

Denton County Master Gardener Association

THE ROOT

Grow With Us 



Hoya blossom Courtesy of DCMGA Member Karen Gibso

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<https://dcmga.com>

Buds from the Board

BY RAE LINE NOBLES, PRESIDENT

It's September and we have almost survived another Texas summer. Fall is right around the corner and can't come too soon as dreams of fall flowers, vegetables and lots of pumpkins fill our imagination.



Photo Courtesy of DCMGA Member Raeline Nobles

With all the thoughts of fall, there's still much work to be accomplished at Denton County Master Gardener Association. This year has been a year of great transition, assessment of activities and plans for the future. The hot summer months have provided us a bit of a break from outside efforts to focus on our strengths, accomplishments, changes made and changes yet to come.

One of our transitions this year has shown us the need we have in our infrastructure for additional support in technology, equipment, and leadership. Two new Board roles are in development and will hopefully be filled as 2026 begins. Not only will these new positions assist current Board members in creating a much better life/work balance, they will allow us to become more progressive in our efforts to respond to organizational and community needs in economical and effective ways. The transition also showed we needed a base of checks and balances to ensure our membership has more access to taking on leadership roles and succeeding in them. Education of members in our current and future programs, support services and technology is key to this effort being successful, and we've made progressive steps towards that goal. A greater effort in transparency, accountability, communication, and collaboration between and within leadership and membership is another goal we have moved towards with work still to be accomplished. As much work as these activities have created for us, and sometimes uncomfortably so, they are all so worth the effort! Our overarching goal is to make DCMGA a place of greater value to the community while also creating an environment of greater happiness and efficacy for our members as we move the bar to success in living our mission to greater heights.

Buds from the Board

BY RAE LINE NOBLES, PRESIDENT

On another front, our Board and the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Agent are currently reviewing our bylaws and editing them to create a more cohesive and up to date reflection of who we are, as well as a more “ever green” document that won’t require constant updating. Once completed, our Volunteer Handbook will be updated to reflect the new bylaws, as will many of our policies and procedures. Our Strategic Vision and Goals are also being evaluated against the work we have accomplished over the past 18 months while reviewing the need to edit current goals to reflect greater community and member responsiveness.

Our second transition involved the entrance of a new Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Agent – Horticulture. Ms. Erin Smith, MS, has been with us since January and her first focus has been on the topics and quality of education we provide to the public and ourselves. Our community and member education has risen in quality as education review and approval processes have been updated. Erin has also added greater accuracy and depth in our approval and reporting mechanisms with the help of our own Jeff Hardgrave, Ellen Gauntt, and many others. She is actively involved on many fronts providing resources, support and ideas to our efforts.

Our Master Gardener Continuing Education (CE) program has also improved dramatically this year under the work of our Education Director, Ellen Gauntt and her Education Committee. The CE they provide monthly is fun, informative and relative to our educational mission. Our training program of Master Gardeners is also culminating in a three-day Texas AgriLife Extension Advanced Training session on vegetable growing this fall led by our Agent, Education Director, and a hard-working, merry band of committee members. Up to 50 Master Gardeners from across Texas will be participating in the training to achieve Advanced Training status with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension. A free Master Class, Greener Horizons, is also being held that week for not only Master Gardeners but our partners at Master Naturalists and Native Plant Society of North Texas. These partners work closely with us on many events and we hope they enjoy this training session!

Our Outreach Director, Bonnie Ambrose, has been busy with her team on a new database of HOA’s in North Texas so greater outreach and education can occur with them, their landscape companies and residents. Her team has also created relationships with libraries in smaller communities where our education and support has not been traditionally present. They have seven new libraries ready to engage in the new fall Roots & Blooms programming. Finally, Outreach is developing a Community Gardens Handbook – a response to many requests from the public.

Buds from the Board

BY RAE LINE NOBLES, PRESIDENT

Other Board and members have been busy as well! Finance is interviewing bookkeepers to attend to day-to-day activities of the Treasurer, our website is becoming more responsive to the public as easier access is being integrated, and our member webpage continues to grow with information keeping our members informed on procedures, awards, events, and opportunities for growth. Our Member at Large, Brenda Martin, and her team are active in creating better communication and response for member needs. And Donna Hull, Communications Director, is taking her team to new heights with more training, more social media presence, and growing subscribers to *The Root*.

Our members and Board have been very busy bees indeed! And it shows. For myself, I couldn't be more proud of them all as they continually show themselves to be the best of the best, and always willing to do more and learn more so we can all do better. You really can't ask for more than that. These folks mean so much to me. They are indeed changing our world for the better every time they step out to educate our community, every time they perform a youth camp on horticulture, every time they deliver a truckload of freshly harvested veggies and fruit, every time they plant a tree or save a sick one. Being a gardener means being hopeful. Hopeful for a better, more beautiful, more bountiful future for you, us and our communities.

Be hopeful today and plant something valuable to you. Happy September!



~ Raeline

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>



Creature Corner: Yellowjackets

BY JANICE YODER-SMITH

Yellowjackets are wasps that some people find beneficial, but others view as nuisances. The two most commonly found in north-central Texas are *Vespula squamosa*, the southern yellowjacket, and *Vespula maculifrons*, the eastern yellowjacket. Both can build below-ground or tree nests, but usually start on the ground. The more aggressive southern yellowjackets may invade and take over eastern yellowjacket nests. Wall cavities or chimney flues serve as alternative nesting sites for these species. Yellowjackets are predators of small arthropods, their larvae or nymphs.

The 0.5" (13 mm) long bodies of yellowjackets have few to no hairs and only incidentally transfer pollen. They fold their long, translucent wings alongside their bodies when resting. Mature yellowjackets bear specific yellow and black markings on their heads, thoraxes, and abdomens. These markings help identify different species. Orange individuals are queens.

Some species in USDA Zones 10 and up build perennial nests, but north Texas yellowjackets construct annual nests by chewing vegetable fibers into a papery material. Newly developed, fertilized queens survive winters by leaving the nest and burrowing into the ground before freezes occur. Those queens emerge between March and June when the soil warms. Multiple queens work together to establish a nest of approximately 50 initial cells. Hanging yellowjacket traps when queens are starting nests and foraging in the spring helps limit the number of nests built. Yellowjackets are polygynous; their nests may have multiple queens. Populations peak between July and the end of September. Freezes in fall kill the workers, guards, and larvae in an existing nest.

