www.wildflower.org/gallery/result.php?id_image=31180

Rain Lilies (Cont.)

a short time after purchase. Otherwise, they may lose viability quickly. The papery seeds are mostly flat and either black or brown. Bulbs are generally less than 2" in diameter and vary in size and shape by species. Plant seeds just under the soil surface. Plant bulbs 6-12 inches apart, root plate down, 2-3 times deeper than the bulb is long. Monitor the soil moisture level. Rain lily bulbs multiply. Gardeners may divide them and spread them to other parts of the garden or share them with other people.

Please consider planting rain lilies in your garden. With just a little initial effort from you, these low-lying plants will bring surprise flowers from mid-spring until September or later and long-lasting greenery most of the year.



Rain Lily Bulbs

Photo Courtesy DCMGA Member Janice Yoder Smith

Resources

Lady Bird Johnson WildflowerCenter

Cooperia pedunculata, https://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id_plant=COPE

Cooperia drummondii, https://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id_plant=codr

accessed 02/07/2025

DCMGA, "Native Plants for Wildlife Habitat Gardens (NPSOT Series)," accessed 02/07/2025

<https://www.dcmga.com/native-plants-wildlife-habitat-gardens-denton-county-tx/>

RHS (Royal Horticulture Society), "Habranthus robustus," accessed 02/07/2025

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/8193/habranthus-robustus/details>

Texas A&M AgriLife, "Rain Lilies Thrive in Neglected Gardens," accessed 02/10/2025

<https://galveston.agrilife.org/files/2020/07/07-29-20-Rain-Lilies-Thrive-in-the-Neglected-Garden-by-Dr.-William-M.-Johnson.pdf>

Henderson County Master Gardener Association, "Zephyranthes grandiflora," accessed 02/10/2025

<https://txmg.org/hendersonmg/plant-library/rain-lily/>



From Indoor Seed to Adult Plant: A Success Story

BY MARTHA CANTRELL

If you are anything like me, an avid, impatient gardener, winter is long and boring. The only things to do in your garden are cleaning beds, cleaning out pots, cleaning, cleaning, cleaning. I know all of these winter chores are very important to the success of your garden, but they hold very little excitement for me. I miss planting, getting my hands in the dirt, and watching things grow. I have eliminated some of that boredom by starting seeds indoors, tomatoes being my favorite! In this article, I will give you the steps from seeds to healthy outdoor plants ready for your spring (or fall) garden.

Step One: Starting Your Seeds

You can use many methods to start seeds indoors. Here's a good article in [The Root, February 2024 \(The Seedy Truth: Seed Starting\)](#). My favorite method is using a seed 'incubator.' It makes setup and monitoring very easy, and I'm all about making things a little easier without sacrificing quality or lowering your success rate. This method works for me but may not be your favorite. Find the method that works best for you!



Seed Incubator

The germination rate printed on the seed packet will help you determine how far in advance you'll need to start your seeds to time them just right for planting outdoors. As a bit of a perfectionist, I keep meticulous records of all the seeds I plant, including their germination rates, the best first date to plant outdoors, and many other facts.

Martha's Seed Starting Records

This is very helpful to me in getting the timing just right so the seedlings can all go outside simultaneously. This detailed recording is not necessary for successful seed starting, but the time it takes to write it can help alleviate some of those boring, happiness-killing winter doldrums.

From Indoor Seed to Adult Plant (Cont.)

STEP TWO: Transfer seedlings into larger containers

Once your seedlings begin to grow, they will need more room than most seed-starting pods provide. The best way to tell if your seedlings are ready to be moved out of the initial pods to a larger container is to check for the development of true leaves. When your seed grows its first set of leaves, which are called cotyledons, they don't look like the leaves of the adult plant. They are round or pear-shaped, have a smooth border, and will appear at the base of the seedling. Their purpose is to provide energy and food to the seed's embryo. True leaves are the second type of leaf, which look like smaller versions of the adult plant.

Once your seedlings have grown at least one set of true leaves, it's time to transfer the maturing seedlings into small, 4" nursery pots and place them under grow lights indoors. This activity gives my impatient, ADHD brain a chance to pretend it's spring by getting my hands in the dirt and transplanting things. Remember that seedlings are very delicate and can be easily damaged during transferring and transplanting. They should only be handled by their roots! There's only one stem, so you'll lose the plant if it's damaged. You can help release them from their small studio apartments by using a knife to separate the soil from the sides, allowing you to bring the roots and soil out in one piece.



**Martha's Tomato
Seedlings**

STEP THREE: Hardening off and transplanting outdoors

FINALLY! It's time to transplant your beautiful teenage babies to their outdoor home, whether a raised bed, container, or directly into the ground. There is a very important step you must take to allow your babies the best chance of success in the big, cruel world known as North Texas, where we can experience all 4 seasons in one day. You must harden off your seedlings to prepare them for the challenges and adversity they will face outside. Doing this step correctly, more than any of the others, is crucial to the success of your seedlings! If not done or done too quickly, your babies will flounder here and never get the chance to be healthy, producing adults.

Hardening off, defined by the PennState Extension service, is *'the process of allowing a plant to transition from a protected indoor or greenhouse environment to the harsh outdoor conditions of fluctuating spring temperatures, wind, and full sun exposure. A gradual introduction of these outdoor stresses will cause the plant to accumulate carbohydrates, to trigger more root development, to reduce the amount of freeze-prone water in the plant, and to actually thicken its cell walls. Plant growth will change from soft and supple to much firmer and harder.'*

From Indoor Seed to Adult Plant (Cont.)

There are many places where you can find the ‘earliest, safest, best date’ to transplant your seedlings outside, some trustworthy and some as trustworthy as an ashtray on a motorcycle. I have always used April 1st as my date because, in most years, we don’t have any more hard freezes after that. Some say you can transplant from around March 20th, but I can remember having a hard freeze on March 29th, so I use April 1st just to be safe.



Using that date, at least two weeks before it’s time to transplant, you will need to begin watering your seedlings less frequently and stop fertilizing them. One week before your chosen date, you will need to move your seedlings to a protected spot outside – I use my covered back patio – to help them become accustomed to the outdoors. You’ll want to start by leaving them out for an hour or two, gradually increasing until they are fully acclimated.

I hope this information will help you fall in love with starting your plants from seeds. Growing healthy and producing plants from seeds provides great satisfaction and accomplishment. It’s also a fantastic way to save a lot of money and produce vegetables that taste MUCH better and are better for you!

