

Denton County Master Gardener Association



THE ROOT

Grow With Us



Buds From The Board

BY PAT MOYER, PRESIDENT

Greetings to all you great DCMGA interns and veterans.

Well, here it is, the inaugural edition of *The Root*. Some of you may be wondering how we got to this point. Some of you may remember that, at one time, we had another newsletter, *The Roto-Teller*, that was last published in 2011. A lot of us, myself included, believed that *Plan Your Week* was the online replacement for *The Roto-Teller* and, to a great extent, it was. However, there was something missing. We didn't have the personal, informative, fun articles that *The Roto-Teller* provided.

During our retreat last year, I started hearing the murmurings of quite a few members, particularly the interns at that time, who felt that we should address that void. I'll admit that, at that time, I was a skeptic. I felt that *Plan Your Week* was doing everything we needed and the coordination effort and time needed

WHAT'S GROWING ON

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<https://dcmga.com>

Buds from the Board – Cont.

to produce a quality newsletter was more than we could comfortably handle.

Then Kathryn Wells started her persuasion campaign. Between Kathryn and Gay Campbell, with assists from Kim Joos and others, I started to see the light. Informally surveying members, I found that the level of interest was impressive. And, also important to me, there was a high level of commitment from the Board of Directors.

The result was that the DCMGA Board decided to support the creation of a new newsletter under the administrative control of the Communications Director. That set Kathryn in motion. She formed a team and found an equally enthusiastic volunteer, Karen Gibson, to serve as the editor.

So here we are. Starting a new program as another tool to promote our DCMGA mission of educating and engaging the community.

The newsletter, although primarily oriented toward DCMGA members and interns, is also designed to let the general public in on what's happening in the horticultural world of North Texas as well as insight into DCMGA programs and members. So share it with your friends, and thank Kathryn, Karen, and the newsletter working group for their efforts.



Photo courtesy of Ana Hunt
Hidden Paradise

is one of this year's five featured gardens.

TOP GARDENING TIPS

April

Plant warm season herbs & vegetables.
Plant warm season flowering annuals & perennials.
Prune spring-blooming shrubs & vines after flowering.
Prune shade trees as needed, except Live or Red Oaks.
Allow spring bulb foliage to die & dry before removal.

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DENTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION

The background of the gardening tips section features close-up images of purple flowers (likely chives) on the left and green foliage on the right, framing the central text area.

Lewisville Lake Environmental Learning Area (LLELA) Project

BY KATHY RAINY

The Lewisville Lake Environmental Learning Area project offers DCMGA members and Denton County residents education about native plants and prairie conservation. Volunteers learn plant identification and cultivation of prairie grasses, seed wildflowers, and wetland plants, as well as how to process seeds in preparation for planting. Controlling invasive exotic plant species is also on the agenda, as well as caring for native plants in the LLELA nursery and participating in the rescue of endangered indigenous plant species by maintaining beds of rescued plants.

LLELA volunteers find a sense of fulfillment as they help to restore the original landscape and reestablish threatened plant species by propagating them in the nursery and transplanting them to the reclaimed prairies. In the past year, DCMGA members, under the leadership of Kim Wootton and Melinda Woolley, worked to establish a relationship with LLELA by providing gardening experience in the nursery and greenhouse. The project has already been instrumental in helping to transplant native grasses and establish healthy beds of rare plants, which, when mature, will begin their lives on the prairie. Plans are underway to prepare the Pocket Pollinator Garden for spring and to begin training volunteers to lead the public on wildflower walks.

LLELA appreciates all volunteers, and anyone can contribute. There are always Master Gardeners or Master Naturalists on hand to help guide and assist those from the community who come out to lend a hand. Those who serve learn



Photo courtesy of Kim Wootton

LLELA Volunteers

helping on National Planting Day with Keep Lewisville Beautiful included Mary Lehrer, Carl Patrick, Susan Myers, and Kim Wootton.

the value of native plants as the foundation of our ecosystem and appreciate the wildlife that depends on these plants. Each volunteer helps LLELA save an endangered ecoregion, one that has been so damaged by human progress that it now can't survive without human assistance. Everyone who serves at LLELA is doing valuable work to help save Texas prairies from extinction.