Newly-emerged queens must leave their nests to hunt smaller arthropods, larvae, and nymphs to feed their larvae. Larvae grow and differentiate into adults that fill specific roles, including workers and guards. When those workers can feed the larvae and queen, she remains in the nest and dies in the fall. Workers expand nests by adding layers of cells beneath existing ones. They cover the nest with a smooth, multilayer paper coat, leaving only one or a few guarded entrances.



Vespula maculifrons, Eastern Yellowjacket

Vespula maculifrons by Rob Keeney CC BY-NC 2025-09

Yellowjackets (Cont.)



Vespula squamosa Queen by Laura Sekas CC-NC-2

Yellowjacket Queen



Yellowjacket Ground Nest by CC BY- 2025-09

Yellowjacket Ground Nest

Yellowjackets may be nuisances. They congregate near concession stands, picnic areas, and trash receptacles that provide sources of protein, water, and sugars brought by humans. Prevention and awareness are the most effective ways to protect individuals from yellowjackets. Before hosting an event, look for them guarding nests in trees, holes in the ground, or gaps in building materials. Consistent daylight sightings of yellowjackets may indicate the presence of their nests. Using pheromone or baited traps may lure yellowjackets to a distant location. Reducing the attractiveness of the site by covering beverages and foods until they are served and limiting trash accumulation. Use lids to cover trash receptacles or tying trash bags tightly to help deter these wasps. Following these steps may reduce the likelihood of someone being stung. If yellowjacket populations must be controlled, doing so at night when the nest is inactive and from a distance is the recommended practice. Follow the label instructions on any insecticide chosen as required by law.

A single foraging yellowjacket can usually be avoided by maintaining a distance. Remaining still and calm is the strategy for preventing a sting from a single insect that lands on an individual. Moving away slowly while protecting the head and neck provokes fewer stings from a swarm. A single sting usually causes pain for several hours but can be treated with over-the-counter medication. Multiple stings may require urgent medical attention to limit pain and swelling. Call 911 immediately for individuals allergic to wasp venom, as well as those with swollen tongues or difficulty breathing.



Vespula squamosa queen nest by Neil Cant CC-NC

Queen Nest

Yellowjackets (Cont.)

Yellowjackets are remarkable, social insects that eat some plant-damaging arthropods. Their swarming behaviors inspire some teams to adopt the yellowjacket as their mascot. Personal and family interactions with them provide humorous stories to share. The next time we observe them from a safe distance, let us remember their benefits.



Vespula squamosa, Southern Yellowjacket

Sources and Resources:

- *Bug's Eye View, Yellowjacket Control Method*, Vol. 4, No. 21. (n.d.). Mississippi State University Extension Service. <http://extension.msstate.edu/newsletters/bug%E2%80%99s-eye-view/2018/bugs-eye-view-yellowjacket-control-method-vol-4-no-21>
- *IPM Action Plan for Yellowjackets* | School Integrated Pest Management. (n.d.). <https://schoolipm.tamu.edu/forms/pest-management-plans/ipm-action-plan-for-yellowjackets/>
- *Southern Yellowjackets – field guide to common Texas insects*. (2018, October 8). Field Guide to Common Texas Insects. <https://texasinsects.tamu.edu/southern-yellowjackets/>
- *Yellowjackets in the Landscape* | NC State Extension Publications. (n.d.). <https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/yellowjackets>



Into The Veggie Patch: Daikon Radish

BY LIZ CHANEY

Origins and Benefits

Daikon radishes originally began in the Mediterranean and Black Sea areas. As trade routes grew, stretching from the Mediterranean to China, the Daikon radish found a new home in Eastern Asia. The initial introduction of the Daikon Radish to America occurred during the 16th century, but scientists only started studying it as a winter crop and an organic crop in the 2000s. They observed a benefit to the radish when managing the soil. This radish's root size is 12 to 20 inches long and between 2-6 inches in diameter. The plants die back at 20°F. The Daikon creates favorable soil conditions for future planting by scavenging nitrogen and increasing the permeability of clay soils. Its spreading canopy prevents fall and winter weeds from germinating.

Today, many people associate the Daikon radish with Asian cuisine. The leafy greens and roots are edible. Their peppery flavor is similar to that of Arugula or Mustard Greens when raw, but cooking can soften the flavor. Daikon can often be found in salads, soups, stews, pickled as well as stir fry. Given its nutritious contents of Vitamin C and calcium, low calories, and long shelf storage of up to 4 months, use of the Daikon radish is spreading into other cuisines.



Daikon Radishes

Plant Requirements:

- Soil: Loose, well-drained soil with a pH of 5-6.5.
- Light: Requires 6-8 hours of full sun.
- Temperature: Prefers air temperatures of 50° - 65°F. Dies back after a few consecutive nights at 20°F or lower.

Planting:

- Plant seeds about 1/4 to 1/2 inch deep in fall or early spring in loose, well-drained soil in either raised beds or in the ground. Separate seeds by 4-6 inches in rows 3 feet apart.

Maintenance and Care:

- Water consistently. Use little or no nitrogen fertilizer. Excessive nitrogen discourages root growth. Thin plants when about 2-3 inches tall to ensure room for growth. Mound around the roots as needed.

Varieties for North Texas:

- Minowase, Mooli Mino, or Shirahime.

In The Veggie Patch: Daikon Radish (Cont.)

Harvesting and Storage:

Radishes can reach maturity, depending on the variety, at approximately 40-70 days when the tops of the tap roots are about an inch above ground level. Storage life is about four months if stored at temperatures between 32-34 degrees with a relative humidity of 95-100 percent.

Resources:

- *Daikon Radish*. (n.d.). Purdue University – College of Agriculture.
<https://ag.purdue.edu/departments/btny/ppdl/potw-dept-folder/2022/daikon-radish.html>
- *Raphanus sativus var nigra Daikon Radish*. (n.d.). *Raphanus sativus var nigra* Daikon Radish.
<https://www.uaex.uada.edu/yard-garden/resource-library/plant-week/Raphanus-sativus-var-nigra-Daikon-Radish-11-22-2017.aspx>



It's (almost) time for Membership Renewal!

Veterans and 2025 Interns, \$20 renewal fee, Oct. 1 - Dec. 15, 2025. There will be a \$15 late fee Dec. 16 - Dec. 31 2025, \$20 late fee thereafter. Members who do not renew by December 31, 2025 will be deemed Inactive on January 1, 2026.

Renewal forms will be available soon!

