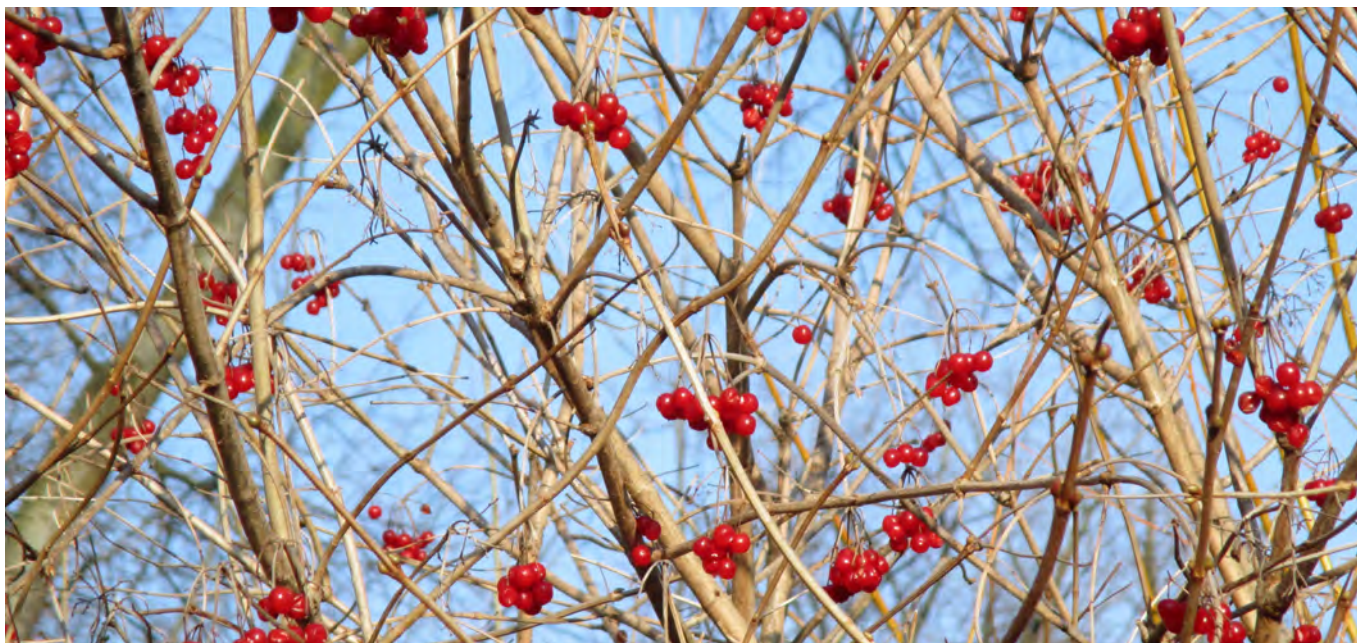


Denton County Master Gardener Association



THE ROOT

Grow With Us



Buds From The Board

BY PAT MOYER, PRESIDENT

Greetings MGers and Interns.

Due to deadlines, I'm writing this after our annual Christmas soiree but before the actual Christmas holiday. So, I hope you all had a great holiday and are making those resolutions and plans for a successful year.

Looking back over the past month, we've had a couple of things that are definitely worth noting. On Tuesday, December 11, Janet Laminack, our great CEA-Hort, made her annual presentation to the County Commissioners Court. She presented the Commissioners a large check that represents the contribution of all the County AgriLife sponsored volunteer activities. The check was for over \$1,300,000, which represents over 54,000 volunteer hours. The DCMGA portion of that check was for over \$522,000 for over 21,000 volunteer hours. Those hours represent a lot of work toward our mission that we should all be proud of. Thanks to all of you for that effort.

WHAT'S
GROWING ON

-
- 04 Plant of the Month:
Christmas Cactus
 - 05 Feature Article:
Wildlife Winter
Wonderland
 - 07 AgriLife Staff
Spotlight:
Zach Davis
 - 08 Shiloh Field
Community
Garden
 - 10 Help Desk Q & A:
Amaryllis Bulbs

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<https://dcmga.com>

Buds from the Board (Cont.)