Volunteer hours are Wednesdays, 8:30 a.m. to 12 noon, with monthly Saturday opportunities. Whether you attend regularly or only once in a while, you will find the work at LLELA rewarding. Contact Kim Wootton at kimtreks9@gmail.com for more information.

Meet Tammie Gurley

DCMGA Immediate Past President

BY GAY CAMPBELL

Q: You're a former math teacher. How did you become interested in gardening?

A: I have always loved gardening. Even as a kid growing up in Ohio, we had a big garden. One year we had a beautiful cabbage, which was ready to harvest. One of our horses jumped the electric fence and took a bite right out of the middle of it! I was devastated. One of my struggles as a left-brained math teacher is learning that all gardens don't have to be symmetrical; they don't have to match on both sides. Allowing my right brain to take over sometimes is difficult for me!

Q: What is your favorite thing in your garden?

A: One of my favorites is to establish garden rooms, which allows me to try all sorts of plants that might not naturally grow together in my landscape. I may not have hedges, fences, vines, or shrubs that separate the areas, but I do have some wide-open spaces. I try to unify parts of the overall garden using yard art, but my garden has both left-brained and right-brained landscapes.

Q: Your home was featured on last year's annual DCMGA Garden Tour. What did you learn or enjoy from that experience?

A: We have some incredible members of our organization, who are willing to volunteer their time to benefit our association's big fundraiser. The great ideas that so many shared and implemented made me smile; my garden has never looked so beautiful! I was very lucky to work with all the wonderful folks who spent hours of their precious time to help prepare my garden for the tour.



Q: You've been an incredible DCMGA President. How do you plan to spend your free time?

A: Working on the board has really been so much fun. I have learned so much about our organization and our members. I am looking so forward to spending lots of time out in the yard and remembering what to do out there!

Q: What three things are most important to you?

1. Family and friends.
2. Holding the bar high for myself.
3. Getting up early, starting the day with a smile, and sharing that feeling with others.

Plant of the Month - Luffa

BY SONJIA BRADSHAW

If you love zucchini and yellow squash but hate battling squash bugs, vine boring beetles, and powdery mildew, then let me introduce you to the disease-resistant and pest-free alternative – luffa (*Luffa aegyptiaca*). Easy to grow and a tasty zucchini substitute in the kitchen, luffa loves the heat and sun of North Texas. This climber thrives in full sun with a fence or trellis for support. A vigorous annual, it can easily cover a fence or climb a fifteen-foot structure in a single season. With large green leaves and delightful yellow flowers that track the sun throughout the day, this vine is pretty as well as productive.

Be patient. Luffa is a bit slow to take off, but once the full heat hits, the vine really thrives. This plant only requires additional water when getting established and can go long, hot stretches without rain.

Harvest young luffa (about 1.5" diameter) for use in the kitchen; otherwise, allow the fruit to dry on the vine and harvest around first frost in October. Any fruit that is mature but not fully dry can remain on the vine & continue drying for harvest during the winter. With a little processing, dried luffa can be used as a sponge for scouring kitchens or for personal hygiene.

I've grown luffa many seasons now and I have never found it to be invasive. I harvest the seeds and grow again each year from my own seed stash.

So, this spring, when you think about the return of the squash bugs, vine boring beetles, and mildew, maybe you'll want to give luffa a home in your garden.

Baked Garden Vegetable Melee

Ingredients:

2 red bell peppers, sliced
2 green bell peppers, sliced
1 medium red onion, diced
1 young luffa, sliced
2 Tbsp rosemary, fresh & chopped
1 Tbsp thyme, fresh & chopped
1 Tbsp olive oil

Directions:

Toss vegetables with olive oil. Place in a greased baking dish. Sprinkle with fresh herbs. Bake at 350 degrees until vegetables are tender. Serve with rice for a delightful side dish.