TEXAS MASTER GARDENER
TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION
Denton County

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

Plant of the Month: Hoya

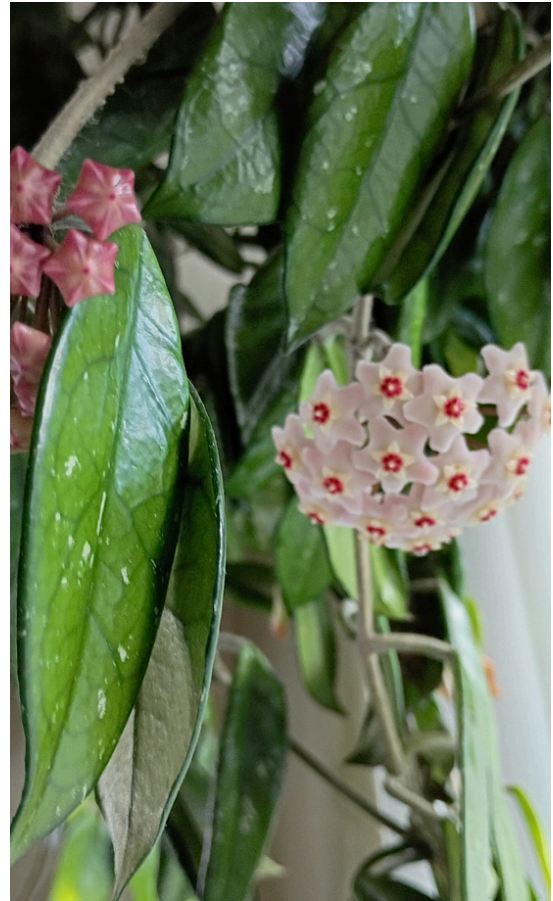
BY KAREN GIBSON

The highlight for Interns going through the Master Gardener program is the Propagation Class. Interns learn about plant propagation – division, rooting, layering, and leaf cutting (to name a few) – using actual plants. Even better, Interns take home an assortment of plant starts to (hopefully) keep alive and eventually plant in their gardens. My intern year, I brought home a rose cutting (which successfully grew into a beautiful rose bush!), Pineapple sage, Bog sage, ‘Paprika’ Yarrow, Lemon Balm, Fall Obedient Plant, August Duelburg Sage, and Lamb’s Ear. Most grew well; a few I still have eight years later. One plant, though, has brought me continuing joy – *Hoya carnosa*. A single cutting of this houseplant has grown to cover my south-facing kitchen window.

Hoya Origin

Hoya was discovered in the early 1800s in Western Australia by Scottish botanist Robert Brown and named after fellow botanist Thomas Hoy. Brown originally classified the genus *Hoya* in the dogbane family (Apocynaceae). However, “certain characteristics of hoyas and its relatives ... determined the need for a new family. He named Asclepiadaceae, the milkweed family, for plants having white sap and leaves that are mainly opposite or whorled, along with other traits.”(1) (Hoyas as Houseplants)

Hoya is often called the Wax Plant or Wax Vine due to its thick, waxy leaves and vining nature. Native to Southeast Asian, Japan, and Taiwan, Hoya is a broadleaf evergreen, epiphytic, vining herbaceous perennial.(2) (*Hoya carnosa*) According to the Cambridge Dictionary, epiphytic means “relating to a plant that grows on another plant but does not feed from it.”



Hoya Blossoms



You can see that Hoya (above) and this green milkweed are in the same family by the flowers.

Hoya (Cont.)

The Hoya is a slow-growing plant, and can take up to 2-3 years before it begins to bloom. But when conditions are right, it will reward you with gorgeous white to pink blooms. My *Hoya carnosa* usually blooms 3 times per year.

Plant Requirements

Soil: Loose, fast-draining potting mix, high in organic matter. The container should have good drainage. Hoyas like a snug fit pot. If you do need to repot, choose a pot that is not more than 2 inches larger.

Light: Bright, indirect light. A little direct sun is fine, but if it's strong Texas sun, filtered by a blind or curtain is optimum. Hoyas can be moved outside for the summer; again, filtered or partial sun is best.

Water: Allow the soil to dry out between watering; overwatering or underwatering can cause leaves to drop. Overwatering can lead to root rot. Hoyas love humidity, so consider misting its waxy leaves occasionally. Water less frequently during the winter.

Fertilizer: Due to infrequent watering, a liquid fertilizer with an NPK ratio of 2:1:2 or 3:1:2 is optimum.

Propagation: Stem cuttings started in water or in a good planting medium.

Pruning – If you decide to prune your Hoya, do so in early spring before rapid growth begins. Do not prune the peduncle (“spur”) where flowers have bloomed, as this is where future blossoms will occur.

Sap: Hoya have a milky sap, like the related milkweed. You will notice sap when you take cuttings, or when the blooms dry up and drop their seeds.

Pests & Diseases: The usual houseplant pests can occur with your Hoya – mealybugs and fungus gnats, to name a couple. If you have fungus gnats, you are likely overwatering.

Cultivars / Varieties

There are over 500 species of Hoya. Most are vining, making them good candidates for hanging baskets or a trellis. *H. carnosa* is the most readily available vining species and the one I have hanging at the side of a window, vining across to the other side. This plant blooms 2-3 times a year. I also have a “Krimson Princess” hanging on the opposite side of the same window, vining back in the other direction. “Princess” has yet to bloom, even though it is 3 years old!

Hoya (Cont.)

Hindu Rope Plant, “Krinkle Kurl” (*Hoya carnosa* ‘Compacta’) has contorted leaves that fold over, giving them a rope-like appearance. Sweetheart Hoya (*Hoya kerrii*) has heart-shaped leaves and is often available around Valentine’s Day.

Growing a Hoya houseplant can be an exercise in patience. You may forget it’s even supposed to be a vine. One day, though, you’ll look at it and see new leaves or new tendrils shooting out. And then you’ll know that – eventually – you will see that first beautiful blossom. Go ahead, take the Hoya challenge!



