

Denton County Master
Gardener Association

THE ROOT

Grow
With
Us



Vibrant butterfly on Zinnia in West Iowa Garden, Nadirsyah Nadirsyah, Pixels, courtesy of Canva.com



STILL GROWING



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Buds From The Board

BY TREVA MCFADDEN, DIRECTOR OF OUTREACH

Spring is in full bloom! It is the season of possibilities, and I am driven in life by possibilities. The outcome is sometimes not what I anticipated, but the lesson is always a benefit.

My name is Treva McFadden, Director of Outreach, and I have the pleasure of writing to you this month in DCMGA's "Buds from the Board." Having grown up in Kansas and later settled in Texas after a brief layover in Oregon, I appreciate diversity in landscapes and thriving native ecosystems. Kansas taught me the love of native chaos. Every year, our backyard erupted in purple coneflower, black-eyed Susans, the epic sunflower, cardinal flower, and milkweed. My favorite spot in our yard was the giant sycamore tree I'd climb and hide out in to get away from chores.

During my brief time in Oregon, I learned about sustainability and microclimates. My love of trees blossomed, and I discovered the beauty of foliage and foraging. It taught me that we are stewards of our surroundings and must work to protect them. There's just no place like walking through an ancient forest, listening to it talk.

After landing in Texas and becoming a Master Gardener in 2017, I decided to garden with the possibility of what could be. No set design, just filling the space with plants, herbs, and the vegetables that I love, while observing what thrives and provides the most for my family and the wildlife that calls my property home.

Do you have a dream of possibility in your garden or landscape? Maybe a childhood favorite flower or a favorite vegetable? I encourage you to seek opportunities and possibilities in your garden today. Perhaps you'll find some inspiration in our Garden Tour and Education Fair on May 9th. I am certain a moment of possibility can be had at this great event. Seeing how others fill their landscapes will spark ideas for your own garden. Mark your calendar and grab your tickets today. Experience the excitement and learn from what could have been or can still be. Nature lives to impress us, and here in Texas, we often put it to the test.

Happy May!



Join Us for the 2026 Garden Tour & Education Fair

Three Home Gardens and Two Public Gardens

May 9, 2026

Our 2026 Garden Tour features herbs, raised-bed vegetable gardening, succulents, EarthKind® gardening, Texas Superstar® plants, and more. Public gardens will have information on grapes, fruit & nut trees, water conservation, and growing native plants. See ticket information on Page 8.

Join us for a great day of gardening!

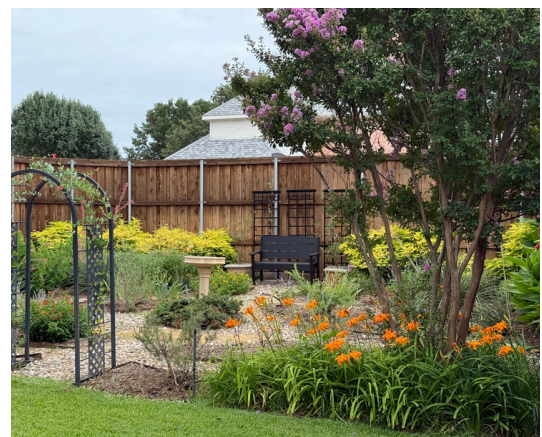
Sage and Serenity

Sage and Serenity is an English-style garden filled with native and adapted plants that thrive in the challenging growing conditions of North Texas. This beautiful backyard is a focal point for the property and is a true labor of love for the homeowner and Master Gardener. Mexican Bush Sage, Gulf Penstemon, Cedar Sage, and Lantana thrive in all-day, full sun in this Texas backyard.

Serenity and Sage is also home to several Shantung maples, whose size is perfectly suited to smaller yards. The design of this garden follows Earth Kind® landscape design principles for water conservation and “right plant, right place”. The selection of plants provides soft landings for pollinators and native wildlife, particularly native bees, butterflies, and other beneficial insects. The owner is also able to grow some vegetables and herbs using “Square Foot Gardening” techniques.

Digging Deeper Education & Activities

- Docent talks on “soft landings” for pollinators, Shantung maples, native and adapted plants for pollinators, square foot gardening, and hardscape selection
- Developing a drainage design
- The DCMGA Earth Kind® Team will be available throughout the day to provide information and advice on implementing EarthKind® principles in your own landscape.



Photos: Lea Sage Watson, CCBY-NC-SA 4.0, Denton County MGA

The 2026 Garden Tour Preview (cont.)

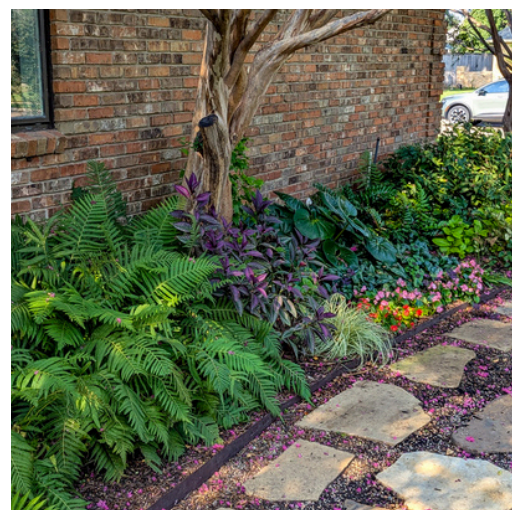
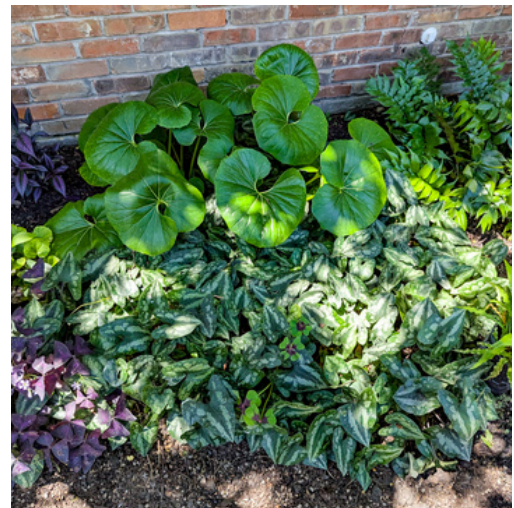
Rooted Together

Rooted Together is a lovely, nostalgic garden. Plants are cherished for their value to pollinators. Plants like Blue Mist Flower, with their lacy foliage, are favorites of butterflies. White Veined Dwarf Dutchman's Pipe is host to pipevine swallowtails and flourishes in this landscape. Plants that provide a sensory experience with fragrance, touch, and taste are part of this garden. Windchimes and a fountain provide the sounds of nature while lamb's ear and herbs provide touch and taste to the experience.