Photo courtesy of Sonja Bradshaw

If you decide to add this gem to your garden, you can begin seeds (presoak them for quicker germination) indoors about six weeks before your last frost date. Transplant outdoors (or direct sow seeds) at the same time you would peppers and tomatoes.

Plant Sales – Why You Should Visit

BY BARBARA BROWN

Spring is an exciting time for gardeners. After the brown, sad look of our landscapes during the winter, green is coming up everywhere as perennial plants begin their growing season. Big box stores and nursery shelves are filled with plants to entice shoppers. But wait. There is another option for finding landscape plants—spring plant sales held by local gardening associations.

When you visit these plant sales, you will see hard-to-find plants, native plants and often seedlings started by association members from their own gardens. Most organization or association plant sales also have knowledgeable volunteers to answer questions on planting and care of your purchases.

Benefits of choosing native plants for your landscape

The U.S. Department of Agriculture defines a native plant as “a plant that lives or grows naturally in a particular region without direct or indirect human intervention.” Some authorities define native as a plant that has existed in an area for hundreds of years, while others extend the required time frame to thousands of years to allow for co-evolution of the plant with indigenous insects, birds and other flora.

Native and well-adapted plants are drought tolerant, heat tolerant and usually require little supplemental water once established. Native plants have successfully adjusted to the growing conditions of our area including soil, droughts, floods, excessive heat and the occasional ice and snow event. Because native plants evolved in North Texas, they are more resistant to common pests and diseases. Note: Texas has many growing regions, so be aware that not all plants native to the State of Texas are native to North Texas.

Recommended native plants for North Texas

Here are three resources that provide lists of North Texas native plants divided into categories including trees, shrubs, perennials, grasses and ground covers:

Texas A&M AgriLife Water University's Top 100 Native and Adapted Plants for North Texas
<http://agrilifeextension.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/top-100-plants-for-north-texas.pdf>



Photo courtesy of Barbara Brown

Salvia greggii

is a small perennial shrub. The native variety has red flowers, and there are many cultivars with white, pink, or lavender flowers. A commonly found named variety of *Salvia greggii* is Autumn sage. The leaves are small and slight aromatic. Pruning in summer will encourage fall blooms. Dead branches should be removed in late winter.

Plant Sales – Why You Should Visit (Cont.)

Trinity Forks Native Plant Society (Denton) “List of Native Plants”

<https://npsot.org/TrinityForks/TrinityForksWeb/plants.html>

Earth-Kind Plant Selector

<http://ekps.tamu.edu>

Advice when attending plant sales

- Bring a cart. This makes it much easier to move plants through the rows of for-sale items, to the checkout and to your vehicle.
- Have a checkbook or cash available for your purchases. Although many non-profit organizations' plant sales accept credit cards, not all of them do.
- Check the plant tag or ask a volunteer about a plant's sun requirements, eventual size, and any cautions about the plant and its growing habits as some natives can be a bit invasive.
- Check out the association's website for more information about its plant sale. Many sites will list the types of plants available, time of the event, and provide a map to the location.
- Go early. Local plant sales are popular and some of the most desirable plants sell out quickly.



Photo courtesy of Kathryn Wells

Conoclinium greggi

is a native perennial, commonly known as Gregg's Mistflower, which blooms from March through November. A pollinator-friendly member of the aster family, it's especially attractive to butterflies.

Upcoming North Texas plant sales

April 6–8, Dallas

Texas Discovery Gardens

<https://txdg.org/plant-sale>

April 7, Flower Mound

Native Plant Society, Trinity Forks Chapter

<https://npsot.org/TrinityForks>

April 13–15, McKinney

Heard Museum Native Plant Society

<http://heardmuseum.org/plantsale>

April 21, McKinney

Collin County Master Gardener Association

<http://ccmgatx.org>

April 28, Denton

Denton County Master Gardener Association

<https://dcmga.com>

DCMGA —HELP DESK—

Question of the Month



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

BY JANIE FARLER

Q. One of my old trees has ice damage from this past winter. Can it be saved?

A. People have emotional attachments to their trees, and of course you want to save it. However, there is no simple answer. First, it could be dangerous. If there are power lines down, or major branches hanging overhead, stay away. Also, if climbing or extensive chain saw work is involved, leave it to the professionals.