Hoya Cutting with New Leaf Growth



Hoya carnosa Cutting



Hoya Vining

All Photos Courtesy of DCMGA Member Karen Gibson

Cited Resources

- Smith, M. L. (n.d.). *Hoyas as houseplants*. <https://extension.psu.edu/hoyas-as-houseplants>
- *Hoya carnosa* (Honey Plant, Porcelainflower, Porcelain Flower, Wax Plant) | North Carolina Extension Gardener Plant Toolbox. (n.d.). <https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/hoya-carnosa/>

Resources

- Reiersen, D. (n.d.). *Help with an indoor hoya plant* – Ask Extension. <https://ask.extension.org/kb/faq.php?id=832720>
- *Hoya* – Gardening Solutions. (n.d.). <https://gardeningolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/plants/houseplants/hoya/>
- *Hoya* (Hoya, Wax Plant, Wax vine) | North Carolina Extension Gardener Plant Toolbox. (n.d.). <https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/hoya/>
- Goodman, N. (2025, February 18). *Indoor Plants – Waxflowers (Hoya)* | Home & Garden Information Center. Home & Garden Information Center. <https://hgic.clemson.edu/factsheet/indoor-plants-waxflowers-hoya/>
- *Wax Plant* – Florida Master Gardener Volunteer Program. (n.d.). <https://gardeningolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/mastergardener/resources/plantid/flowers-and-foliage/wax-plant/>

What to Plant in September

- Time to plant lots of color for fall. Chrysanthemums come in various colors and varieties.
- Plant perennials late in the month after the weather cools.
- Sow poppy seeds for a fall display. Keep moist until seeds germinate.
- Transplant established bulbs. Divide spring blooming plants if they have become crowded.
- Direct sow seeds for cool season vegetables, including broccoli, beets, carrots, cauliflower.
- Plant garlic late this month for a summer harvest.
- Apply preemergence herbicide to lawns to avoid spring weeds

For more monthly tips:

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

SEPTEMBER TURF TIP

TIME TO APPLY PRE-EMERGENT TO YOUR NORTH TEXAS LAWN

MID-SEPTEMBER THROUGH EARLY OCTOBER

THERE'S A SPECIFIC TIME-FRAME TO APPLY



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

STOP THE GROWTH OF COOL WEATHER WEEDS ONCE THE COLD WEATHER USHERS IN WITH RAIN AND A COLD FRONT - IT'S TOO LATE

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



REMEMBER, NOW IS THE TIME

DON'T MISS THIS BRIEF WINDOW FOR TREATMENT



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

WHAT TO APPLY

CORN GLUTEN MEAL, BENEFIN AND OTHER OPTIONS

Corn Gluten Meal can have a success of up to 60% if it does not receive rain for five to seven days after it is applied. Benefin will only be effective if applied in the short time frame from mid-September to October. To read more about the different herbicides and the weeds they affect, visit:

[Preemergence Herbicides for the Home Lawn](#)



CHECK OUT MORE INFORMATION

ANOTHER RESOURCE FROM TEXAS A&M



To learn more about weed identification and treatments, be sure to see Texas A&M AgriLife's Extension's free download:

["A Homeowner's Guide to Herbicide Selection for Warm Season Turf Grasses"](#)

Denton County Master Gardener Association

Questions? Contact our Help Desk

email: master.gardener@dentoncounty.com

PHONE: 940-349-2892



Meet the Communication Team

by Donna Hull

Communication happens naturally in every organization. If you gather a few master gardeners together, I promise that in no time you will be witnessing the very free flow of words and ideas amongst our members! But communications go far beyond talking. There's the printed word, the digital word, pictures and photographs that say a thousand words - and there's always a need to "get the word out" about our educational events. All of this is what we do on the DCMGA Communications Team, aka, "The Comm Team".



Communication Team at VOF

According to the current by-laws, the Director of Communications and the Comm Team are responsible for overseeing the execution of all media publications, marketing of DCMGA public events, website content updates, photograph management, and communication to the membership as necessary. These are not small tasks! The website content has spun off to the Website Management Team, led by Bill Moen and Pam Spooner. Mike James, Lea Watson, and many other members have helped take and collect photos for the past several years.

The remainder of the tasks - publications and marketing - belong to the Comm Team. We've done a little re-organizing this year to share the load and take advantage of some of the talent and skills that are in our association. So come meet the Comm Team!

Director of Communications, Donna Hull

I'm a member of the Class of 2023 and a former science educator. While I have always understood the need for communications, I became acutely aware of how important it is when I was the principal of a private high school that depended on external funding. Branding, mottos, creating and executing communications plans all became part of my job. For DCMGA, I'm the point person. I do my best to know who is doing what and if it's getting done. I work on all aspects of *The Root* and I do whatever is needed - write, edit, make flyers, signs, stickers, you name it. I've learned more in the last six months than I ever imagined I would! But I couldn't do it without the next two members.



Director of Communications
Donna Hull

Meet the Communication Team (Cont.)



Photo Courtesy of DCMGA Member Judy Allen

Assistant Director for Publications
Judy Allen

Assistant Director for Publications, Judy Allen

If anyone knows what the Comm Team does, it's former director Judy Allen, who led the DCMGA Comm Team in 2023 and 2024. Judy is a researcher, writer, and editor for DCMGA and for our monthly e-magazine, *The Root*. She oversees the delivery of our monthly and bimonthly horticultural articles for the *Denton Record-Chronicle*, *The Cross Timbers Gazette*, and *Celebration Senior*. She loves to make signs (remember that!) and she is our special envoy for marketing the Community Strong Farm (led by her husband, Russ Allen).

Assistant Director for Social Media and Marketing, Meaghan Dawson

If you've seen flyers and posts for DCMGA events, you've likely seen Meaghan's work. A true communications person by training and by career, Meaghan has an excellent eye for what works well and what helps DCMGA put its best foot forward. She is - officially as of September 1 - taking the position of Assistant Director for Social Media and Marketing. Meaghan will be receiving the Communications Team Marketing Requests with the Director of Communications for all DCMGA marketing requests. She will assist projects and programs in creating and executing their marketing plan.



Photo Courtesy of DCMGA Member Meaghan Dawson

Assistant Director for Social Media
and Marketing, Meaghan Dawson

The Root Process (Team Root)

The Root has always been a team effort of writers and editors. But until recently, just one person took everyone's articles and turned them into a winning e-magazine. That one person (Karen Gibson for seven years, then Cheryl Huckabee for a short time) edited the articles, found photos, checked resources, put all of the articles into a sometimes 40+ page layout, then created the mailing for our subscribers, the content for the website, and indexed all of the educational, horticultural articles. Whew! To make *The Root* more sustainable going forward, we now have "Team Root" to handle the production process.

Meet the Communication Team (Cont.)

Team Root (Production):

Editors

Judy Allen

Lisa Burt

Patricia Gunnison

Donna Hull

Janice Yoder-Smith

Layout Managers

Tracy Southers-Parker

Nikki Solis

Preparation of Website Content

Donna Hull

Bill Moen

Pam Spooner

Mail Campaign (to subscribers)

Adrienne Barnes

Donna Hull

Indexing

Karen Gibson

The Root Researchers and Writers

We have a small army of researchers and writers at DCMGA – those behind-the-scenes people who like to read, write, and go down research rabbit holes on the internet to find out a few good stories and facts behind our beloved plants. Our thanks to all of you who do this work! Take a look at any issue of *The Root*, and you'll find their names and their passions. If this sounds like you – come join us. We can always, always use more good writers. I do want to give a special shout-out to Barbara Brown, author of *Gardening Grandma* and a true horticultural writer in her own right who has contributed on our behalf for many years.