On December 12 we had another annual event. The always popular DCMGA Christmas Party was, as usual, a festive event that allowed us to get together in a social atmosphere that didn't include shovels and trowels. Dee Payne's team, with Cindy Helm's Master of Ceremonies abilities, made it another memorable event. The Ugly Sweater competition was a new and fun addition (even if I didn't win). We were also able to raise \$1218 and provide some new clothes for the Rainbow Rooms in Denton County. Thanks for all the contributions.

I hope by now you've completed your 2019 Membership Renewal. But I know that not everyone who is eligible has done so. We have over 130 submissions at this time, which is less than half of our membership. If you haven't already, please take the time to get your AT and Service hours into VMS and complete your renewal.

Looking ahead, I hope to see all of you at the Graduation and Awards Banquet at Robson Ranch on January 16. This will not only be our usual graduation and awards ceremony, it will also be the kickoff for our organization's 30th Anniversary featuring former CEA-Hort John Cooper as our keynote speaker. Look for your Evite and note that payments this year will be made using PayPal. In order to preserve Dee Payne's sanity, we won't be accepting checks at the door. Please help us



Photo Courtesy of Debby Ishee

DCMGA Christmas Party

Master of Ceremonies Intern Cindy Helm,
"Christmas Carol" Carol Brantley, and
Kitchen Coordinator Cathie Rod

make this another success.

In the 2019 issues of The Root, we will be highlighting one of the members of our AgriLife staff each month or so. Please take this opportunity to get to know these hard-working folks a little better.

Happy New Year and let your 2019 gardening begin.

Pat Moyer

TOP GARDENING TIPS

January

- Keep landscape plantings watered well at root level.
- Clean, sharpen, repair, and store garden and lawn tools.
- Leave the leaves! Mow in place, compost, or use as mulch.
- Check trees for damaged limbs that may be compromised by ice.
- Relocate established trees & shrubs during winter dormancy.

#DCMGA #GROWWITHUS

DENTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION

Double Tree Ranch Park "Planting Frenzy"

BY KAREN GIBSON

As was mentioned in December's Double Tree Ranch Park Spotlight column, one last workday was held, described by Mary Morris as a "Planting Frenzy." The DCMGA volunteers received accolades in the recent Highland Village City Manager's weekly report:

The Denton County Master Gardeners assisted staff with planting 270 one gallon plants – and they did it in 1.5 hours! The Denton County Master Gardeners are an amazing group of people, we are fortunate that they chose to adopt Doubletree Ranch Park.



Photo Courtesy of Barbara Brown

Double Tree Ranch Park

planting frenzy worker crew, including city employees and Master Gardener volunteers.

New Membership Renewal Process

It's time to renew your annual DCMGA membership, and, as you do, please note the following changes to the policy and procedure:

- Annual dues paid by January 31, 2019 are \$15.
- Annual dues paid after January 31, 2019 will be \$25
- All service hours and AT hours must be entered in VMS no later than January 31, 2019.
- Any member not in good standing as of March 31, 2019 will be inactivated, unless granted an exception by the CEA-Hort.

As always, to remain a member in good standing, the following conditions must be met:

- Required annual service hours and AT hours have been earned and entered into VMS.
- The annual renewal form AND annual volunteer service agreement have been completed.
- Annual dues have been paid.

For a review of the annual membership renewal requirements, please visit the Member's Info section of our website or this direct link:

<https://dcmga.com/members-info/annual-dcmga-membership-renewal/>

Please contact President Pat Moyer or Member-at-Large Gay Campbell with any questions or concerns.

Plant of the Month – Christmas Cactus

BY RHONDA LOVE

There is nothing prettier than a Christmas cactus in full bloom. If you were gifted with a Christmas cactus this year or were perhaps lucky enough to have a friend share a slip from their established plant, you may be uncertain how to care for it. A Christmas cactus can bring added cheer to the holiday season year after year if cared for correctly, so here are some timely tips.

The Basics

First, as with all plants, make sure the basics – soil, water, and light – are taken care of. The soil should be about half sand, along with bark or peat moss, or use a soil designed for cacti. Add fertilizer every three months or so during the active growing season, April – October. Your cactus will like frequent watering, but it should tend toward the drier side, especially before blooming. Provide plenty of drainage for the pot, and your cactus won't mind being a little pot bound. Like most cacti, it likes lots of bright light. It will also be happier out of drafts.