Happy Seed Starting!!

Resources

PennState Extension, “Hardening Transplants,” Lois Miklas, (accessed 02/18/2025).

<https://extension.psu.edu/hardening-transplants>

University of Maryland Extension, “Starting Seeds Indoors,” (accessed 02/18/2025).

<https://extension.umd.edu/resource/starting-seeds-indoors/>

Michigan State University, MSU Extension, Gardening in Michigan, “Hardening off vegetable transplants is easy,” Lori Imboden and Barslund Judd. (accessed 02/18/2025).

<https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/hardening-off-vegetable-transplants-is-easy>



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

BY CHERYL HUCKABEE

Native Gems, Master Gardener Favorite Plants for Your North Texas Garden

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

Creating a beautiful, low-maintenance landscape in North Texas with native plants is easy. Native plants are suited to the local climate, soil, and rainfall, which makes them more drought-tolerant and resilient. They provide local wildlife food and shelter, adding natural beauty and character to your garden. The plants featured here are Denton County Master Gardeners' favorites, known for their beauty, resilience, and ability to support local wildlife. By choosing these natives, you're ensuring a sustainable and stunning landscape that thrives with minimal effort.

Shrubs

[Coralberry \(*Symphoricarpos orbiculatus*\)](#) is a charming, low-growing shrub that adds year-round interest to shady gardens. Its small greenish-white flowers bloom from April to July, followed by clusters of coral-pink to purple berries that last through winter, attracting birds. Thriving in well-drained soils with low to medium water needs, it's an excellent choice for woodland landscapes!



Coralberry

[Flame Acanthus \(*Anisacanthus quadrifidus* var. *wrightii*\)](#) is a head-turner with orange-red flowers that bloom from summer into fall and are a magnet for hummingbirds. Thriving in full sun, it's perfect for low-maintenance gardens. It's ideal for accent planting or containers growing 3 to 4 feet tall and wide. Drought-tolerant, it only needs occasional deep watering and a spring trim to flourish!



Flame Acanthus

[More native shrubs from the Trinity Forks Chapter, Native Plant Society of Texas.](#)

Rooted in North Texas - Native Gems (Cont.)

Flowering Plants

[Black-eyed Susan](#) (*Rudbeckia hirta*) is a cheerful perennial that brings bright yellow, daisy-like flowers and striking dark centers to any garden. It is easy to grow and a favorite among pollinators. It blooms from spring to fall and is drought-tolerant. Standing 1–3 feet tall, it thrives in full sun and well-drained soil. Perfect for pollinator gardens, borders, and flowerbeds.



Black-eyed Susan

[Purple Coneflower](#) (*Echinacea purpurea*) is a garden superstar with vibrant purple petals and a unique cone-shaped center. This perennial attracts bees and butterflies all summer, adding color and life to your garden. It thrives in full sun to partial shade and grows 2 to 4 feet tall. Ideal for wildflower gardens, it requires occasional watering and a trim for fresh growth.



Purple Coneflower

Ornamental Grasses

[Little Bluestem](#) (*Schizachyrium scoparium*) is a charming, tough native ornamental grass with blue-green leaves that turn reddish-orange in fall. It adds texture and color to any garden and is perfect for full sun and hot, dry spots. Growing 2–4 feet tall and wide, it benefits wildlife, thrives in well-drained soil, and only needs a trim in late winter. Easy care, beautiful results.



Little Bluestem



Gulf Muhly

Rooted in North Texas – Native Gems (Cont.)

Ornamental Grasses (cont.)

[Gulf Muhly \(*Muhlenbergia capillaris*\)](#) adds dreamy beauty to any garden with its pinkish-purple plumes swaying in the fall breeze. This low-maintenance plant thrives in full sun and dry conditions, growing 2 to 3 feet tall and wide. It is ideal for mass planting, borders, or xeriscape gardens and provides wildlife shelter. Trim in late winter for a stunning, easy-to-manage garden.

[More native ornamental grasses from the Trinity Forks Chapter, Native Plant Society of Texas.](#)

Cacti and Succulents

[Spineless Prickly Pear \(*Opuntia ellisiana*\)](#) is a low-maintenance cactus that adds desert charm without the hassle of prickles. Its vibrant yellow spring flowers and unique spineless pads make it eye-catching. Growing 3–5 feet tall and 4–6 feet wide, it thrives in full sun and well-drained soil. It attracts pollinators, provides fruit for wildlife, and needs minimal care—avoid overwatering.



Spineless Prickly Pear

[Red Yucca \(*Hesperaloe parviflora*\)](#) is a hardy, drought-tolerant succulent with eye-catching coral-red flowers from spring to summer and spiky evergreen leaves. Perfect for sunny spots and low-water gardens, it grows 3–4 feet tall and wide. It's low-maintenance; just remove old flower stalks in winter. It's excellent for xeriscapes, rock gardens, or containers and attracts hummingbirds, too!



Red Yucca

[More native cacti and succulents from the Trinity Forks Chapter, Native Plant Society of Texas.](#)

Vines

[Crossvine \(*Bignonia capreolata*\)](#) is a fast-growing vine transforming your garden with vibrant orange-red flowers in spring. Perfect for adding natural beauty without fuss, it attracts hummingbirds and butterflies while climbing trellises, fences, and arbors. Thriving in full sun to partial shade, this semi-evergreen vine reaches 20–50 feet. Quick-growing and adaptable, it's a wildlife magnet and low-maintenance.

Rooted in North Texas – Native Gems (Cont.)

Vines (cont.)

[Passionflower](#) (*Passiflora incarnata*) is a garden showstopper with vibrant, intricate purple blooms that evoke a tropical paradise. Attracting hummingbirds and butterflies, this fast-growing, deciduous vine reaches 10–25 feet long, thrives in full sun to partial shade, and adds lively beauty to trellises, arbors, or fences. Prune to control its spread, and enjoy its stunning summer flowers!

[More native vines from the Trinity Forks Chapter, Native Plant Society of Texas.](#)



Crossvine



Passionflower

Ground Covers

[Frogfruit](#) (*Phyla nodiflora*) is a fantastic ground cover with small white or pink flowers attracting pollinators. This low-maintenance plant thrives in sun and part shade, keeping your yard green and lively even in dry spells. Perfect for preventing erosion, it grows 3–6 inches tall and spreads up to 3 feet. Just mow or trim occasionally to keep it tidy.