Canva Team

Recently, DCMGA held its first Canva Training Session. A work in progress, we will be doing more training in the near future! For those who may not know, Canva is graphics design software. Our organization has a free, nonprofit account with limited users. In Canva, members can design programs, presentations, flyers, social media posts, signs, etc. By having our members use a single software platform, we are able to share and keep designs in our organization that can be re-used, modified, or just made available for ideas for years to come. Once trained and on license, a member becomes part of the “Canva Team” and a resource for other members who do not have access.

Meet the Communication Team (Cont.)

Social Media

DCMGA has two Facebook pages – a private member page and a public page. We have an Instagram account for public postings. Any member can post on our private Facebook page, and *thank you* to everyone who does! We also have a group of members who post for us on Nextdoor with the help of Intern Andi Fitzgerald, helping us get the news out to local areas within Denton County.

Join Us!

As you can gather, we are a very busy team. And it takes a team, no doubt about it. A huge thanks to everyone who participates in any way on the DCMGA Communications Team. A note to everyone – in the near future, we will be rolling out a Jotform process for marketing requests – one that will help all of us stay on top of our work and present ourselves in the best light.

Would you like to be a part of the Comm Team?! We meet by Zoom, the 4th Wednesday of every month, 10am. You can find the link on the calendar or in Trish Percy's weekly email, Plan Your Week (thank you, Trish!). Meetings usually last an hour, sometimes a little more. Hope to see you there.

North Texas Gardening

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

[What's Wrong With My Tree? \(Garden Basics\)](#)

[Fall Aster \(Plant Facts\)](#)

[Cole Crops \(Path to the Plate\)](#)

[Weeping Redbud and Smoketree \(Plant of the Month, September 2020\)](#)

[Brassica oleracea 'Romanesco' \(The Root, September 2018\)](#)

Denton County to Host Texas Master Gardener Advanced Training HOME VEGETABLE GARDENING

BY ERIN SMITH

Coming up this November, the Denton County Master Gardener Association (DCMGA) and Erin Smith, Denton County AgriLife Horticulture agent, will be hosting a state-wide advanced training (AT) for Texas Master Gardeners in home vegetable gardening. Registration opens September 11, 2025. Watch the DCMGA website for registration details.

The purpose of Texas Master Gardener Advanced Training is to empower certified Master Gardeners to expand their subject matter knowledge through an in-depth program under the umbrella of horticultural studies. This program allows participants to be trained by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension agents, AgriLife Extension Specialists and previously AT-certified Master Gardeners. Participants will be able to return to their community with educational materials and the knowledge to provide vegetable production focused programs to the public, supporting AgriLife Extension's educational mission.

This program takes considerable coordination and planning by the county hosting the training. The DCMGA AT Vegetable planning committee, led by Ellen Gaunt has secured the 2020 Room on the third floor of the Commissioners Courthouse in Denton as the venue. DCMGA volunteers will be providing support through the AT committee, Herbal Branch, Hospitality and Celebrations teams.

Registration for the AT Home Vegetable Gardening program will open Thursday, September 11th on the DCMGA website. On-line payments will be made via PayPal. The program will begin Thursday, November 6 at 8:00 am and will end mid-day on Saturday, November 8. Participants will be delighted to receive a goodie bag filled with surprise gifts and educational materials to share with their fellow volunteers and the public when they return to their respective counties.

In-person speakers will include - Smith County AgriLife Horticulture agent, Dr. Greg Grant, AgriLife Extension Vegetable Specialist, Dr. Joe Masabni, Texas A&M University Professor and Associate Extension Department Head for plant pathology, Dr. Kevin Ong and DCMGA's very own Lynda Harvey! Topics will include soil preparation, integrated pest management, vegetable crop production, and harvest preservation.



Denton County to host Texas Master Gardener Advanced Training



Invite You To Save The Date For

Advanced Training

HOME VEGETABLE GARDENING

The Extension Master Gardener Advanced Training in Home Vegetable Gardening Course will empower certified Master Gardeners throughout the state with the knowledge and skills required to effectively support and multiply Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service educational efforts in their county.

November 6 - 8, 2025

Denton, Texas

Details To Come

Registration

Opens

September

11th

Breakfast and Lunch Provided

Mocktail Reception

Field Trip to the Largest Community Garden
in the US

For more information contact DCMGA at dcmga.advancedtraining@gmail.com



Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service 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

Denton County AgriLife Presents: 'Greener Horizons' - A Master Class Series

BY ERIN SMITH

DCMGA is excited to announce a new educational activity in Denton County: The Greener Horizons Master Class Series.

Greener Horizons master classes will be in-depth programming, featuring horticulture and environmental education opportunities provided multiple times per year. Join us for the very first seminar on the evening of November 6, 2025 in the Greater Denton Arts Council building at 400 E. Hickory Street in Denton, TX 76201. The program will begin at 5 pm.

This inaugural program will feature two speakers from Texas A&M AgriLife. The first hour will be spent with Dr. Jenna Anding, a Texas A&M Professor and Extension specialist in nutrition. Dr. Anding will present, "Preserving the Harvest, How to preserve your vegetable garden harvest to provide healthy meals". Then at 6:30 pm, Texas A&M AgriLife Smith County Horticulture Agent Dr. Greg Grant will captivate the audience with his two-hour session centered on the value of pocket prairies in an ecosystem. Dr. Grant will highlight our very own Josey Ranch Pocket Prairie located in Carrollton at the Josey Ranch Library off Keller Springs Road.

Registration will be \$20 per person. Seating is limited. Tickets will be available online only, beginning Monday, September 15th.

Registration will be open to Denton County Master Gardeners (DCMGA), the Elm Fork Chapter of Texas Master Naturalists (EFCTMN) and the Native Plant Society of Texas (NPSOT) members by way of an online link for each group. These groups have been invited to host an information table at this event so that members are able to cross connect and learn about the wonderful horticulture and environmental education programs available in our area.