This garden is home to plants with a past. There are cuttings from friends and family, as well as a Southern Wood Fern brought from a childhood home. These special plants help provide a feeling of stability and peacefulness. Found and reused objects are woven into the backyard with vintage patio furniture, pots, rocks, and décor, all layered with memories and personal history.

Digging Deeper Education & Activities

- Docent talks on trees, plant choices, Texas Superstar® plants, and raised beds
- DCMGA's Herbal Branch members will be on-site all day, providing herb demonstrations
- The Native Plant Society of Texas will be present to answer questions and provide advice on planting and growing Texas natives.



Photos: Lea Sage Watson, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0, Denton County MGA

2026 Garden Tour Preview (cont.)

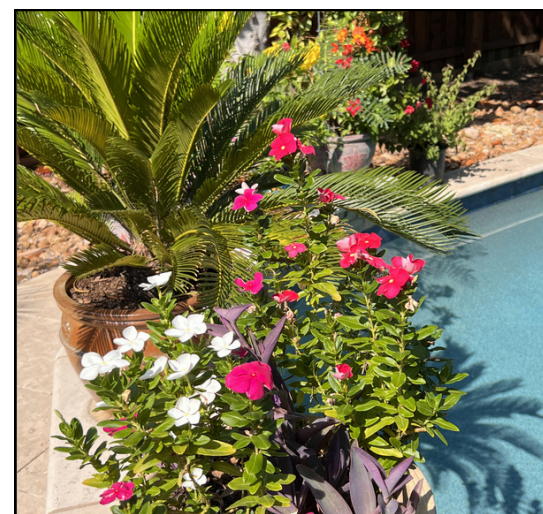
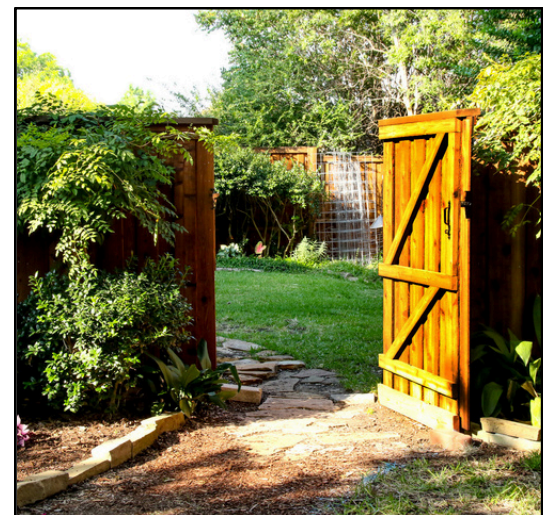
Rhapsody in Green

A visit to “Rhapsody in Green” will take you to a place of both beauty and learning, nestled up against a wooded area of Indian Creek in Carrollton, Texas. A musician by training, the homeowner has brought harmony to his own landscape with the help of EarthKind® techniques, waterwise irrigation, composting, and Integrated Pest Management. You will see native plants thriving in both sun and shade, as well as a beautiful selection of succulents, including a “Crown of Thorns” (*Euphorbia milii*). Roses, trumpet vines, towering live oak trees, and even a small “Fairy Garden” fill the landscape.

Our irrigation specialist will be here to discuss irrigation techniques, and for those who are interested in water capture, come see how this homeowner (with permission!) captures water from his neighbor’s downspout to fill his own water barrels. Composting will be another educational topic offered at this site, where the homeowner has developed a composting plan with 100-gallon grow bags.

Digging Deeper Education & Activities

- Docent talks on composting, garden tool types and care, landscaping with the Earth Kind® Rule of Thirds, garden art, and neighborly “downspout-sharing.”
- Shade Gardening
- Growing Roses
- The DCMGA Succulent Team booth will be available to answer questions and provide information.
- The DCMGA Plant Propagation team will be providing propagation demonstrations throughout the day.



Photos: Lea Sage Watson, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0, Denton County MGA

2026 Garden Tour Preview (cont.)

Josey Ranch Pocket Prairie

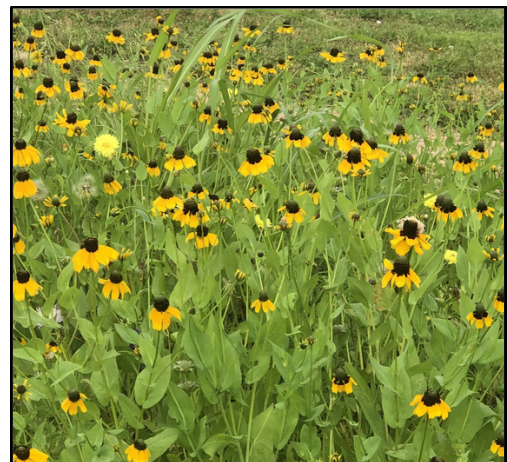
Adjacent to the Josey Ranch Lake Library is a 1-acre stretch of Blackland Prairie that is being actively restored to its native habitat. This is the Josey Ranch Pocket Prairie. In the words of the master gardeners restoring this property:

“We believe nature knows best. Native plants and animals evolve together, forming resilient ecosystems that support pollinators, birds, mammals, and more. By planting native species and restoring habitat, we’re helping to reverse the alarming disappearance of wildlife and reconnect our community with nature.”

The Jose Ranch Pocket Prairie is a collaborative effort of the Denton County Master Gardener Association, North Texas Master Naturalists, and community volunteers. The pollinator gardens include Rock Roses, Turk’s Cap, Frogfruit, Mexican Hats, Evening Primroses, Black-Eyed Susans, and many other native plants. It is host to native Texas grasses and two Monarch Waystations, which serve to educate and inspire visitors to the pocket prairie.

Digging Deeper Education & Activities

- Native Plant Society of Texas booth
- Texas Master Naturalists – coloring book activity
- Texas Master Naturalists booth
- Bees and Bee-Keeping Demonstrations
- Docent- led tour of the Josey Ranch cistern and water conservation efforts
- Scavenger Hunt led by the City of Carrollton
- Seed Library information and resource lists are available



Photos: Lea Sage Watson, CCBY-NC-SA 4.0, Denton County MGA

2026 Garden Tour Preview (cont.)

The Denton County Grove

In 2015, then Commissioner of Precinct 2, The Honorable Ron Marchant, requested that the Denton County Master Gardener Association find ways to increase the appeal of the grounds of the Denton County Government Center in Carrollton. In the years that followed, pathways, fruit and nut orchards, a gazebo, and a small vineyard were developed on the property with the help of DCMGA.