Frogfruit

[Horseherb](#) (*Calyptracarpus vialis*) is a hardy ground cover perfect for low-maintenance landscapes. With cheerful yellow flowers that thrive in sun and shade, it adds charm to any yard, especially where you want a natural, relaxed look. Once established, it's super drought-tolerant, making it a fantastic choice for easy, effortless gardening.

[More native ground covers from the Trinity Forks Chapter, Native Plant Society of Texas.](#)

Rooted in North Texas – Native Gems (Cont.)



Horseherb

Canopy Trees

[Mexican White Oak \(*Quercus polymorpha*\)](#) is a hardy, fast-growing tree with semi-evergreen foliage that provides year-round beauty. Growing up to 80 feet tall and 60 feet wide, it thrives in sun to part shade with medium water needs. Resistant to oak wilt, it's an excellent choice for a resilient, long-lived shade tree in North Texas landscapes.

[Cedar Elm \(*Ulmus crassifolia*\)](#) is a sturdy, adaptable tree with graceful, slender branches and a dense canopy that provides excellent summer shade. Once established, it's a favorite among local birds and is drought-tolerant. Growing 50–70 feet tall, it thrives in various soil types and is perfect for shade or street tree use. Prune in winter to maintain its shape.

[More native canopy trees from the Trinity Forks Chapter, Native Plant Society of Texas.](#)



Mexican White Oak



Cedar Elm

Rooted in North Texas – Native Gems (Cont.)

Ornamental Trees

[Mexican Plum \(*Prunus mexicana*\)](#) is a striking small tree that brings early spring color to your yard with its fragrant white blossoms and rich, dark green leaves. Perfect for attracting pollinators and birds, it also provides lovely shade. This low-maintenance tree thrives in full sun to partial shade and well-drained soil, making it a beautiful and practical addition.

[Desert Willow \(*Chilopsis linearis*\)](#) is a beautiful small tree perfect for hot, dry summers. Its graceful, trumpet-shaped pink and purple flowers attract hummingbirds and charm your landscape. Low-maintenance and drought-tolerant, it grows 15–30 feet tall and thrives in full sun and well-drained soil. It is a stunning, hassle-free addition to any garden.

[More native ornamental trees from the Trinity Forks Chapter, Native Plant Society of Texas.](#)



Mexican Plum



Desert Willow

These are just a few of the many stunning, low-maintenance Texas native plants that can transform your garden into a vibrant, eco-friendly haven. Whether you're looking for colorful blooms, hardy grasses, or wildlife-friendly shrubs, there's a perfect native plant for you!

Sources and Resources

Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center. Special Collections – North Texas Recommended.
https://www.wildflower.org/collections/collection.php?collection=TX_northcentral

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension. Earth-Kind® Plant Selector. <https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/earthkind/plant-selector/>

Native Plant Society of Texas. Native Plants Database.
<https://www.npsot.org/resources/native-plants/native-plants-database/>

Special thanks to Liz Moyer, Denton County Master Gardener and Native Plant Society of Texas Educator for providing valuable suggestions.



What Are These Creatures? Lady Beetles

BY JANICE YODER SMITH

The images presented immediately below show lady beetle larvae. As with caterpillars, learning what something becomes before we destroy a newly discovered life form in the garden brings benefits. In the USA, some people call lady beetles by other names, including ladybirds and ladybugs. Lady beetles are true insects, not birds or bugs, so entomologists call them beetles. These are only two examples of the thousands of species of lady beetles found on earth.



Asian Lady Beetle *Harmonia axyridis* larva
By Meghan Cassidy, CC BY-SA

<https://www.inaturalist.org/photos/418291163>



Lady Beetles, Family Coccinellidae
Anubhav Agarwal, CC BY-NC 4.0

<https://www.inaturalist.org/photos/469869729>

Different species of lady beetle larvae and beetle adults may vary in color, size, and spot count, but they share several characteristics. The larvae have spike-like projections on their backs. The adults have forewings called elytra that protect their wings. The adults have a pronotum just behind their heads. That structure's markings help distinguish one beetle species from another.

Many people recognize that lady beetles are beneficial insects because they eat undesirable soft-bodied insects, including aphids and mealy bugs. Fewer realize that the larvae eat more crop-damaging insects than the adults do. Larvae will continue to live and feed in the same area until they become pupae. The adults will stay in a garden as long as they find food there, but they will fly away if they cannot find food. One way to keep lady beetles in a garden is to allow aphids to begin to infest a plant and cover that plant with tight mesh netting for a while to let the aphids multiply. Then, remove the cover when it is clear that the lady beetles have nearly cleared the neighboring plants of aphids. Rotating a sacrifice plant or a few plant stems or branches keeps food available for the lady beetles. Allowing some herb plants to flower provides nectar and pollen they will eat. Another strategy is providing slices of ripe fruit that provide food and water for the lady beetles.

Asian lady beetles (*Harmonia axyridis*) out-compete many common lady beetle species, including the seven-spotted lady beetle (*Coccinella septempunctata*) that many people recall from childhood. Asian lady beetles can typically eat more soft-bodied insects than the common lady beetles.

What Are These Creatures? Lady Beetles (Cont.)

Lady beetles can become pests when they swarm onto or into buildings seeking shelter. Weep holes, torn screens, and gaps in caulk around windows or doors provide access routes. Asian beetles prefer light-colored surfaces. Common beetles prefer dark surfaces and spending winters under decaying leaves or stones, but some may overwinter in attics or between walls if insufficient shelter is available outside. Asian beetles release a yellow substance when threatened. That substance can stain building surfaces and emit a disagreeable odor. Lady beetles do not bite humans or sting humans. Some people's skin becomes irritated by the yellow substance those beetles secrete.



Asian Ladybeetle

Jacobo Martin, CC BY-NC 4.0

<https://www.inaturalist.org/observations/26155459>

Resources

"Lady Beetles: An Overview," (accessed 10 February 2025). Galveston County Master Gardeners, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service.