This educational series has been created to provide in-depth education for certified Denton County Master Gardeners to expand their knowledge of horticulture and environmental education topics. Through this program, we will be able to offer continuing education credits in a broad range of topics that are of interest to our volunteer members. At times and depending upon the subject and speaker, this series will be open to other volunteer group members in the area. This opportunity is different from Master Gardener Advanced Training in several ways. It will not be as in-depth as a multi-day presentation and no documented education for the public must follow the training. Instead, participants are asked to "bank" this knowledge so they become more informed volunteers when they provide public education in the future, for example at the Ask A Master Gardener Booth, Help Desk and Speaker's Bureau.

As a bonus, Dr. Grant has graciously agreed to sign any of his books at the end of the evening for the participants. Books will be available by pre-order and can be picked up that evening at the book table. Please, limit book signing to one book per person but feel free to pre-order more than one book as you would like.

Refreshments will be provided.



Denton County AgriLife Presents: 'Greener Horizons' - A Master Class Series (Cont.)

Denton County Master Gardeners Present *Greener Horizons* MASTER CLASS SERIES

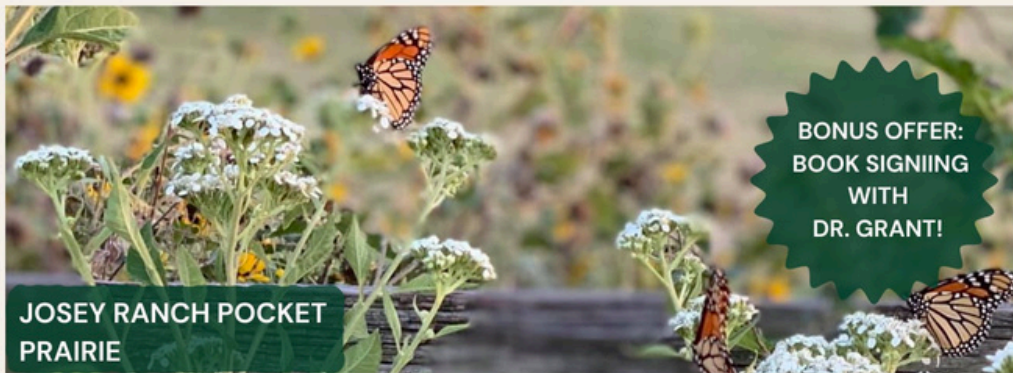
INTRODUCING DCMGA'S ADVANCED SPEAKER SERIES THIS EVENING'S PRESENTATIONS

- **Preserving Your Vegetable Harvest**
with Dr. Jenna Anding from 5:00
- **Pines, Paw Paws & Pocket Prairies**
with Dr. Greg Grant from 6:30

REFRESHMENTS PROVIDED

\$20.00 /PERSON

ADVANCE REGISTRATION REQUIRED / MORE INFO TO FOLLOW



JOSEY RANCH POCKET
PRAIRIE

NOVEMBER 6, 2025

5:00-8:30 PM

DENTON, TEXAS



Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service 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



Cultivating Community: Why Master Gardeners Matter Now More Than Ever

BY KIM WOOTTON

The world has rediscovered the simple joy of gardening. What started during the pandemic as a way to find peaceful, family-friendly hobbies has grown into a powerful movement. From a single potted plant on a patio to a flourishing backyard garden, people are finding solace and satisfaction in connecting with nature. And it's no surprise—science proves that gardening is good for us.

The National Center for Biotechnology Information has documented that gardening offers incredible health benefits. Gardens provide a place to boost mental health, reduce stress, and improve emotional well-being. Regular gardening can even lower your risk of depression, anxiety, obesity, and heart disease, all while increasing your sense of community and quality of life.

This is where the **Denton County Master Gardener Association (DCMGA)** comes in. We believe in the power of plants to change lives, and we're looking for passionate people to join our mission. As a Master Gardener, you'll be trained by leading horticultural experts, gaining the scientific knowledge and hands-on experience needed to truly make a difference. You'll become a trusted resource and horticultural educator, helping others in your community avoid common gardening pitfalls and find success in their own green spaces.

Are you ready to share your passion and inspire a new generation of gardeners? The **DCMGA Class of 2026** is looking for you! This is your chance to use your skills for a greater purpose, connect with like-minded individuals, and help your community thrive. Visit dcmga.com and click on "Become a Master Gardener" to apply. We can't wait to meet you!



Photo Courtesy of DCMGA Member Meaghan Dawson.



Photo Courtesy of DCMGA Member Meaghan Dawson.





DENTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER

2026 Intern Class Recruitment



Join Us To Learn More!

WHAT TO EXPECT:

- Classes will be held weekly on Tuesdays from January 27th - April 28th
- World-class education coupled with hands-on learning
- Over 30 volunteer projects in Denton County to choose from

OCTOBER 8, 2025

General Meeting
10:00am - 12:00pm

OCTOBER 17, 2025

Intern Round-Up
10:00am - 12:00pm

*Scan Here To
Apply* →



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

Applications Open August 30th-October 20th at [DCMGA.com](https://dcmga.com/)

"TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION SERVICE IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER AND PROGRAM PROVIDER."

Gardening Grandma Says...

BY BARBARA BROWN

"Add a bottle tree to your garden to protect your home from bad luck!"

Truth or myth?

I think we can all agree that this is a myth. However, it is a myth with a very long and colorful history. The practice originated in African cultures where bottle trees were believed to attract and capture evil spirits at night. This tradition was brought to the Americas by enslaved Africans in the 1700s. Blue bottles were considered the most effective at warding off bad spirits. Although blue wine bottles may be used, in the past, milk of magnesia bottles were often saved for this purpose.



"Folklore and written sources from as early as 1776 indicate that this centuries-old custom originated in the kingdom of Kongo on the West African coast, where vessels were combined with tree branches. When Africans were brought to the Americas as slaves, some were able to continue this practice, using whatever resources they had available. Variations appeared on islands in the Caribbean. The more familiar bottle trees we recognize today were likely a Creole invention, becoming particularly prominent in the southern United States from eastern Texas to South Carolina, where bottles were often placed on the branches of crape-myrtle trees." ("The American Bottle Tree" Smithsonian Garden Library)

Folks outside of the South may have learned about bottle trees in the 1930s from a popular short story written by Mississippi WPA worker Eudora Welty. Today, displaying a bottle tree can be an example of folk art, a landscape enhancement, or a method of recycling and repurposing glass bottles.