Photo Courtesy of Denton County MGA

Today, “The Grove”, as it is best known, is home to numerous varieties of peach, pear, plum, persimmon, jujube, and pomegranate fruit trees, as well as pecan trees, blackberry vines, and grapevines. Produce harvested at The Grove is donated to local non-profit food banks for distribution.

In June 2024, the Denton County Master Gardeners added an Earth Kind® garden on the property. Today, there are nearly 30 native plant species in this garden, including Four-Nerve Daisy, Purple Skullcap, and Shrubby Boneset. Adaptive plants include Jerusalem Sage and the Kaleidoscope Abelia. There are also Texas Superstar® plants, including Mystic Spires Blue Salvia and Red Yucca.

Digging Deeper Education & Activities

- Blue Bird Boxes demonstration
- DCMGA Ask-A-Master-Gardener booth (soil sampling bags available)
- Science With Attitude (SWAt) demonstrations for children
- Fruit tree docents will field questions regarding growing and caring for fruit trees in North Texas, and what varieties succeed.
- Texas A&M Viticulturalist Michael Cook will be on site to answer questions regarding how and what grapevines to grow in our area.



Photo Courtesy of Denton County MGA

2026



TEXAS
MASTER GARDENER
TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION
Denton County

GARDEN TOUR & EDUCATION FAIR

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



SCAN ME!



OR GO TO WWW.DCMGA.COM FOR TICKETS!



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

ADVANCED
PRICE:

\$20

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

RAIN OR SHINE

MEET OUR GARDENS!
ACROSS CARROLLTON





SAGE AND SERENITY
Right Plant, Right Place

This calm, English-inspired retreat teaches how [Earth-Kind® Principles](#) guide design choices, [Drainage](#) and [Soft Landings](#) support pollinators, and how [Square-Foot Gardening](#) makes the most of small raised beds.







**JOSEY RANCH
POCKET PRAIRIE**
Small Prairie, Big Impact

A compact ecosystem where [Native Plants](#) restore habitat, [Pollinators](#) find refuge, and [Beekeeping](#) showcases the buzz of urban conservation.







ROOTED TOGETHER
Where Memories Take Root

A nostalgic, neighborly space where [Texas Superstars](#) take center stage, [Sensory Gardening](#) invites hands-on connection, and thoughtful [Tree Care](#) shows how to grow without topping or over-pruning.







RHAPSODY IN GREEN
Nature's Living Symphony

A lush, shaded landscape where [Composting](#) turns waste into renewal, [Shade Gardening](#) thrives beneath mature maples and oaks, and smart [Irrigation](#) keeps every layer of this living garden in harmony.







THE GROVE
Grow Smart, Garden Together

Explore [Fruit Tree Selection and Care](#), talk with experts at the [Ask a Master Gardener Booth](#), learn about [Viticulture](#), and see hands-on demonstrations in action.



Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service is an equal opportunity employer and program provider.



2026 DCMGA Plant Sale - Another Sale "In the Books"



THANK YOU, Denton County Plant Lovers!

We couldn't do this without you. We thank you for shopping, for your smiles, and for loving plants as much as we do! See you NEXT YEAR!!

And Thank You to the RECORD number of DCMGA volunteers who worked tirelessly (okay, we got tired!) to make this happen. You are simply the best.

TOP GARDENING TIPS

May

Finish planting warm season herbs & vegetables.
Continue planting warm season annuals & perennials.
Prune spring-blooming shrubs & vines after flowering.
Prune climbing roses to remove dead or weak canes.
Prune erratic growth on evergreen shrubs.

#DCMGA #GROWWITHUS

DENTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION

Photos courtesy of Kathryn Weiss



A Fungus Among Us!

BY LIZ CHANEY
DENTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER

Introduction

Gardeners dedicate countless hours planning, composting, preparing beds, selecting seeds, and hoping the weather cooperates. They also spend time in plant nurseries and garden centers contemplating the correct ratio of nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium (NPK) in fertilizers for their trees, vegetables, flowers, and grasses. Many think of soil pH, trace minerals, and various soil amendments, but the presence of carbohydrates from plant roots feeds mycorrhizae (“fungus-root) fungi, supporting symbiotic relationships between fungi and plant roots. The carbon-to-nitrogen ratio in the soil affects this relationship directly, and that is why organic matter, containing carbon, is important in the soil.

The Kingdom Fungi

Most of us are familiar with fungi in our lawns, particularly mushrooms, after a rainstorm. There are somewhere between 3 and 13 million species of fungi in every possible environment of our planet. In soil and in decaying material, fungi form extensive root-like networks called “mycelium,” which appear as long, white, fuzzy threads. These networks can extend for miles as the fungal branches interconnect with each other and plant root systems. The most common visible evidence of this relationship can be found on the floor of well-established forests, referred to as the “wood wide web”, where mushrooms, the surface reproduction structure of the mycelium network, are commonly found at the base of pine, oak, or birch trees. Additional evidence might be seen with the appearance of a “fairy ring” of mushrooms on residential lawns. Around ninety



Mushrooms are beneficial fungi in our yards.



Mushrooms on a tree



Beneficial Fungi (cont.)

percent of plants on Earth participate in this fungal relationship. A short list of those plants that participate in the mycorrhizae relationship can be found in a list provided by the Oklahoma State University Extension (see Resources below).

Mycorrhizal Fungi

Mycorrhizae are fungi that have entered a symbiotic relationship with plants. In this case, the relationship is “mutual” – both the fungi and the plant benefit from the association. Mycorrhizae are broken down into two categories: (1) endomycorrhizae, and (2) ectomycorrhizae. The difference between these two types is how the fungi interact with the plant root systems. Endomycorrhizae, the most common type, break through the cell walls of the roots, creating a direct link between the fungi and the plants. In contrast, ectomycorrhizae fungi wrap around the root system and do not physically breach the cell wall. Usually associated with trees, ectomycorrhizae are well-adapted for nutrient uptake.



Underground mycorrhizal fungal networks



Fairy ring mushrooms grow in a circular pattern in grassy areas.

Why is this relationship important to your garden? Garden plants need nutrients such as nitrogen, phosphate, potassium, and trace minerals, as well as water, to survive. If the root system cannot access sufficient nutrients or water, the plant will suffer and may ultimately die. Mycorrhizal fungi allow the plant root system to be incorporated into the mycelium network, extending the plant's range to acquire nutrients and water. In exchange for access to nutrients and water, the plant sends carbohydrates (sugars) and lipids (fats) to the fungi. But not only do these plants exchange nutrients: these fungal networks also allow for the exchange of hormonal, chemical, and electrical signals between plants, alerting them to pests and other plant needs.