<https://txmg.org/galveston/beneficials-in-the-garden-and-landscape/lady-beetles-an-overview/>

"Lady Beetles – Texas Insect Identification," (accessed 10 February 2025). Texas High Plains Insects by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

<https://texashighplainsinsects.net/insect-of-the-week/2015/7/7/lady-beetles>

"Ladybugs – A Garden Good Guy," (accessed 10 February 2025). K-State Research and Extension – Johnson County

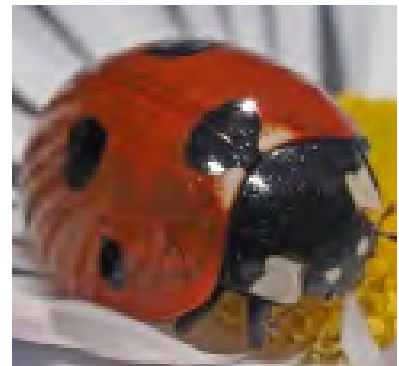
<https://www.johnson.k-state.edu/programs/lawn-garden/agent-articles-fact-sheets-and-more/agent-articles/insects/ladybugs.html>

"Asian Lady Beetle Invasions," (accessed 10 February 2025). Insects in the City by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

<https://citybugs.tamu.edu/2022/01/21/asian-lady-beetle-invasions/>

"Asian Lady Beetle," (accessed 10 February 2025). Missouri Department of Conservation

<https://mdc.mo.gov/discover-nature/field-guide/asian-lady-beetle#>



Seven-Spotted Ladybeetle

Felix Riegel, CC BY-NC 4.0

<https://www.inaturalist.org/photos/185984230>



Looking Ahead - April General Meeting Payge Stevens, Owner of the Cactus Queen

BY LEE ANN YATES

Recently, Carolyn Stoy, Succulent Team PM, and Gay Campbell, cacti aficionado, visited a cool little shop in Dallas that was on both of their wish lists. They corralled me to go with them so I would write this article for them – and I’m always up for a road trip to see plants, even if it’s just to Dallas.

Payge Stevens was a successful wedding photographer who fell in love with the town of San Miguel Allende, Mexico, and its desert scenery on a wedding shoot. She was stunned by the Mexican fencepost cacti (*Lophocereus marginatus*) she encountered there. She had never seen cacti taller than she was! Payge brought some home so the magic of Mexico would endure.

When the pandemic hit in 2020, the wedding business vanished into thin air, but Payge declares she has always been able to find a way to pivot in hard times. She looked at her tall cacti with fresh eyes – I love these cacti, I bet others would too. Shazam! In the middle of a global pandemic, Payge began a new business collecting and selling tall cacti to her friends and their friends online. Cactus Queen was born and has been growing ever since – now in a brick-and-mortar retail store in Dallas.

Payge had absolutely no interest in gardening prior to her epiphany, but now reels off botanical names, growing conditions, and soil needs like a life-long pro. She sources her cacti mostly from Arizona and southern California – collecting many of the species herself. It’s the part of the job she might enjoy the most – the dusty drives, finding the perfect specimen at a family-owned nursery, cultivating friendly ranchers who allow her to dig specimens on their land. Or her favorite part might be introducing her finds to customers, relaying the vitals of their new cactus. Or it might be caring for the plants in her shop and greenhouse.



Mexican Fencepost cacti and others at Cactus Queen shop.

Looking Ahead-April General Meeting (Cont.)

Payge's favorite part might even be speaking to groups like Master Gardeners! You can hear Payge talk about her story, her passion for cacti – especially Mexican fencepost cacti – and how she created the magic of Cactus Queen at the [April 9th Master Gardener general meeting](#). The program starts at 10:00. Join us for Payge's "Wild and Pokey Adventure!"

You can visit Cactus Queen plant nursery at 1835 Corinth Street in Dallas or catch her at [mycactusbadmycactushood](#) (look at it carefully) on Facebook and Instagram.

(Photos Courtesy DCMGA Member Lee Ann Yates)



Gay Campbell, Carolyn Stoy, Lee Ann Yates, and Payge Stevens at Cactus Queen



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

[Dandelion/Bees \(03/2020\)](#)

[Insects That Attack Trees \(03/2021\)](#)

[Spring Vegetable Planting \(03/2020\)](#)

[Spring Is In The Air \(03/2024\)](#)

[Gardening Basics - Foodscaping](#)

[Path to Plate - Radishes](#)

Gardening Grandma Says...

BY BARBARA BROWN

Humans transitioned from hunting and gathering to growing their food about 12,000 years ago. Over the millennia 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, “It helps to put honey on insect bites.”

Truth or myth? Let’s find out.

Anyone who has spent time in the vegetable garden, enjoys walking trails, or even sitting on the patio has likely experienced an irritating bug bite. It hurts. It itches. And for individuals who are very sensitive to the venom, it can lead to a serious health issue.

Why do insects bite humans?

The exact reason differs among common biting insects including bees, wasps, ants, ticks, chiggers, and mosquitoes. However, usually an insect stings or bites you either because they feel threatened or they are hungry.



Gardening Grandma is right!

Placing a dab of honey on an insect bite can reduce inflammation and itching. First though a **caution**: some people are extremely allergic to insect bites. If someone is experiencing any of the following symptoms, call 911 or your local medical emergency number:

- Trouble breathing.
- Swelling of the lips, face, eyelids or throat.
- Dizziness, fainting, or unconsciousness.
- A weak and rapid pulse.
- Hives.
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.

Gardening Grandma Says... (Cont.)

Why a dab of honey helps

“Honey has many properties that relieve itching and pain. Honey contains an enzyme called catalase, which provides relief for minor inflammation. Put on enough unprocessed honey to lightly cover your bite. To avoid accidentally creating a sticky mess, you can also put a bandage on top of your honey-covered bites.”

<https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/17695-mosquito-bites>

- Honey has many medicinal properties. It contains compounds that combat inflammation, so it may help reduce swelling. <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/322907#eight-home-remedies>
- The natural antibacterial agents in honey may also help prevent infection and speed healing. For these reasons, some medical professionals use honey extracts in wound dressings. <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/322907#eight-home-remedies>
- “Honey is also believed to release oxygen into wounds to aid healing and help flush out dead tissue.” <https://www.healthline.com/health/outdoor-health/home-remedies-for-bee-stings#:~:text=Honey%20is%20also%20believed%20to,for%20up%20to%20an%20hour>



Bee on a Zexmenia Flower

Other potential home remedies to treat symptoms of an insect bite:

- Aloe vera gel
- Baking soda
- Over-the-counter medicines such as hydrocortisone cream or Benadryl
- Calamine lotion
- A cold compress

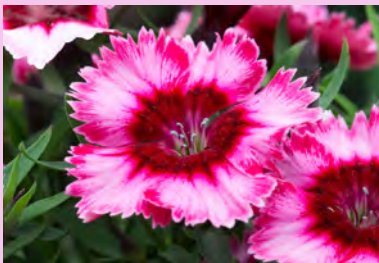
Gardening Grandma Says... (Cont.)