When To Repot

If your cactus is root-bound, you can repot it every other year or so, any time from February to April, using a rich and appropriate soil. Remember that it will be happiest if it is a little root-bound, so don't repot to a pot that is much larger than the one it is in. You can fertilize it lightly, and prune it before any new buds appear. Keep the soil moist and keep the plant in indirect light.

Encourage Blooming

The cactus will be happiest during the spring and summer if it is outside, out of drafts and direct light. Bring it back indoors before the first frost and place in indirect light. You can encourage blooming by placing your cactus in total darkness for 14 hours each day from early September until new buds form. To encourage bud formation, keep the plant in cool temperatures of about 50-55 degrees. Buds are reluctant to form at higher temperatures. When it buds, you can give it a high nitrogen fertilizer.

If you have treated your Christmas Cactus with love and care, it will most likely bloom for you by Christmas. You can expect blooms of red, pink, purple, fuchsia, or white. Whatever color you have, your plant will reward you with many blooms.

Resource

East Texas Gardening – Christmas Cactus

<https://easttexasgardening.tamu.edu/2014/07/23/christmas-cactus/>



Photo Courtesy of Phyllis Minton

A Christmas Cactus

(*Schlumbergera bridgesii*) in full bloom is a beautiful sight.



Cultivating a Wildlife Winter Wonderland

BY KATHRYN WELLS

Neatly manicured gardens appear aesthetically pleasing, but on closer inspection, something is often missing from the carefully clipped landscape: life! Even within suburban properties, a whole wildlife world exists—or has the potential to exist, if the right conditions prevail.

Three necessities: water, food, & shelter

Wildlife requires the same three fundamental needs as humans: water, food, and shelter. Species ranging from butterflies to bobcats co-exist in suburban landscapes, and, while you may not want invite coyotes for dinner, wouldn't you delight in hearing a songbird at breakfast?

Water is the first essential element in supporting wildlife habitation, and receptacles can be as large and elaborate as a constructed pond or as small and simple as a shallow pan. Because, like humans, wildlife comes in all shapes and sizes, one size does not fit all. So, for example, plan to supplement a birdbath with something low to the ground—perhaps a plant saucer with a few large pebbles, so the smaller organisms aren't stranded. To prevent disease and to discourage mosquitoes, keep the water source receptacles clean and freshly filled.

Food becomes scarce in the winter, and the very best way to help our feathered (and non-feathered) friends is to go native—native plants, that is. Incorporating a diverse selection of natives in your landscape provides a varietal food source in the form of berries, fruits, nectar, and seeds. Consider each plant's blooming and fruiting season, and plan for diversification to ensure that something is always in maturity. Keep in mind that Texas is a big state with many types of ecoregions. Denton County is mostly Blackland Prairie with a strip of Cross Timbers (Oak Woods) running through the center. A plant indigenous to the west Texas Trans Peco ecoregion is not the best choice for our area. Plants native to north central Texas will withstand our particular temperature and rainfall extremes, thrive in mostly alkaline clay (or sandy) soils, resist diseases, and, importantly, nurture wildlife that is also native to our ecoregion, keeping the circle of life in check.

Shelter is the last—but not least—factor in the triad of wildlife requirements, and it's often the biggest void in most suburban landscapes. Immaculate maintenance strips the habitat of important cover for nesting and protection. In winter, when deciduous shrubs and trees have shed their leaves and most plants are dead or dormant, cultural practice usually includes cutting back stems to the ground. Such conventional maintenance, however, leaves a gaping habitat hole as dry plant stems provide predator protection for small wildlife and nesting habitat for native bees. Consider your landscape vertically from the ground up: bird species such as sparrows dwell in grasses while others—mockingbirds, for instance—prefer understory trees, and high-flyers like swallows seek the tallest canopies.



Photo Courtesy of Kathryn Wells

Native wildflowers

provide food and shelter for indigenous wildlife and offer seasonal garden interest.