Beneficial Fungi (cont.)

Mycorrhizae and the Carbon Cycle

Carbon sequestration, or the capture and transfer of carbon from the atmosphere into plants and soil, is enhanced by the presence of mycorrhizal fungi. Up to 30% of the carbon captured during photosynthesis is transferred to these fungi, which store large amounts of this carbon in the biomass of their mycelium network. This organic matter can improve soil structure, water retention, and fertility, as well as support other micro-organisms. Their presence provides a good reason to adopt non-till and non-fallow farming practices. Tilling releases carbon locked in the soil into the atmosphere. Fallow practices prevent carbon from being replenished into the soil. Longer range practices to increase carbon would include the use of cover crops as well as composting. Some carbon-rich cover crops include cereal rye, which also breaks up clay soil, oats, or forage sorghum, to name a few. Composting leaves, chipped wood, shredded cardboard or newspaper, livestock manure, wood ash, or eggshells creates a carbon-rich environment.

Conclusion

Gardening in North Texas is challenging. The weather can be unpredictable, soil requires amending, water can be scarce, and pollinators can be in short supply. Therefore, practices that can minimize instability or loss are often sought after. You can almost hear the plants say, “We need mycorrhizal fungi among us!” So, let the fungi roots do the work while you enjoy the fruits of their labor.



Composting increases carbon sequestration in the soil

Composting for Rural Landowners CC BY-NC 4.0



Beneficial Fungi (cont.)

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Fungi are our friends in the garden!

Errata: In last month's feature article on Rose Diseases in DFW, the photo labeled Black Spot was in fact a photo of Cercospora Leaf Spot, a different fungal disease. For a true photo of black spot, see the publication, [Black Spot of Roses](#) by AgriLife Learning. Our apologies for the error.



Plant of the Month Zinnias for Summer-long Color

BY JUDY ALLEN



Colorful zinnias, Truecreatives, Courtesy of Canva.com

Introduction

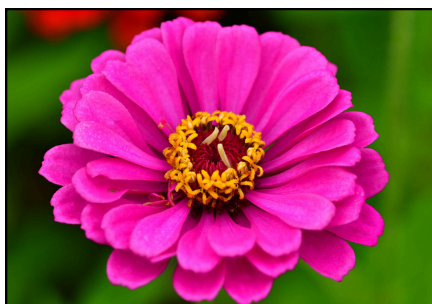
Zinnias (*Zinnia elegans*) are a garden's blooming workhorse. This beautiful annual will continue to bloom from spring through fall, especially when continuously sowing seeds every two to three weeks. Butterflies, including Monarchs, will flock to your garden. What colors do you like? Your choices are nearly endless when it comes to zinnias. Planting the right varieties for North Texas will ensure your success without a lot of attention.

Description and Varieties

There are many zinnia varieties, so knowing whether you will be using your flowers as a cutting garden or simply to line a path is important. Taller varieties like Benary's Giant, Cactus types, and the Oklahoma series are the best for cutting. These varieties are heat-tolerant, disease-resistant, and thrive in our Texas climate. Some lower-growing varieties like Zahara and Profusion grow to about 12-16 inches, making them perfect to line a pathway or border. Thumbelina is one of the smallest varieties, topping out at just 6-8 inches. Most of the shorter varieties are also good candidates for show-stopping containers.

How To Grow Zinnias

Zinnias are ideally planted from seeds. Sow directly into the garden once soil temperatures reach 65 degrees or more. Make sure your planting area receives at least 4-6 hours of sun. Heavy clay soil is not the best for growing zinnias. Ideally, soil should be amended with some compost for nutrients and some expanded shale to help with drainage. Zinnias aren't too particular about soil types, but good drainage is a must. The seed packs have valuable planting information such as planting depth and spacing, so be sure to follow directions. Keep soil moist but not soggy until seeds germinate. Thereafter, an inch or two of water per week should be adequate. During the hottest days of summer, you may need a little more.



Zinnia, magidline02, Getty Images, Courtesy of Canva.com

A beautiful pink zinnia



Zinnia, Chatterbox16, Getty Images, Courtesy of Canva.com

Zinnias come in a wide variety of colors.



Plant of the Month: Zinnias (cont.)

Your Tips for Summer Maintenance

Pinching zinnias promotes bushier plants and more flowers. It's not necessary, but the plants will thank you for it by presenting you with a strong plant and many stems to cut. Just snip off the growing tips as your plants reach around 12 inches tall. The same can be said for deadheading. Cutting back old, faded blooms will enhance the growth of newer flowers. Some of the lighter varieties look faded much earlier than the brighter flowers. The process is similar to pinching, but you will reach deep into the plant and snip off the old bloom just above a node. New flowers will sprout from there.

Harvesting

Now that you have an abundance of colorful flowers, it's time to harvest. Remember, the more you cut, the more they will bloom. Try to harvest regularly for a continuous bloom cycle. Nothing is more satisfying than strolling through your garden and cutting flowers for a lovely bouquet. Be sure to change water frequently in the vase, as zinnias can quickly turn vase water into a murky mess. Adding a floral preservative as well can prolong the life of your flowers. Master Gardeners do not promote individual companies, but there are many excellent sources for zinnia seeds. Have fun growing zinnias!

Resources

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An array of colorful zinnias



In The Veggie Patch

Growing Cucumbers for Summer Salads and Pickles

BY DONNA HULL

Introduction: Origin & Benefits

The scientific name for a cucumber is *Cucumis sativus*. It is a member of the Family Cucurbitaceae, which also includes melons, pumpkins, and squash. Cucumbers are indigenous to South Central Asia. They are low in calories, have a high water content, and contain soluble fiber. In addition to antioxidants, cucumber nutrients include potassium, magnesium, and vitamins K and C. A mainstay of salad recipes, cucumbers are also the most common vegetable used in pickling.

Plant Requirements

Soil: Cucumbers do well in a wide variety of soils, but prefer sandy loam and good drainage. Heavier clay soils will need to be amended with organic matter.

Light: Full sun (at least 6-8 hours).

Temperature: Cucumbers are a warm-weather crop. They grow best with daytime temperatures of 80-90°F and warm nights (65-70°F).

Planting: Seeds can be sown directly into the soil when the soil has warmed (late March through April for summer harvest; late August-September for fall). Prepare soil by working in organic matter to a depth of 8 to 12 in and create low mounds or ridges 4-6 in high. Plant 3-4 seeds every 12-14 in. Cover seeds with $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$ in of soil. Thin to one plant after the seedlings have germinated. If planting in rows, allow for 3 ft between rows. If planting transplants, plant when the soil is warm, 12-14" apart in rows 3 ft apart.