How to decrease your chances of being bitten:

- Wear long-sleeved shirts, long pants, socks, and closed-toe shoes. Tuck in your shirt and pants, and tape or tuck your pants into your socks. Wear light-colored, tightly woven clothing.
- Use insect repellent: Apply an EPA-registered insect repellent to your skin and clothing.
- Remove standing water that attracts mosquitoes.
- Avoid colognes, perfumes, perfumed soaps, and strongly-scented shampoos and deodorants
- Look for ant trails and visually check for the presence of ant mounds before you dig
- Stay alert for nests in trees, bushes, and along home borders. Do not get too close if you see one. Knocking them down may make them mad, so be careful. Or, contact a professional pest control service for safe removal. Bee hives should be removed by a professional beekeeper. To find beekeepers in your area, check with the American Beekeeping Federation:
<https://abfnet.org/swarm-rescue-removal/>
- Keep food and drinks covered when consuming outdoors
- Do not wave your arms to swat away bees or wasps, just move away slowly

Do biting insects provide any benefits or should they be killed immediately?

We know that bees are essential pollinators for many garden crops and honeybees provide the honey to use on bites. Ants help excavate soil and break up compacted earth that facilitates the movement of nutrients and water to plant roots. Other biting insects such as mosquitoes serve as a primary food source for other wildlife. Conclusion: our plants and the ecosystem need these insects so we must learn to live among them!



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.***

DCMGA Intern Class of 2025



We're excited to welcome 47 passionate interns from 19 cities across North Central Texas as they begin their journey to becoming certified Denton County Master Gardeners! Their adventure kicked off on January 28, and over the coming months, they'll complete 70 hours of instruction led by some of Texas's top horticultural experts.

Throughout their training, they'll explore a wide range of fascinating topics, including plant development and pathology, soil nutrition, Texas trees and native plants, edible gardening, rainwater harvesting, irrigation, and much more. Beyond the classroom, they'll dedicate at least 70 volunteer service hours to hands-on projects with DCMGA, from community gardens and youth programs to landscape design and public speaking. With so many opportunities to learn and contribute, we know they'll make a lasting impact. Welcome aboard—let's grow together!

Welcome



March General Meeting & Program

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

TOP GARDENING TIPS

March

Plant cool season vegetables.
Plant cool season flowering annuals.
Prune winter damage from perennials & shrubs.
Allow spring bulb foliage to die & dry before removal.
Protect tender plants from late freezes.

#DCMGA #GROWWITHUS

DENTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION

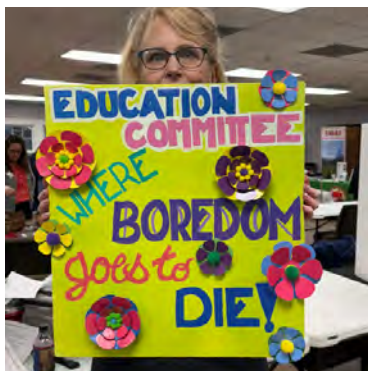
Volunteer Opportunity Fair 2025

BY JEFF HARDGRAVE

The Volunteer Opportunity Fair (VOF) was held at Global Sphere's Solomon's Porch on Wednesday, February 12, 2025. Attended by over 180 Master Gardeners and Interns, DCMGA had 35 project and committee representatives showcasing their opportunities for "growing in knowledge, growing in service." Table exhibitors included attractive and creative displays, photographs, and giveaways for attendees. For many in our membership, it was the first chance to meet the amazing Intern Class of 2025!

Our annual Volunteer Opportunity Fair is truly a celebration of what we do! "Educating and inspiring Denton County residents through research-based horticulture to promote eco-friendly gardens and enduring landscapes that enrich our communities." While this volunteer service plays a crucial role in strengthening our neighborhoods and communities, it also contributes to our own personal growth. By offering our time and skills to support activities, we gain valuable learning experiences that enhance the quality of our lives and expand our interpersonal abilities. Our DCMGA membership is comprised of diverse backgrounds and experiences, yet we are uniquely connected by this common interest in gardening.

As we look forward to next year's VOF, I am encouraged by this year's participation and new ideas suggested by our intern class! Our new interns have much to teach us, and I am ready for class to begin!



Photos courtesy of DCMGA Master Gardener Mike James



Cultivating Plants, Flowers, and Youths Denton Youth Fair

BY LYNDA HARVEY

Many gardeners have a childhood memory that keeps them growing. The Denton Youth Fair builds that fond experience. From April 1st through April 5th this year, the Denton Youth Fair welcomes 4H and FFA students to display their talents at raising plants and their artistic powers in floral arranging.

Denton Master Gardeners (MGs) assist the contestants for several days to make the event a success. Plant Validation in February is the first occasion that occurs about six weeks before the Youth Fair. Plant participants bring their plant-growing project to be registered, measured, and photographed by the MGs. The MGs help to identify species and coach the kids on the care of their venture. However, it is often the MGs that learn about new house plants, Texas Natives, and even species of trees and shrubs. The terrariums and dish gardens are particularly inspiring.

The 2025 Horticulture Contest at the Denton Youth Fair is scheduled to begin on April 2nd with site setup done on the afternoon before. That Wednesday morning is a flurry of excitement and activity as both Floral Arrangements and Plants are dropped off for display at the North Texas Fairgrounds. The event is held indoors inside the Point Bank Building.



Photos courtesy of DCMGA Master Gardener Lynda Harvey

**Master Gardener volunteers
working at the 2024 Denton
Youth Fair.**



Cultivating Plants, Flowers, and Youths Denton Youth Fair (Cont.)

MG volunteers check off registration, label the entries, and arrange the projects for judges to inspect, score, and give constructive feedback to each entry. The Horticulture Contest is an educational opportunity that goes beyond the competition. The MGs tally the scores and place the well-deserved ribbons.

In addition, the Denton Master Gardener Association sponsors the belt buckles and championship banners.