Unclipped Mexican Hat (*Ratibida columnifera*) provides architecture and texture to the winter landscape.



Wildlife Winter Wonderland (Cont.)

Living on the edge

The greatest variety of wildlife is supported in areas where prairies and forests meet—a convergence known as the "edge effect". Since Denton County supports both prairies and forests, we have the great pleasure and privilege of saving, shaping, and stewarding habitat for those living on (and in!) the edge. As you're planning, planting, and pruning your winter landscape, resist monoculture and reduce maintenance by including native wildflowers, grasses, shrubs, and trees with ranging heights and revolving maturities. Evergreens are an important consideration, especially fruiting species, which will provide year-round food and shelter for wildlife.

Texas Parks and Wildlife offers a helpful and informative fact sheet for urban wildlife commonly found in our area (see *Resources*). This winter, give our native wildlife the edge by helping to protect their water, food, and shelter sources. It'll be a beautiful sight; you'll be happy each night (to see wildlife) walking (and flying) in a winter wonderland.

Resources

Texas Parks and Wildlife Urban Wildlife Fact Sheet

https://tpwd.texas.gov/publications/pwdpubs/media/pwd_lf_k0700_0167.pdf

If you have questions about landscaping to encourage and protect wildlife diversity or any other horticulture-related question, please contact the Denton County Master Gardener Help Desk at master.gardener@dentoncounty.com or 940.349.2892; it's free of charge, and it's our pleasure to assist you.



Photo Courtesy of Kathryn Wells

Evergreen Yaupon Holly

(*Ilex vomitoria*) provides year-round shelter and seasonal berries for many bird species including our official state bird, the Northern Mockingbird (*Mimus polyglots*). On a recent cold morning, this one checked in for both bed and breakfast.

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**Graduation & Awards Banquet
and 30th Anniversary Celebration Kickoff**
January 16, 2019, 6 pm to 9:30 pm
Robson Ranch Clubhouse
9400 Ed Robson Boulevard, Denton, TX
Keynote Speaker: John Cooper

Save the Dates!

No General Meeting in January

Graduation & Awards Banquet
RSVP & Payment Due by 1/10/19



**Volunteer Opportunity Fair
and General Meeting**
February 13, 2019, 9:30 am to 11:30 am
Global Spheres Center
7801 S Interstate 35, Corinth, TX
Welcoming DCMGA Members & 2019 Interns

Meet Your AgriLife Staff

Zach Davis

County Extension Agent, Agriculture & Natural Resources

I grew up in agriculture on my parents' dairy and cattle ranch in northwestern Denton County, where I attended Slidell High School. I graduated from Texas A&M in 2008 with a Bachelor's degree in Agriculture Leadership and Development.

I was hired by the AgriLife Extension Service in 2009 and served in Coryell and Nueces Counties as a 4-H agent. While working there, I received the Achievement Award in 2012.

In 2015, I received a Master's degree from Texas A&M Kingsville in Agriculture Science. My last county before moving back home was Somervell County in Glen Rose, TX, as Agriculture & Natural Resources agent from 2015-2018.

My job responsibilities include working with commercial farmers and ranchers to improve their businesses and working with small acreage landowners that are new to agriculture. There are two committees that currently work with me as planning groups, The Denton County Ag Committee and the Denton County Equine Committee.

In my spare time, I do some hunting and fishing. I also help my family raise commercial cattle and show goats on their family farm.

Please contact me anytime if you need some advice or have a problem I can help you with. My office line is 940-349-2889, or you can email Zadavis@ag.tamu.edu.



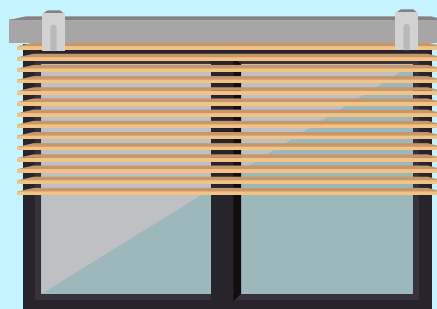
Photo Courtesy of Zach Davis

Zach Davis

Mini-Blinds Wanted

Do you have some used mini-blinds that are destined for the trash? Did your neighbor set out mini-blinds for trash pick-up when they moved out?