Maintenance & Care

Water: Cucumbers require evenly moist soil. In the absence of rain, water deeply at least once a week. Mulching around the base of plants helps retain moisture.

Fertilization: Spread 1 cup of balanced fertilizer per 10 ft of row and work into the upper few inches of soil (approximately 2 Tbsp per plant). Apply an additional $\frac{1}{2}$ cup per row when vines are approximately 1' long.



Fresh Cucumber Growing in Green Garden Foliage

Pexels, Free Stock Photo



Cucumber (cont.)

Maintenance & Care (cont.)

Pests/diseases: Common pests include cucumber beetles, aphids, cutworms, leafminers, whiteflies, and mites. Diseases are primarily fungal and include powdery mildew, downy mildew, and anthracnose. Root nematodes may also be an issue.

Special care: Cucumbers are vining plants that grow 6–8 ft long and do best if grown with support. A standard trellis or livestock panel will work well. There are newer “bush” varieties that can be grown in containers.

Varieties for North Texas

Slicing cucumbers: Straight 8, Market More, Salad Bush, Burpless, Slice Master

Pickling cucumbers: Carolina, Calypso, Fancypak, Multipik, National Pickling; note that these varieties are often just labeled “pickling” cucumbers – they are small fruit with bumpy skins.

Other Varieties: Lemon, Armenian, Mexican Sour Gherkins, Japanese, Persian

Harvesting & Storage

Cucumbers should be picked from the vine when they are green and at the desired size. Do not allow them to become overripe, as evidenced by yellowing and softening. Overripe cucumbers are pithy and bitter and should not be eaten. Cucumbers are best stored in the refrigerator and used within one week of harvest. Do not freeze cucumbers, as they will lose their texture when thawed. Cucumbers are at their best when used fresh in salads and dips (e.g., tzatziki), pickled, or combined with mint and water for a refreshing drink!



photo courtesy DCMGA member Donna Hull

Gherkin cucumber



photo courtesy DCMGA member Donna Hull

Pickling cucumbers on the vine



Cucumbers (cont.)

Photo courtesy DCMGA member Donna Hulp



Harvest your fresh, crispy cucumbers, then pull out your favorite pickling recipe - and enjoy a little summer for months to come!

Resources

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Creature Corner: Astonishing Aphids

BY JANICE YODER SMITH

Teardrop-shaped, soft-bodied aphids thrive in high humidity and mild temperatures that arrive in April, May, September, and October. Female aphids inhabit gardens year-round. Aphid eggs and adults can survive most winters in North Central Texas.

Some aphids protect their bodies with waxy coatings, giving them a fuzzy appearance. They use their specialized mouth parts to extract plant phloem and the molecules it contains. The process leaves plants with damaged fruit, leaves, and malnourished roots. These tiny true bugs excrete excess sugars that they don't need from their bodies using the cornicles extending from their rear ends. The resulting sticky honeydew makes surfaces sticky and attracts ants. Some ant species farm aphids, moving them to new sites on plants. Harvested honeydew feeds the other ants in their nests. Honeydew attracts airborne viruses, fungi, and bacteria. Some of those microbes will infect aphids and be transmitted to plants.

Some gardeners feel anathema toward aphids yet find them intriguing. Aphids use parthenogenesis to reproduce asexually and give birth to up to 12 offspring five times a day for most of the year. Offspring are exact replicas of their mothers and already contain copies of themselves when born. Aphids' telescoping reproduction, which can complete a generation in 7-10 days, allows their populations to increase exponentially. When the weather cools in the fall, some females will develop wings, while some of the developing aphids will become males. Aphid females flying to mate with males lay eggs carrying gene variants that diversify their gene pool, thereby influencing the survival of both aphids and plants.



Oleander aphid

Esmeralda alspuro, cc-by-nc 4.0 300.jpg



Creature Corner: Aphids (cont.)

Around 250 of the 5,000 known aphid species feed on plants. Monophagous aphids feed on one specific plant species; heterophagous aphids feed on multiple species. Aphid common names often indicate their preferred host plants. Crape Myrtle aphids (*Tinocallis kahawaluokalani*) feed only on crape myrtles. However, Oleander aphids (*Aphis nerii*) target oleanders and *Asclepius* spp. target Milkweeds. Green Peach aphids (*Myzus persicae*) may be called spinach or tobacco aphids since they attack those plants, too.



Dark-legged euphorbia aphid

Controlling aphid populations requires frequent plant inspections. Strong sprays from a hose can dislodge aphids from plants. Insecticidal soap mixtures in a bottle can be sprayed onto aphids to damage their soft bodies and kill them. Aphids can be removed from plants by gently wiping them off leaves and stems. Removing an entire leaf, stem, or plant can limit the aphid spread to other plants.

Including plants that support lady beetles, parasitoid wasps, and lacewings limits aphid populations. Purchasing those insects might help for a few hours, but they will quickly fly away if there is insufficient habitat or remaining food. Planting milkweed may spare oleanders from significant damage. In that use, milkweed becomes a trap plant. They survive aphid damage while distracting them from the oleanders.



Aphids on a milkweed plant

Pesky aphids annoy gardeners, but they serve as food for other creatures. Wise gardeners understand that annihilating all aphids would be unwise. Supporting nature's cycles allows gardeners to create beautiful, productive gardens.



Creature Corner: Aphids (cont.)

Resources

Aphids on Ornamentals. (n.d.). extension.okstate.edu. Retrieved March 8, 2026, from <https://extension.okstate.edu/programs/digital-diagnostics/insects-and-arthropods/aphids-on-ornamentals/>

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Jeffers, A. (2026, February 9). *Integrated Pest Management (I.P.M.) for Aphids | Home & Garden Information Center*. Home & Garden Information Center. <https://hgic.clemson.edu/factsheet/integrated-pest-management-i-p-m-for-aphids/>

Texas Master Gardeners. (n.d.). *Aphids in Texas*. txmg.org. Retrieved March 6, 2026, from Aphids in Texas Identification Life Cycle Damage to Plants Monitoring Population Levels, <https://txmg.org/orange/files/2019/09/Aphids.pdf>

Winski, P., & Khan, R. (2023, April). *Grower Fact Sheet: Aphid Management Guide*. [Extensionentomology.tamu.edu](https://extensionentomology.tamu.edu). Retrieved March 8, 2026, from Grower Fact Sheet: Aphid Management Guide.