Brady Fleitman from Denton High School FFA (above, left) and Ryleigh Murray from Byron Nelson FFA (above, right) were the respective Grand and Reserve Champions in 2024, a year that had 178 registered entries.

MGs will welcome the public to visit the splendor and scents of the Horticulture display on Thursday April 3rd from 9:00am – 5:00pm and Friday April 4th from 9:00am – 2:00pm.

All are invited to the [Denton Youth Fair Silent and Live Auctions on Saturday April 5th](#) where you can make some memories by supporting the gardeners, ranchers, and farmers of tomorrow!



**BY HELP DESK TEAM**

Q: How do I know if my plants have freeze damage after the super-cold weather in mid-February? What should I be doing?

A: What does freeze damage look like?

Symptoms of freeze damage include shriveling and browning or blackening of plant tissue. Or, when gently squeezing plant branches, leaves or fruit, it may feel soft or mushy. However, according to Greg Grant, PhD., A&M AgriLife Extension Service, it may take weeks or months to know the extent of the damage to our perennial plants. Greg published an excellent overview of plant appearance and after-care from freeze damage in his March 3, 2021 column:

(<https://txmg.org/grayson/files/2021/03/Freeze-Damage.pdf>).

What should I do?

Trees: "Watch and wait" is the current recommendation from the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. "Do not be tempted to prune or fertilize these stressed, damaged plants yet; once you prune, new growth may flush out on some plants. Since the last average frost date in north Texas is mid-March, the new growth could get

damaged by low temperatures still possible in late winter. Fertilizers and pre-emergence herbicides will be stressors as well, so postpone these treatments a few weeks longer than usual. In general, the plants and trees need time to recover from the severe cold stress."

The only exception to this guideline would be pruning for safety's sake. Branch damage in large shade trees could pose a risk to people, pets, property, or power lines, so cracked branches should be removed immediately. If you cannot safely remove damaged branches yourself, hire a certified arborist to inspect your trees and prune any cracked branches. You can find a certified arborist for your area by searching: Find an Arborist

<https://isatexas.com/for-the-public/find-an-arborist/>

Warning: If it is necessary to prune damaged oak trees for safety reasons, you should immediately cover pruning cuts with a wound dressing to deter the spread of oak wilt. From February to July, the beetle that spreads oak wilt fungus is active and foraging. For more information on preventing oak wilt:

<https://texasoakwilt.org/oakwilt/oak-wilt-management>



Turf: “Winter injury of warm-season turfgrasses may arise due to numerous factors, including direct low-temperature kill or freeze injury, suffocation under prolonged ice cover, frost injury and desiccation during windy, dry conditions, said Ben Wherley, Ph.D., AgriLife Research turfgrass ecologist in the Texas A&M Department of Soil and Crop Sciences, College Station.” Provides helpful information to diagnose potential winterkill: “Quick methods for assessing viability of turf areas” and he has some supportive suggestions:

<https://agrilifetoday.tamu.edu/2021/03/03/turfgrass-response-to-winter-fury-may-take-weeks-to-determine/>

Vegetables and Herbs: If you added mulch and covered your plants before the recent extreme cold, they may have survived, so check them after the warmer weather returns for signs of damage. “Cool-season vegetables will tolerate temperatures below freezing down to 26°F with little or no damage. Very hardy cool-season vegetables like spinach, beets, collards, kale, carrots, and Brussels sprouts typically only see damage when temperatures get below 26°F. Other cool-season crops, such as cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, radish, lettuce, chard, and onion, will see minor damage when temperatures get below freezing but will readily recover over 7 to 14 days.” Unfortunately, with temperatures in the teens and wind chills in the single digits, vegetable or herb plants with significant damage will probably need to be replaced.

<https://yardandgarden.extension.iastate.edu/how-to/cold-and-freeze-damage-garden-plants#:~:text=Cold%20Temperatures%20Can%20Damage%20Newly%20Emerged%20Leaves&text=Symptoms%20of%20freeze%20damage%20include,from%20the%20tree%20or%20shrub.>

If you planted onions and garlic in mid-February, here are some suggestions and general information: “How to Tell If Your Onions Have Been Damaged”

<https://www.onionpatch.dixondalefarms.com/protect-your-onions-from-a-freeze/>

Perennial herbs can be damaged by freezing temperatures, especially newly emerged growth, but most will recover, sending up new growth from their roots and crowns. To minimize damage, prune back only the damaged tissue, and ensure proper care in spring and summer. Herbs like lavender, oregano, mint, and thyme are generally hardy.

“Winterizing the Herb Garden”:

<https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/winterizing-the-herb-garden#:~:text=If%20treated%20properly%2C%20many%20herb,until%20after%20new%20growth%20begins>

Mulch Herbs After Hard Freeze: “After the first hard freeze, apply a 3- to 6-inch layer of organic material such as straw, pine needles or chopped leaves. Cut plants back to within a couple of inches of the ground after the first hard frost. Cover the remaining stub with soil. Then cover the soil with 4 to 5 inches of mulch.”

<https://newswire.caes.uga.edu/story/989/frigid-herbs.html>

One more resource: The “Winter Recovery for Plants” discussion from “Chat with Green Aggies” offers many helpful suggestions:

https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=80673164.0188172&ref=watch_permalink

If you do not use Facebook, you can view the recording on the “Chat with Green Aggies” on their YouTube page. Here is the link to the video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VHgV9akQKjw&list=PLCDoXRJzsMPEEMqKfhDP-lznPNq2yEc6Q&index=30>

Hang in there! Spring will come soon!

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.

LATE WINTER PREP FOR YOUR SPRING TURF

TIME TO APPLY PRE-EMERGENT TO YOUR NORTH TEXAS LAWN

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



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

STOP THE GROWTH OF SUMMER WEEDS

PREVENT CRABGRASS AND SANDBURS WITH A PRE-EMERGENT APPLICATION AT THE CORRECT TIME.

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



REMEMBER, TIMING IS KEY

DON'T MISS THE BRIEF WINDOW FOR TREATMENT

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



WHAT NOT TO APPLY

AVOID WEED AND FEED APPLICATIONS AS IT IS TOO EARLY TO APPLY FERTILIZERS TO YOUR LAWN

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

Annual and Broadleaf weeds can be treated after they emerge. 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_Herbicides%20for%20Weed%20Control%20in%20Turfgrass.pdf

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

✓

Denton County Master Gardener Association
Questions? Contact our Help Desk
email: master.gardener@dentoncounty.com
PHONE: 940.349-2892

TEXAS
MASTER GARDENER
TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION
Denton County

Denton County Master Gardener Association

Page 1

Upcoming Events

**MAR
1**

Veggie Gardening Procedures

Planting your own food is one of the most amazing things you can do! Becoming a successful gardener requires you to "see" and understand your garden. Learn procedures and strategies.