If the tree was generally healthy and thriving before the storm, it may recover, depending on the extent of damage. It will depend on how much of the crown (foliage and branches) is intact, how big the wounds are, how much bark is damaged, and how much you want to save it.

For minor damage, prune the compromised limb(s) and wait to see if the tree recovers. For major damage, contact a certified arborist to assess your tree. A list of certified arborists in your area is available online at www.isa-arbor.com.

Texas A&M Forest Service provides extensive information about environmental damage after a storm. Visit them online at <http://texasforestservice.tamu.edu/canmytreebesaved/>.

DENTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL PLANT SALE

April 28, 2018

**9:00 A.M. - 2:00 P.M. or Until sellout!!
Trinity United Methodist Church
633 Hobson Lane, Denton**

- Look for our Texas Superstars 
- Texas native plants, tough-as-nails perennials and no-fuss roses
- Hard-to-find ground covers, bedding plants and herbs
- Special container plants
- Pass-along plants from Master Gardeners' own gardens
- Master Gardeners available to help you make your selections and answer your gardening questions

We're also pleased to welcome back Stan Poole, who builds and sells Adirondack furniture, chairs, gliders, swings and potting tables.

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

For more information, visit our website at dcmga.com, like us on FACEBOOK or call (940)349-2883



Photo courtesy of Sarah Hendel

DCMGA veterans and interns

gathered recently for a potting party to prepare member pass-along plants for the upcoming community plant sale.



DENTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION

Congratulations!

TOM HARPOOL SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Danielle Price
\$1000
Food & Nutritional Science
Major
Oklahoma State University

Jonathan Martin
\$500
Agriculture Business Major
Texas Tech University

BY JERRY ALEXANDER

Congratulations to Taylor Danielle Price and Jonathan Morgan, the most recent recipients of Denton County Master Gardener Association's Tom Harpool Scholarship.

Miss Price, an Oklahoma State University sophomore majoring in Food and Nutritional Science, received \$1000 towards her educational expenses. Mr. Martin, a Texas Tech University sophomore majoring in Agriculture Business, received \$500.

Established several years ago, the annual scholarship fund is named in memory of Tom Harpool, DCMGA's first president. Each year, our Scholarship team meets with the Blue Ribbon Club (a support organization for the Denton County Youth Fair and Rodeo) to select qualified candidates from the applications received. Recipients must be Denton County residents and enrolled in an accredited school of secondary higher education, preferably studying Horticulture or Entomology. Scholarships are presented at the annual Denton County Youth Fair.

If you or someone you know is interested in applying for the 2019 scholarship, please bookmark these sites, which provide greater detail and information about the application process: <https://dcmga.com/scholarship/> and <http://dentonyouthfair.com/blue-ribbon-club/>. Information will be updated as soon as it's available for next year.



Mission Statement

Denton County Master Gardener Association educates and engages county residents in the implementation of research-based horticultural and environmental practices that create sustainable gardens, landscapes, and communities.

Extension EO/EEO Statement

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

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Social Media

Facebook:

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

Instagram:

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

Twitter:

<https://twitter.com/@MGsDentonTX>

Pinterest:

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

Save the Date

April 28: DCMGA Plant Sale

May 12: DCMGA Garden Tour

June 16: Vegetable, Flower, Herb, and Fruit Show

Contact Information

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Content

Submission deadline for the May edition of *The Root* is Monday, April 16. Submissions may be revised at the discretion of the editor.

Ideas, photos, and articles are welcome and may be submitted to Editor Karen Gibson at karenhoot19@gmail.com or Communications Director Kathryn Wells at kathrynwells333@gmail.com.