Denton County Master Gardener YouTube Channel

Click on "Videos" and check out our new presentations!

And don't forget to subscribe to @DentonCountyGardenerAsso

<https://www.youtube.com/@DentonCountyMasterGardenerAsso>





QUESTION: My yard is being invaded by vines – everywhere! What can I do to control them and keep them from coming back?

QUESTION: HELP! We have these green vines climbing our fence and covering some shrubs! I have pulled and cut them, but they come right back. I did NOT plant them. My husband and I just removed them again. This time we burned the cuttings. What are these vines, and how can we prevent them from coming back?

ANSWER: Many Texans echo your frustration! The two most likely candidates are greenbrier (*Smilax* spp.), also sometimes called catbrier and sawbrier, or Carolina snailseed (*Cocculus carolinus*). Both grow exuberantly in North Texas. Both vines have similar-looking heart-shaped, ovate, or triangular leaves that do not change color in the fall. Carolina snailseed leaves are hairy underneath, whereas greenbrier leaves are generally smooth. Carolina snailseed produces (poisonous) red berries, while greenbrier briers are waxy, dark blue to black.



Saw Greenbrier

A less likely candidate is Virginia creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*). The leaves of Virginia creeper have five ovate-to-elliptic leaflets, which turn bright red in the fall. Virginia creeper berries are dark blue to black and poisonous to humans.

How to control: While cutting and burning the vines may provide a sense of satisfaction, it will not kill the plant, which has deep, widespread tubers or root systems. Control requires a multi-year strategy utilizing mechanical removal and targeted herbicide application to manage deep-rooted, waxy foliage. The University of Georgia College of Agricultural & Environmental Sciences recommends the following alternate strategies:

1. If you can separate vines, “Lay the vine on some bare ground or on a piece of plastic. Spray or sponge-apply a 10% solution of glyphosate (approximately 12 ounces of glyphosate per gallon of water, using a product containing at least 41% active glyphosate).”



Vine control (cont.)

Allow the herbicide to stay on the plant for 48 hours and then cut stem back to ground level. If the greenbrier attempts to regrow, spray or wipe a 10% solution of glyphosate on the sprouts when they are 6 to 8 inches high."



Carolina Snailseed



Virginia Creeper

2. Or, if separation is not possible, "cut the vine as close to the ground as possible. Immediately paint concentrated glyphosate on the cut stem. Make sure that the concentrated glyphosate is at least 41% or greater active ingredient glyphosate. If the plant re-sprouts, sponge on or spray a 10% solution of glyphosate when the sprouts are 6 to 8 inches high."

These plants are resilient perennials with significant root reserves, so "one-and-done" methods are rarely successful (University of North Carolina Extension). Unfortunately, even successfully killing your existing plants will not protect your shrubs, trees, and landscape forever, as birds often consume the berries and then distribute them in their feces everywhere they go. Good luck!

Resources

Castelli, T. (2025, June 11). Greenbrier: Texas-Tough Vines with a Purpose. Native Plant Society of Texas. <https://www.npsot.org/posts/greenbrier-texas-tough-vines-with-a-purpose/>

Czarnota, M. (2025, December 23). Controlling Greenbrier. CAES Field Report. <https://fieldreport.caes.uga.edu/publications/C867-2/controlling-greenbrier/>

Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center - the University of Texas at Austin. (n.d.). https://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id_plant=coca



Denton County Master Gardener Association and Master Naturalists Recognized by the Denton County Commissioner's Court

On April 20, our Denton County Horticulture Agent, Erin Smith, appeared before the Denton County Commissioners' Court to present to the commissioners an accounting of the volunteer work accomplished by both Denton County Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists over the past year. The commissioners acknowledged these achievements in a Court Proclamation "Recognizing AgriLife Horticultural Program Volunteers in Denton County" (see the full proclamation on the next page). Thank you, Erin, for lifting up the work we do in Denton County, and THANK YOU to all of the DCMGA volunteers who made the proclamation possible. Let's keep on growing!!

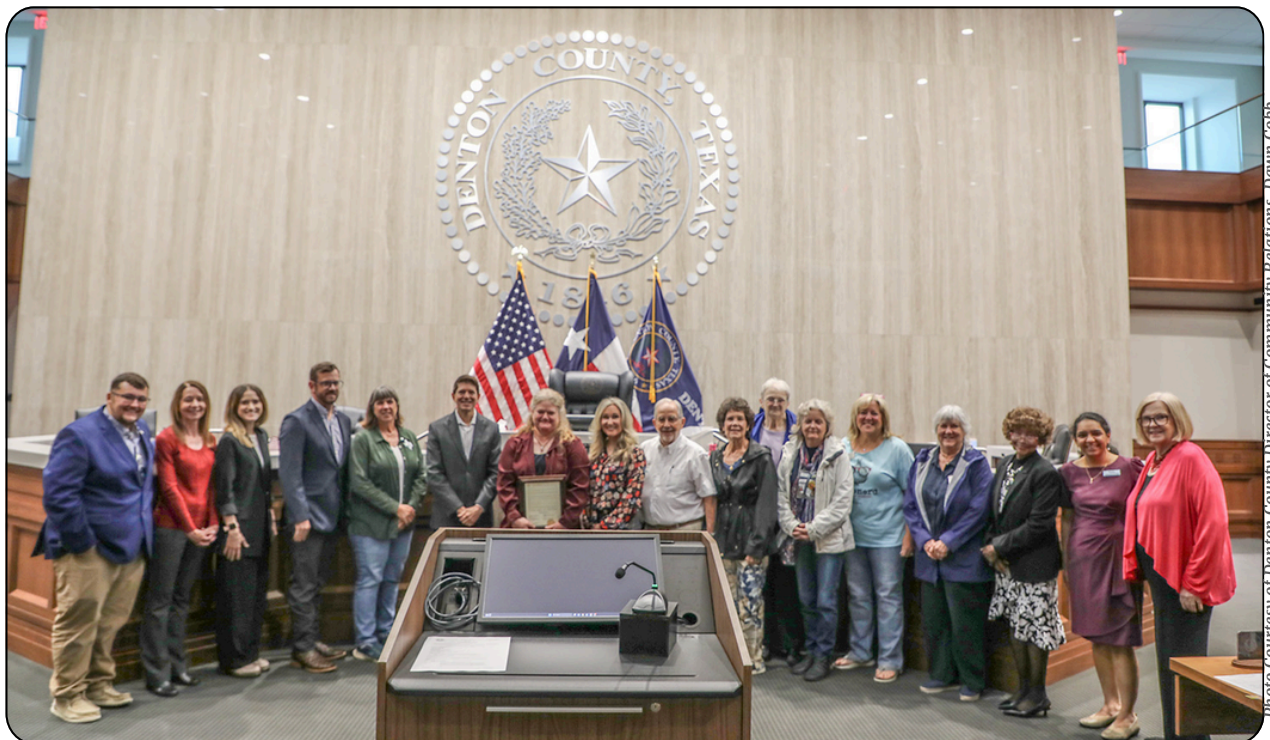


Photo Courtesy of Denton County Director of Community Relations, Dawn Cobb.