Explore the possibilities in this class. \$15

SignUpGenius Link: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C4CA5AE29A3F9C07-veggie#/>
Global Spheres Center: 7801 S. Interstate 35E, Corinth, 9am-12pm

**MAR
3,10,17,
24,31**

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

**MAR
24**

Lose the Lawn-Love the Landscape

Join Denton County Master Gardener Chuck Guarnaccia for an inspiring presentation on lawn alternatives! Native plants, ground covers, and drought-tolerant landscapes save water, reduce maintenance, and support pollinators. Whether you want to replace your entire lawn or just a section, this session will provide practical tips to create a beautiful, sustainable yard.

Co-sponsored by the City of Denton.

Emily Fowler Central Library 502 Oakland Street Denton, 6PM-7PM

**MAR
5**

Webinar-Start Spring with Texas Natives

It's the perfect time to give your garden beds a little pick-me-up — all from the comfort of your home during your lunch break! Join us for this virtual presentation with Liz Moyer, Denton County Master Gardener and Native Plant Society of Texas educator. Liz will share tips for preparing your beds and introduce you to low-water, low-cost, low-maintenance Texas native plants. Sponsored by the Upper Trinity Regional Water District.

Registration Link: <https://events.gcc.teams.microsoft.com/event/941e786e-e188-40d2-ace3-b96b14f101c6@cc450009-5f94-4f37-99c2-68f662d95818>

Webinar Event 12 noon

**MAR
7**

Landscape Design for Beginners

Are you struggling to develop a landscape that compliments your home? Don't know what will grow in specific areas or how to determine bed sizes? Let Denton County Master Gardener Treva McFadden help you with design tips to ensure your landscape is an asset that supports your property and your lifestyle. Co-sponsored by the Wise County Garden Club,

1107 8th Street, Bridgeport 11:40AM-12:40PM

Check out dcmga.com for more details.



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.

Events

Denton County Master Gardener Association

Page 2**MAR
8**

Understanding 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 do they work, and what they can do for and with you! After the presentation portion of this class, 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! Class is \$15

SignUpGenius Link <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C4CA5AE29A3F9C07-tree#/>
Global Spheres Center 7801 S. Interstate 35E, Corinth, Tx. 9AM-12PM

**MAR
10**

Designing Your Dream Yard the Earth-Kind® Way!

Discover the art of creating beautiful, sustainable landscapes! Join us for a presentation on the basics of landscape design using Earth-Kind® principles, which blend environmental responsibility with low-maintenance gardening techniques. You'll learn practical tips for plant selection, site preparation, and design strategies that conserve water and support local ecosystems. Don't miss this opportunity to create a landscape you'll love while protecting the environment! Presented by Denton County Master Gardener Cheryl Huckabee in partnership with the Prosper Community Library. 250 W. First St., Prosper 6:30PM-7:30PM

**MAR
11**

Plant Propagation - Dividing Established Plants

Who doesn't love free plants!? Get ahead of your gardening needs by learning how and when to divide existing herbaceous perennial plants. Denton County Master Gardener Kathi Efflandt will demonstrate methods and techniques on dividing plants.

Doubletree Ranch Park 310 Highland Village Rd. Highland Village 10AM-11:00AM

**MAR
12**

Microscopic Soil Analysis

There are so many intrinsic microscopical life forms in the soil, that play extremely important roles in order to have a healthy, nutritious and efficient garden foundation!
In this class we will have Jane Duke (Master Naturalist, Soil Web Specialist and a dear friend) leading our micro eyes to teach us all about soil life. You can bring a small soil sample from home so we can all be educationally informed by the results, share with classmates, and have a better understanding of the next steps to enrich our own soil.

SignUpGenius Link

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C4CA5AE29A3F9C07-48260701-testadmin#/>
Global Spheres Center 7801 E. Interstate 35, Corinth, 12:30PM-2:00PM

**MAR
12**

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. The program begins at 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. and is followed by the general business meeting. The public is welcome to attend and grow with us!

Solomon's Porch, Global Spheres Ctr. 7801 Interstate 35E, 10AM-12PM

Check out dcmga.com for more details.



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Events

Denton County Master Gardener Association

Page 3**MAR
14**

Plant Selection

Denton Senior Center, 509 Bell Avenue, Denton

Selecting the right plants can make your landscape a beautiful, low maintenance asset. Don't miss this opportunity to hear Denton County Master Gardener and Earth-Kind® landscape designer Kathy Rainey give her guidance on picking just the right plant for that spot.

Denton Senior Center, 509 Bell Avenue, Denton. 9AM-10AM

**MAR
20**

Water Conservation in Your Landscape

Our region is experiencing extreme growth and that leads to water availability concerns. We can all do our part to conserve water and still have beautiful landscapes. Denton County Master Gardener Charlotte Canion will share her knowledge of water-wise techniques including plant selection, irrigation techniques, rainwater management and local resources to help you support our regional needs.

The Colony Public Library, 6800 Main Street, The Colony 6:30PM-7:30PM

**MAR
20**

Join us at Ask A Master Gardener Booth

Visit the Denton County Ask A Master Gardener booth at the Flower Mound Senior Center Garden Club annual plant sale! Bring your gardening questions and purchase plants at the same event. Co-sponsored by the Flower Mound Senior Center Garden Club.

Flower Mound Senior Center 2701 West Windsor Drive Flower Mound, 10AM-2PM

**MAR
21**

Soft Landings Installation

Install native plants under keystone trees at Josey Ranch Pocket Prairie. These plantings will provide critical habitat for native moths, butterflies and other beneficial insects. Bring water, hat, gloves, small tools, sunscreen, and insect repellent.

Josey Ranch Pocket Prairie 1700 Keller Springs Rd Carrollton, 9AM-11AM

**MAR
22**

Creating a Monarch Habitat

Liz Moyer, Denton County Master Gardener and Native Plant Society of Texas educator, will help you plan and create a Monarch butterfly oasis in your landscape. Enjoy the beauty and awe of the spring migration, egg-laying, caterpillar development, chrysalis development and eventual flying of the new generation right in your yard. Then marvel in their return south in the fall to the wonderful buffet you will have blooming for them!