How to make a bottle tree

You have several choices to display your bottle tree. You may choose to use an existing tree or a large shrub. (Historically, crepe myrtles were popular choices.) Clear the branches of leaves and slide on your chosen bottles. Alternatively, select a disease-free dead tree branch. Clean it of any leaves, and remove several branches on the cut end to provide a stable platform for inserting the branch into the ground. Clean the branch and allow it to dry thoroughly. Then use a wood sealant to protect it from insects and water. For a less labor-intensive approach, you can order a bottle tree stand from several online sources.

Gardening Grandma Says...

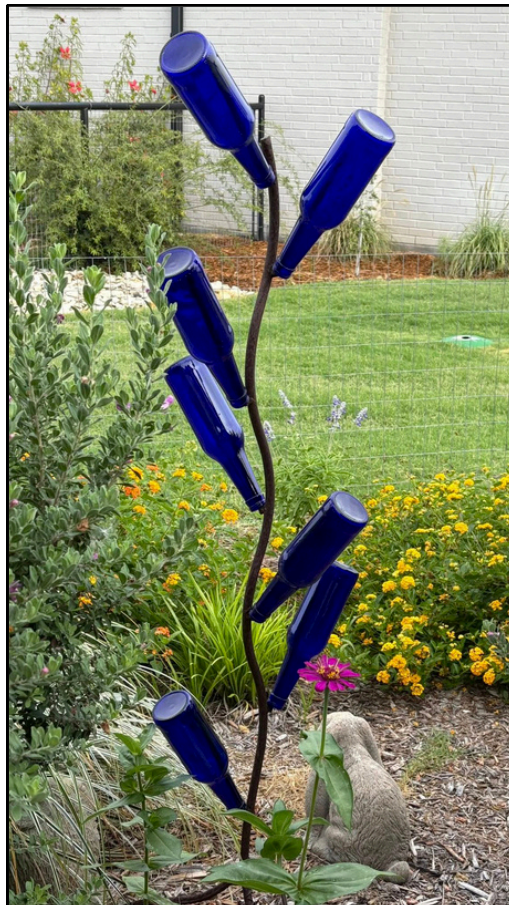
BY BARBARA BROWN

“Add a bottle tree to your garden to protect your home from bad luck!”

Once your stand is ready, select a location to “plant” your bottle tree where it gets some sun. “Preferably locate it where shafts of sunlight strike it through an opening in the canopy so that for a few magical minutes each day the bottle tree glows while the background is subdued in shadow.” (The University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture: “Bottle Tree”). Enjoy!

Sources

- *Tree, bottle.* (n.d.). Tree, Bottle. The University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture. <https://www.uaex.uada.edu/yard-garden/resource-library/plant-week/tree-bottle-1-16-09.aspx>
- *Smithsoniangardens.* (2013, February 28). *The American Bottle Tree.* Smithsonian Gardens. <https://smithsoniangardens.wordpress.com/2013/02/28/the-american-bottle-tree/>
- *Bottle art at UT Gardens Jackson.* (n.d.). <https://taes.tennessee.edu/video/researchWP.asp?t=Bottle%20Art%20at%20UT%20Gardens%20Jackson&v=137>



Blue Bottle Garden art, photo is used with permission of DCMGA Member Barbara Brown

**BY HELP DESK TEAM**

Q: My neighbor told me I should be very careful because the plant I was cutting down and pulling out was poison ivy! WOW! I did not know. What should I do?

A: Sorry! Encountering poison ivy is not unusual when clearing out shady landscape areas. It is the most common toxic plant in our North Texas area. According to journalist Adam Russell at AgriLife, "Poison ivy can survive just about anywhere, but it loves woody areas and can be a real problem along walking trails or even in raised beds in home gardens."

(<https://agrilifetoday.tamu.edu/2020/09/08/how-to-avoid-and-remove-poison-ivy/>)

Direct contact with poison ivy causes an allergic reaction caused by an oily resin called urushiol. This oil is in the leaves, stems, and roots of poison ivy. The body's reaction is usually a red, itchy, rash.

"Poison ivy rash often appears in a straight line because of the way the plant brushes against your skin. But if you develop a rash after touching a piece of clothing or pet fur that has urushiol on it, the rash may be more spread out. You can also transfer the oil to other parts of your body with your fingers.

The reaction usually develops 12 to 48 hours after exposure and lasts two to three weeks." (Mayo Clinic:

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/poison-ivy/symptoms-causes/syc-20376485>).

When clearing an area that is known to have poison ivy or might have poison ivy, wear long-sleeved shirts, pants, closed-toe shoes or boots and use disposable gloves (turn them inside out when removing them). William M. Johnson, Ph.D., AgriLife Extension horticulturist, recommends "Spraying the plant foliage with an herbicide containing glyphosate as the active ingredient, such as Round-Up, or triclopyr, such as Brush-B-Gone, or a combination of dicamba plus 2,4-D, will be effective. Two weeks before or after full bloom, which is typically in late-spring or early summer, is the best time to spray because the plant is absorbing liquid and nutrients to grow. Climbing vines already established in trees can be cut near the ground, he said. The stump should be treated with an herbicide immediately to maximize absorption. Make cuts to the vine horizontally to allow the herbicide to sit and soak."

Place the dead material in a sealable plastic sack and place it in the trash. DO NOT burn it as inhaling the smoke can make you very sick. Do not compost it. "After you remove plants and debris, spread four to six inches of clean wood chip mulch over the site to prevent possible exposures to urushiol that may remain on or in the soil."

(<https://extension.umd.edu/resource/poison-ivy/>).

Immediately clean any tools used with alcohol. After any exposure to poison ivy, thoroughly wash all exposed skin preferably within 10 minutes, “Soap can work, but it can also work against you by spreading the irritating oil,” he said. “So, I recommend starting with rubbing alcohol as a solvent and following with cool running water because hot water will open your pores. Don’t scrub because that can spread it, just let the water run over it, lots of water, until it’s gone.”

(<https://agrilifetoday.tamu.edu/2020/09/08/how-to-avoid-and-remove-poison-ivy/>).

Launder your work clothes separately from the rest of your laundry.

I hate to tell you this, but two other potential culprits that look similar to poison ivy and may be in your landscape. They are poison oak and poison sumac. See attached picture to compare leaves. These potential problem plants may be treated in the same way as poison ivy.

Sources and Resources:

Russell, A. (n.d.). How to avoid and remove poison ivy. AgriLife Today.

<https://agrilifetoday.tamu.edu/2020/09/08/how-to-avoid-and-remove-poison-ivy/>

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service — Galveston County Office, & Johnson, W. (2018b). Poison Ivy: Leaves of Three, Let it Be. In Galveston Daily News.