Volunteerism Celebrated at the Denton County Commissioner's Court





COURT PROCLAMATION

Recognizing AgriLife Horticulture Program Volunteers in Denton County

WHEREAS, volunteerism stands as a pillar of strength in the foundation of a compassionate community, promoting goodwill, cooperation, and selflessness; and

WHEREAS, the Denton County Horticulture Agent provides leadership to more than six hundred Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists, whose nonprofit efforts play a vital role in enhancing the quality and accessibility of horticultural and environmental education for the residents of Denton County; and

WHEREAS, these dedicated volunteers contributed nearly eighty thousand hours of service in 2025, reaching citizens through educational programs, public outreach, and community engagement across ninety-five projects throughout Denton County – extending their impact into the fabric of our communities and fostering environmental stewardship among individuals, youth, and families; and

WHEREAS, through the youth program, Science with Attitude (SWAT), volunteers educated over eight thousand youth and adults during one thousand and fifty-seven educational sessions, contributing four thousand nine hundred and seventy-seven volunteer hours to inspire the next generation of environmental stewards and lifelong learners; and

WHEREAS, their efforts support five community gardens that collectively produced more than fifty-five thousand pounds of fresh produce and forty-nine hundred dozen eggs in 2025, directly benefiting county residents and reinforcing food sustainability initiatives; and

WHEREAS, it is essential to recognize and honor the selfless contributions of these volunteers, nurturing a culture of gratitude, appreciation, and continued community engagement; and

WHEREAS, *National Volunteer Week*, observed April 19 to April 25, 2026, provides an opportunity to express our sincere appreciation for those who generously give their time, talents, and passion to enrich the lives of Denton County residents through gardening, conservation, and outdoor education.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Commissioners Court of Denton County, does hereby proclaim the week of April 19 to April 25, 2026, as *NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK* in Denton County, and be it further resolved, that we call upon all residents, businesses, and community organizations to join us in recognizing and celebrating the extraordinary contributions of horticulture and environmental volunteers, and to be inspired by their example of service for the betterment of our community.

DONE IN OPEN COURT, this 21st day of April 2026, upon a motion made by Commissioner Edmondson and seconded by Commissioner Mitchell and 3 members of the court being present and voting "aye."

Andy Eads
ANDY EADS, COUNTY JUDGE

Commissioner Williams (a)
RYAN WILLIAMS, COMMISSIONER
PRECINCT 1

Kevin W. Falconer
KEVIN W. FALCONER, COMMISSIONER
PRECINCT 2

Bobbie J. Mitchell
BOBBIE J. MITCHELL, COMMISSIONER
PRECINCT 3

Dianne Edmondson
DIANNE EDMONDSON, COMMISSIONER
PRECINCT 4

ATTEST:
JULI LUKE, County Clerk and Ex-Officio
Clerk of the Commissioners Court of Denton County

BY: Juli Luke



Junior Master Gardener Program Graduates Six New Horticultural Students

BY NANCY DIMARCO



photo courtesy DCMGA member Nancy DiMarco

On Tuesday, April 7, six young gardeners graduated from the International Junior Master Gardener Program and became Certified Junior Master Gardeners. To earn this achievement, these dedicated young men and women completed 44 weeks of lessons in the following areas:

- Plant Growth and Development
- Soils and Water
- Ecology and Environmental Horticulture
- Insects and Diseases
- Landscape Horticulture
- Fruits and Nuts
- Vegetables and Herbs
- Life Skills and Career Exploration

The JMG students also had to complete 44 lessons and eight service-learning projects:

- Collected canned foods for Denton Community Food Center
- Visited the Denton Recycling Plant
- Made a wildflower meadow at Shiloh
- Planted vines for the new arbor at Shiloh, as part of the butterfly garden
- Collected fruit and nuts and delivered to Our Daily Bread
- Made bird feeders with pinecones
- Learned about drip irrigation through a visit with licensed irrigation specialist Jeff Hardgrave
- Collected recipes for a forthcoming JMG Cookbook!

DCMGA member Nancy DiMarco leads the program. Other Master Gardener leaders include Leah Robinson, Pam Peterson, Kathy Dieringer, and Ann Marie O'Lone. Sprouts provided the funding through grants, and Shiloh Field Community Garden provided classroom and garden spaces for the students. This chapter of JMG continues to meet through the end of May. A new JMG class, Level 1, will begin in September. If you know anyone who would like to be involved, please email Nancy DiMarco at firecracker04.50@yahoo.com.



You're Invited

May 2026, Monthly General Meeting & Program

"Historic Uses of North Texas Plants"



Presented by
Carol Clark,
Master
Naturalist,
NPSOT member,
Conservation
Specialist with
Monarch Watch

Discover the interesting and sometimes surprising uses of our native plants over the years - from prehistoric times to modern day. Beyond the obvious uses of food, clothing, and shelter, native plants have been used as dyes, medicines, industrial materials, toys, for rituals, and theatre effects, pollution detectors, and more.

**May 13, 2026, 9:30 am General Meeting
10:30 am Presentation
Greater Denton Arts Council
400 E. Hickory Street, Denton, TX**



Denton County Master Gardener Association

Upcoming Events

Community Strong Farm Work Days

Growing Vegetables for local 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.

1350 Milam Road E., Sanger Meet Mondays 9AM-11AM

LLELA Nature Preserve Workday

Lake Lewisville Environmental Learning Area

201 E Jones St. Lewisville Meet Wednesdays 9AM-12PM

The Grove and Gazebo Work Days

The Grove at Sandy Jacobs Government Center

1029 W. Rosemeade Pkwy. Carrollton Meet every 2nd and 4th Friday 9AM-11:30AM

Gardening for Wildlife

May 2 - 10:30-11:30am [Click for more info](#)

Garden Tour & Education Fair

May 9 - 9am-4pm [Click For More Info](#)

Monthly General Meeting: Historical Uses of N. Texas Plants

May 13 - 9:30am-11:30am. [Click for More Info](#)

Native Plants for North Texas

May 16 - 10am-3:00pm. [Click For More Info](#)

Edible Gardening-Summer Vegetables

May 19 - 6pm-7pm. [Click For More Info](#)

Turf Lawn Alternatives-The Rule of Thirds

May 19 - 6:00pm-7:00pm. [Click For More Info](#)

Creating a Backyard Prairie

May 21 - 6pm-7pm. [Click For More Info](#)

Gardening Techniques-Seeds the Smart Start

May 23 - 8am-5pm. [Click Form More Info](#)



DCMGA MEMBER NEWS

Denton County Master Gardener 2025 Volunteer & Cumulative Hours Awards

Our April General Meeting is the month that we recognize all of our amazing DCMGA volunteers for the many, many hours of service that they do for Denton County and its citizens. Congratulations to everyone, including our newest Emerita Member, Ann Hillman.