The Plant Sale Committee can use any and all mini-blinds for Plant Sale ID stakes. If you have some to donate, contact Michele Rawleigh at flower.freak@verizon.net.



Shiloh Field Community Garden

BY GUEST CONTRIBUTOR ALEX HELM

Community gardens are developing and expanding in Denton County, and they provide a great place for the beginning gardener to learn and fellowship with likeminded people. DCMGA has a small but dedicated group of volunteers who provide community garden consultations on an as needed basis, and one of our projects, Flower Mound First Baptist Church Urban Farm & Community Garden, is actually a hands-on program in partnership with the church. Alex Helm, daughter of DCMGA member Cindy Helm, recently visited one of Denton's community gardens: Shiloh Field. In sharing her experience there, Alex recounts the many advantages of working with a community garden, whether or not it is a DCMGA project. Alex's narrative has been slightly edited for our use. ~ Liz Moyer

Tucked in between apartments and railroad tracks is the Shiloh Field Community Garden. If you turn the corner too fast, you could miss it amongst the trees.

As a young gardener just getting her feet wet into the world of plants, a place like this is somewhere to learn a lot. My mom invited me to tag along on a garden tour with several Master Gardener Interns. Here we met Gene Gumfory, the 79-year-old founder of the garden. Gene was a member of the DCMGA for several years before he created Shiloh Fields. He told us his story, how he felt called by his faith to create this garden. So he did, and now the garden produces hundreds of pounds of food to give to local charities and organizations in need.

But it's so much more than that. This is a place to learn. Right now, my gardening experience consists of houseplants and a few balcony herbs. Shiloh gave me an opportunity to see what I could do with more space, and how I could utilize some of the smaller space I already have.

In the front of the garden are plots for the community to grow almost anything they want. The 15x15 plots can be adopted free of charge, including water. This is all part of Gene's design. To him, gardening should be something anyone can do, and he wants to make it easy for people to have access to a place to learn and grow along with their plants.

Large fields produce potatoes, okra, squash, and other veggies that are then harvested by volunteers and donated. There's even a small vineyard.



Photo Courtesy of David Huffman

Shiloh Field Vineyard

Greenhouses and covered areas produce melons and fruits. One small wooden greenhouse inspired me to try my hand at propagating smaller plants, something I could easily do in my apartment space.

The biggest thing I got out of meeting Gene and learning about Shiloh was a renewed inspiration to get my hands dirty and try something new. What began as a feeling in his heart turned into several acres of garden supporting individuals and the community. Something I want to do is produce vegetables for myself and my family one day and. Shiloh showed me that it's possible if you work hard and grab a few hands to help. That's the thing about community gardens, or any garden, really; it takes a community to get together and make something happen. Shiloh is the a good place to make that happen.

DCMGA Christmas Party

The DCMGA Annual Christmas Party and First Annual Ugly Christmas Sweater contest was held on December 12, 2018. As always, there was an abundance of fun, food, and laughter.

One dish in particular, Burgundy Mushrooms, generated so many oohs and ahs that we asked Lee Ann Yates to share her recipe. The next time you want to impress your guests, or even your family, this is the dish to prepare. Enjoy!

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Burgundy Mushrooms

Recipe source: The Pioneer Woman website
<https://thepioneerwoman.com/cooking/burgundy-mushrooms/>
 Modifications courtesy of Lee Ann Yates.



Recipe makes 8 servings and takes 8-9 hours to complete.
 It can be made a day ahead and reheated to serve.

Ingredients:

- 4 pounds white button mushrooms (I couldn't find small buttons, so I quartered the larger ones.)
- 1 litre Burgundy or other dry, red wine (I used a Cabernet Sauvignon.)
- 2 cups boiling water
- 2 sticks butter
- 1 1/2 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1 teaspoon dill
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 4 beef bouillon cubes
- 4 chicken bouillon cubes
- 4 cloves garlic, peeled and minced (I used 4 teaspoons prepared minced garlic.)
- Salt to taste (I did not add any salt.)
- Crusty bread for serving

Directions:

- Wash mushrooms and put in a large stock pot. Add wine, water, butter, Worcestershire sauce, dill, pepper, all bouillon cubes, and garlic. Stir to combine.
- Bring mixture to boil over medium to high heat. Reduce heat to low and simmer, covered, for 6 hours. Stir occasionally.
- After 6 hours, remove lid, continue cooking uncovered, for 2-3 more hours. Stir occasionally.
- Add salt to taste (if desired) at the end of cooking time.
- Mushrooms will be very dark in color. Serve straight from the pot of spoon mushrooms and liquid into a serving bowl.
- Serve with crusty bread to soak up all the yummy liquid.
- Can be reheated – it tastes even better the next day. I cooled mine overnight and reheated in a crockpot only to transport and keep them warm until serving time.



Photo Courtesy of Sharrie Ely

DCMGA Member Bill White

(center) got stuck in an ugly Christmas sweater sandwich between President Pat Moyer (left) and Dale Powell (right).

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BY JANIE FARLER

Q. Will my holiday Amaryllis bloom again?

A. Yes, your Amaryllis can bloom again with some basic care. First, after the flower has died, cut the stem within an inch of the bulb. Gradually discontinue watering the bulb as the foliage dies down. Once the leaves have died down you can put the bulb in a cool dry place or plant the bulb still in its pot outside in part shade.

If you have decided to keep your bulb in a cool dry place, replace the soil and thoroughly water once growth begins again or in late fall, whichever comes first. Water regularly and feed with a complete liquid fertilizer every 2 to 3 weeks. Your Amaryllis should bloom within 6 to 12 weeks.

If you replanted your Amaryllis outside after the holidays, they do not require much attention during the summer. Bring it inside in late fall and begin watering regularly and feeding with a complete fertilizer every 2 to 3 weeks and watch your Amaryllis bloom.

Here is everything you ever wanted to know about amaryllis:

East Texas Gardening - Amaryllis Care
<https://easttexasgardening.tamu.edu/2014/06/16/amaryllis-care-2/>

Oak Trust Library - The Amaryllis
<https://oaktrust.library.tamu.edu/bitstream/handle/1969.1/162766/636/Leaf0636.pdf?sequence=6&isAllowed=y>



Canva Stock Photo

If you have questions about caring for bulbs or any other horticulture-related subjects, please contact our Master Gardener Help Desk at 940.349.2892 or master.gardener@dentoncounty.com. It's free of charge, and it's our pleasure to assist you.



DENTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION

GREATER GARDENING

2019 GREATER AUBREY AREA GARDENING SERIES



JANUARY 17

Butterfly Gardens

**Carol Rowley
& Mary Branstetter**



FEBRUARY 21

Plant Propagation

Suzie Cook



MARCH 21

*Basic Landscaping Design
Principles*

Shirlee & Claud Singer

6:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Third Thursday: Jan, Feb, & March

AUBREY AREA LIBRARY

226 Countryside Drive

Aubrey, TX 76227

Jump start your 2019 gardening
with this free educational series.

Register via email to
kab@KeepAubreyBeautiful.org
or via phone at 940-343-1313.

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Liz Moyer
Native Plant Society
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Monika
Maeckle
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of Texas Butterfly
Ranch

Lewisville ISD Career Center East
2553 FM 544

Sat., Jan. 19th



Register today at
LLELAFriends.org



9 am-1pm



DENTON COUNTY
MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY FAIR & GENERAL MEETING

February 13, 2019
9:30 am - 11:30 am
Global Spheres Center
7801 S Interstate 35, Corinth, TX

Welcoming DCMGA Members and 2019 DCMGA Interns.

Light breakfast fare will be available.



TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION

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

Save the Date

January 16:	Graduation & Awards Banquet
February 13	Volunteer Opportunity Fair
April 25-27	TMG Annual Conference (Victoria)
August 14	30th Anniversary Celebration

Contact Information

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<https://dcmga.com>

Content

Submission deadline for the February edition of *The Root* is Tuesday, January 15. Submissions may be revised at the discretion of the editor.

Ideas, photos, and articles are welcome and may be submitted to Editor Karen Gibson at karenhoot19@gmail.com or Communications Director Liz Moyer at lizmoyer@live.com.