<https://galveston.agrilife.org/files/2018/05/5-16-18-Poison-Ivy-Leaves-of-Three-Let-It-Be-by-Dr.-William-M.-Johnson.pdf>

Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, (n.d.-b). Recognizing poison ivy, oak and sumac.

<https://www.chop.edu/news/health-tip/recognizing-poison-ivy-oak-and-sumac>

Poison Ivy. (n.d.-b). University of Maryland Extension.

<https://extension.umd.edu/resource/poison-ivy/>





Denton County Master Gardener Association

Upcoming Events

Page 1

Community Strong Farm Work Days

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 have a short education on the tasks of the day. Meet Monday mornings in September 9AM-11AM 1350 Milam Road E., Sanger

LLELA Nature Preserve Workday

Lake Lewisville Environmental Learning Area
201 E Jones St. Lewisville, TX 75057, Meet Wednesdays 9AM-12PM

Flower Mound First Baptist Community Garden

Learn and grow veggies to help the community. Wear comfortable shoes, hat, and sunscreen. Bring water. Meet Thursdays in September 8:30AM-10:30AM
1901 Timber Creek, Flower Mound

Creating a Monarch Habitat

SEP
3

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
North Branch Library, 3020 N Locust Street, Denton 6:30-7:30PM

SEP

8

Veggies in the Fall Y'all

Join us for a fun and informative presentation on fall planting for cool-season crops —perfect for anyone wanting to grow a thriving veggie garden in North Texas! Master Gardener Brenda Smith will cover everything from the benefits of fall gardening in our unique Texas climate to planning your garden, choosing the best crops, planting tips, pest control, harvesting, and more. Whether you're a seasoned gardener or just getting started, you'll leave with practical advice. Hosted by the Prosper Community Library
250 W First Street Prosper 6:30-7:30 PM

SEP

10

Monthly Meeting and Program -SWAt

Science With Attitude (SWAt) is rolling in with our EnviroScape model, ready to wow the grownups the same way we do kids - Adults love cool science demos too! We'll share the story of SWAt, drop some amazing science facts, explain how we put the "attitude" in science, and highlight the incredible network of contacts we've cultivated across the county. The program begins at 10:00 and is followed by the general business meeting at 11 a.m. The public is welcome.
Solomon's Porch, Global Spheres Center 7801 S. Int. 35 Corinth 10AM-12PM

Please check the dcmga calendar for updates



Denton County Master Gardener Association

Upcoming Events

Page 2

SEP 10 **Webinar: Cool Gardens in the Hot Texas Sun - Shade Loving Native Plants**
Join us for a webinar with Liz Moyer, Denton County Master Gardener and Native Plant Society of Texas educator, as she shares tips on creating beautiful shade-loving landscapes in the sunny state of Texas. Discover how to build a cool, inviting habitat for wildlife using native plants that thrive in the shade—sponsored by the Upper Trinity Regional Water District. **Sept. 10, 2025 at 12:00 pm.** Register here to attend or go to dcmga.com, navigate to the calendar, and find the event on September 10th.

SEP 12 **Compost Soil and Mulch**
Gardening in our area is tough, in part because most of our wonderful topsoil has been lost. In order to be successful, we have to repair the damage and build a good foundation for our plants to grow. Good soil makes all the difference! Denton County Master Gardener Lee Ann Yates will walk you through the steps to building better soil.
Denton Senior Center 509 Bell Avenue. Denton, 9AM-11AM

SEP 20 **Ask a Master Gardener Booth**
Saddle up and head on over to the Fall Frolic at Coppell Nature Park, hosted by the Biodiversity Education Center! Denton County Ask a Master Gardener booth will be there to answer all your gardening questions and share the scoop on native prairie plants and sustainable landscaping tips. The SWAT (Science With Attitude) team will be wrangling up some hands-on fun just for the kids. Great family event!
Coppell Nature Park 367 Freeport Parkway Coppell 10AM-12PM

SEP 27 **Ask a Master Gardener Booth**
Visit the Ask a Master Gardener Booth during the KFMB Fall Eco Action Day at Flower Mound High School. Members of the Denton County Master Gardener Association will be available to answer your gardening questions and help your garden thrive. The event also includes recycling drop off and environmental fair hosted by Keep Flower Mound Beautiful.
Flower Mound High School 3411 Peters Colony Rd Flower Mound 10AM-12PM

SEP 30 **Succulent Team & Herbal Branch-Aloe**
Short Succulent meeting followed by a presentation on Aloe, how to harvest and things you can make with your harvest. Bring a friend, open to the public.
Doubletree Ranch Park 310 Highland Village Rd
Highland Village, 10AM-12PM

Please check the [dcmga](http://dcmga.com) calendar for updates

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.

You're Invited

September 2025, Monthly General Meeting &
Program featuring SWAt & the EnviroScape Model



Science With Attitude (SWAt) is rolling in with their EnviroScape model, ready to wow the association the same way we do kids - no juice boxes required - because let's be honest, adults love cool science demos too! We'll share the story of SWAt, drop some amazing science facts, explain how we put the "attitude" in science, and highlight the incredible network of contacts we've cultivated across the county.

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





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 EEO Statement

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2025 Board of Directors

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Vice-President	Jeff Hardgrave
Secretary	Lori Barr
Treasurer	Dale Powell
Communications	Donna Hull
Education	Ellen Gauntt
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Member-at-Large	Brenda Martin
CEA-Horticulture	Erin Smith

Social Media

Facebook:

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

Instagram:

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

X (formerly Twitter):

<https://twitter.com/DentonCountyMGA>

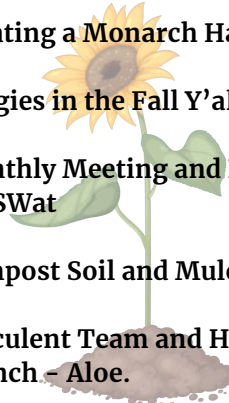
Pinterest:

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

YouTube:

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

Save the Date

- 
- Sept. 3 Creating a Monarch Habitat
 - Sept. 8 Veggies in the Fall Y'all
 - Sept. 10 Monthly Meeting and Program for SWat
 - Sept. 12 Compost Soil and Mulch
 - Sept. 30 Succulent Team and Herbal Branch - Aloe.

Contact Information

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Communications:

dcmga.communications@gmail.com

Website:

<https://dcmga.com>

Content

The Submission deadline for the October edition of *The Root* is September 5. Submissions may be revised at the discretion of the editor.

Ideas, photos, and articles are welcome and may be submitted to Communications Director Donna Hull at doctorhulld@gmail.com.

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