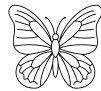


photo courtesy DCMGA member Jaci Williamson

DCMGA's newest Emerita member, Ann Hillman

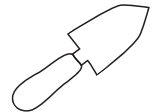
100 Hours VS Interns (Butterfly)

Susan Abler - 121
 Adrienne Barnes - 144
 Candice Bly - 105
 LeeAnn Burke - 535
 Denise Catalano - 222
 Eloise Clayton - 275
 Andrea DeSimone - 102
 Kathy Dieringer - 209
 Andi Fitzgerald - 122
 Laura Franklin - 101
 Maria Gilbert - 137
 Rena Goodwin - 109
 Susan Heintzman - 149
 Amy Isaacs - 116
 Julie Kasner - 120
 Donna Kellogg - 164
 Delia Kleehammer - 143
 Melanie Kuyoth - 106
 Faye Lipham - 119
 Angie Moran - 105
 Pam Peterson - 307
 Debbie Pitcher - 113
 Cheryl Poland - 137
 Leah Robinson - 258
 Susan Davis Smith - 114
 Nancy Wilkerson - 108
 Kristina Wilson - 122



Over 500 Hours of Service (Trowel)

Susie Barber
 Linda Barker
 Cathy Berg
 Nancy Blakney
 LeeAnne Burk
 Lisa Burt
 Margaret Calabrese
 Susan Cox
 Meaghan Dawson
 Nancy DiMarco
 Harry Gornick
 Donna Hull
 Karen Jamieson
 Allison Lohse
 Lisa Marlow
 Treva McFadden
 Anne McMahon
 Ruvan Nanayakkara
 Molly Stingley
 Ivy Summerfield
 Carly Zambielli Flaherty



DCMGA MEMBER NEWS

Denton County Master Gardener 2025 Volunteer & Cumulative Hours Awards

Over 1000 Hours (Shovel)

Carol Arment
Patti Barry
Becky Cameron
Mario Casanova
Becky Collins
Kathy Efflandt
Ellen Gauntt
Monique Goodhart
Mary Harned
Donna Hull
Brenda Martin
Melissa Migis
Ricky Wilkins



Over 1500 Hours (Bouquet)

Russ Allen
Carol Brantley
Becky Cameron
Becky Collins
Linda D'Amanda
Jeff Hardgrave
Linda Hay
David Huffman
Brenda Martin
Chryl Prestemon
Carolyn Stoy
Melissa Weaver



Over 2000 Hours (Watering Can)

Judy Allen
Gay Campbell
Sheila Daniel
Jeff Hardgrave
Kathy Rainey
Chryl Prestemon



Over 2500 Hours (Cactus)

Marion Arndt
Pat Edwards
Jeff Hardgrave
Steve Spurgin
Lee Ann Yates



Over 3000 Hours (Daisy)

Beverly Duncan
Lela Khan
Pam Spooner
Katherine Woodward



Over 3500 Hours (Sunflower)

Beverly Duncan
Lynda Harvey



Over 4000 Hours (Ladybug)

Kim Wootton



Over 4500 Hours (Bee)

Dale Powell



Over 6000 Hours (Hummingbird)

Sue Hudiburgh



Over 6500 Hours (Dragonfly)

Janet Gershenfeld
Pat Moyer



DCMGA MEMBER NEWS

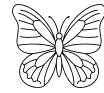


photo courtesy DCMGA member Donna Hull



Congratulations to these amazing Class of 2026 interns who all earned more than 100 hours of volunteer service in their intern year, earning the "Butterfly" pin.



HOW TO CHANGE OR DELETE AN EXISTING VMS HOURS ENTRY

1. Sign in to **VMS**.
2. Click on **YOUR INFORMATION**.
3. Click on **VIEW YOUR HOURS** in the dropdown list. The **REPORT OF MG HOURS** list is shown.
4. Find the entry that you want to change or delete in the list, then Click the **blue button** in the **HID** column on the left for that entry. You'll see the **UPDATE MG HOURS** screen for that entry.
 - a. **To delete the entry**, Click the red **Delete** button at the top. Click **OK** when asked "Do you really want to delete the record?". Then Click **Back** to return to the **REPORT OF MG HOURS** list.
 - b. **To change the entry**, edit the **Project**, **Date**, **VOL or CE hours**, **Miles** or **Description**. Click the **Save** button at the top. Then Click **Back** to return to the **REPORT OF MG HOURS** list.
5. Your changes will be shown in the **REPORT OF MG HOURS** list.



DCMGA MEMBER NEWS



DO YOU LOVE GROWING VEGETABLES???

THEN LET'S GET TOGETHER!

Save the Date for the *FIRST OFFICIAL Meeting*
of the VEGGIE SQUAD

When: Monday, June 8
1:00 pm - 2:00 pm

**Where: Global Spheres,
Solomon's Porch**

ALL Members
& Interns
Welcome!!!!




Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service is an equal opportunity employer and program provider.

NO MORE PLANT SALE, GARDEN TOUR?? Wondering what to do next?!!

Never Fear, Village Fest Will Soon Be HERE!



Village Fest planning
meetings will resume

Thursday, May 21, 1-3 pm

Location: the Barn at
Doubletree Ranch

- Meetings will be held on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month
- June Meetings (June 4 and 18) will be at Global Spheres
- We would love for anyone who wants to sign up for a team lead position or for a committee member position to register via our [sign up genius](#). There are three tabs on the SUG, one for team volunteers, one for hospitality, and one for setup day.





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

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.

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

YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/@DentonCountyMasterGardenerAsso>

Save the Date

May 9	2026 Garden Tour 9 am - 4 pm Carrollton
Oct. 3	2026 Village Fest An Education & Garden Expo Highland Village, TX

Contact Information

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Content

The submission deadline for the June edition of The Root is May 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 communications@dcmgga.com

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