Hosted by the Denton Sustainability office

Emily Fowler Central Library, 502 Oakland Street, Denton 11AM-12PM

Check out dcmga.com for more details.



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Events**Page 4**

Denton County Master Gardener Association

**MAR
22**

Water- Wise Gardening Save Water-Grow Green

Join us for "Introduction to Water Conservation," presented by Denton County Master Gardener Jeff Hardgrave. You'll learn the practical ways to save water while maintaining a healthy, beautiful garden. Learn efficient watering techniques, drought-tolerant landscaping, rainwater harvesting, and more! Discover simple steps to reduce waste and protect our water resources.

Don't miss this valuable event! Co-sponsored by Keep The Colony Beautiful.

The Colony City Hall Annex. 6804 Main St The Colony 1PM-2PM

**MAR
25**

Pest Management

Denton County Master Gardener Lynda Harvey and AgriLife Agent Dusty Fife will review the many diseases and pests that may impact your landscape and the best ways to deal with them.

Flower Mound Public Library, 3030 Broadmoor Lane, Flower Mound 1PM-2:30PM

**MAR
29**

Composting Full On

Everything in nature takes something away; to give something back as a natural recycling process. Soil quality is key for a prosperous garden, and composting is the best way to build nutritious soil for your plants. In this class you will learn all about it! From the simplicity of it, to the science within it, to having a better understanding on how to make it happen and replenish your garden with amazing good compost!

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C4CA5AE29A3F9C07-compost#/>

Global Spheres Center 7801 S Interstate 35E Corinth 9AM-12PM

**MAR
29**

Join Us For Ask A Master Gardener

Visit the Denton County Ask a Master Gardener booth during the Ace Hardware Celina Open House. Bring your gardening questions and learn from Master Gardener experts.

Ace Hardware Celina. 1371 South Preston Road, Celina 10AM-2PM

Check out dcmga.com for more details.



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TEXAS DENTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION
MASTER GARDENER
 TEXAS A&M AGRI LIFE EXTENSION

WE'VE MOVED OUR Plant Sale

New Location:  **NORTH TEXAS FAIRGROUNDS**
 2217 N. Carroll Blvd.
 Denton 76201

Spacious, covered sale area
Plentiful, convenient parking

April 26, 2025
9:00 A.M.- 2:00 P.M. or Until sellout,
RAIN or SHINE!!!

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

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

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

*Texas A&M AgriLife Extension is an equal opportunity employer and program provider. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating
*Persons with disabilities needing accommodations for effective participation in the meeting should contact Denton County AgriLife Extension office at least a week in advance of the meeting or event to request mobility, visual, hearing or other assistance.
*Denton County Master Gardener Association educates and engages county residents in the implementation of research-based horticultural and environmental practices that create sustainable gardens, landscapes, and communities.



TEXAS
MASTER GARDENER
TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION
Denton County

2025

GARDEN TOUR

Discover, Learn, and Grow:
Inspiring Gardens for Every Gardener



**SATURDAY
MAY 10TH**
9 AM - 4 PM

ADVANCED PRICE:
\$20

DAY OF EVENT: \$25
(CHILDREN 12 & UNDER
FREE)

**SCAN
ME!**



OR GO TO WWW.DCMGA.COM FOR TICKETS!
RAIN OR SHINE (NO REFUNDS)







**SHILOH FIELD
COMMUNITY GARDEN**
Vegetable varieties to grow in North Texas

The nation's largest community garden, producing over 60,000 pounds of food annually for local food banks with a strong focus on **sustainability**. You can't miss the **beekeeper** and chickens!

MEET OUR GARDENS!

ACROSS DENTON & OAK POINT

Visit our educational stations, where experts will share the gardening techniques that shaped these beautiful gardens.



SECLUDED SANCTUARY
Tranquil & relaxing oasis

In the heart of a suburban neighborhood, Secluded Sanctuary offers a peaceful escape into nature, celebrating diverse plantings, drought tolerance, and creating a vibrant wildlife habitat. With a **rich diversity of roses**, flourishing vegetable beds, and colorful wildflowers, the garden provides year-round beauty, inspiration, and valuable lessons in raised-bed gardening, effective water conservation, and the importance of **cultivating a wildlife-friendly environment**.



ALICE IN CACTUSLAND
Growing & caring for cacti and succulents

Step into a whimsical world where **art meets nature** in Alice in Cactusland, a garden inspired by "Alice in Wonderland" and featuring an impressive collection of cacti and succulents beautifully arranged along charming pathways. Visitors will find **practical solutions to drainage and space challenges**, explore an enchanting Alice in Wonderland sculpture garden, visit an art studio open house, and enjoy a flourishing fig orchard, all highlighting the resilience and creativity of its dedicated owner.



WINDBLOWN WILDSCAPE
Shade gardening & planting beds

Spanning one acre, Windblown Wildscape is a shaded haven that slopes down to a seasonal creek, featuring curving plant beds filled with native plants, raised vegetable beds, and a rain garden. The aftermath of the May 2024 windstorm led to **creative adaptations**, including sun-tolerant plantings in previously shaded areas and the use of downed trees for garden structures, focusing on shade gardening and **water conservation**, with highlights like agaves and vitex.



GARDEN TAPESTRY
Composting techniques & rain harvesting

Nestled in northeast Denton, Garden Tapestry is a serene retreat where **native plants and ornamentals** blend harmoniously in a mix of sun and shade. Managed by a single gardener, this modestly sized garden showcases a vibrant pollinator garden, a tranquil shade garden, and a secluded back garden, with composting, rain harvesting, and **innovative gardening techniques like hügelkultur and lasagna beds**, making it a peaceful place of learning and reflection.

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

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Pinterest:

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

YouTube:

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

Save the Date

- 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
- April 9 General Meeting & Program,
"Cacti: A Wild & Pokey
Adventure" Dallas native
Payge Stevens.

Contact Information

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Content

The Submission deadline for the April edition of *The Root* is Wednesday, March 5. Submissions may be revised at the discretion of the editor.

Ideas, photos, and articles are welcome and may be submitted to Editor Cheryl Huckabee or Communications Director Donna Hull at doctorhull@gmail.com.

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