

Denton County Master Gardener Association

THE ROOT

Grow With Us



Buds From The Board

BY PAT MOYER, PRESIDENT

Howdy Fellow MGers and Interns,

Happy November! Fall is making a casual appearance and it's very welcome.

The Fall Garden Fest for 2019 is in the books and it certainly deserves some mention. On the down side I think we were all disappointed by the attendance. But, I think everyone who did come can say only positive things about our organization. The efforts of Sue Novak, Sharrie Ely, and Carolyn Stoy (to name just a few) made this a success. The number and variety of MG booths was amazing and reflects the diverse interests of our members.

Once again, we also need to thank Southwest Displays and Events for their donation of the curtain system that makes us look so much better. Not only has Southwest provided

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Buds from the Board (Cont.)

the curtain system over the years, but this year they upgraded their system for us!

Our Nominating Committee, under Patty Cooke's leadership, presented a slate of candidates for the 2020 Board of Directors at the October General Meeting. The slate not only includes the usual seven board positions, but also our newly identified positions for VP-Outreach and Communications Director – Promotions. This enlargement of the Board of Directors reflects the growth of our organization and the realization that we want to expand our outreach for educational opportunities throughout Denton County. Be sure to look for an email that will have a short bio of each of the candidates.

In November we will be hosting our first Project Managers Symposium. Don't let the title fool you. The intent of the Symposium is not only aimed at training our current Project Managers, but also intended to help those of you with Project Manager aspirations to understand that there is help within the organization to assist you in making those first steps in starting a new project. Kathryn Wells, our current VP and Presidential candidate, will be leading that effort. I look forward to seeing a lot of you there.

Happy Gardening,

Pat Moyer

DCMGA YouTube Channel

We need your help!

When we reach 100 subscribers to our new DCMGA YouTube Channel, we can apply for a "named" channel, rather than the current crazy long unreadable one.

So, go check it out and while there, please subscribe.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCtNGrhH1hopNTVcMNnUyi2A>

DCMGA President Pat
Moyer

Decorations by Dee Payne
& Team



Meet Beth Sharum

BY GAY CAMPBELL

It was the final evening of the Texas Master Gardener Annual Conference in Victoria, Texas. The counties were anxiously awaiting the announcement of the 2018 state awards. When Beth Sharum received the Marva E. Beck Junior Master Gardener Leader of the Year for the entire state of Texas, the applause was thunderous and members from Denton County were ecstatic. However, back home in Flower Mound, Beth was stunned when she received word of her achievement. She had no idea that such an award existed or that her name had been submitted to receive it.

Although grateful for such a prestigious honor, it's obvious that Beth's passion for educating youth has nothing to do with recognition or awards. Since becoming a Master Gardener, Beth has led multiple Junior Master Gardener and Science With Attitude (SWAt) projects in Denton County. Each summer, she heads the Junior Master Gardener camp. She also educates numerous parents, teachers, and volunteers throughout the year and manages Wellington Elementary School's annual Science Night in Flower Mound. Currently, Beth is in her second year of developing and refining an original AgriLife 4-H course at Lake Dallas Middle School. It's the only program of its kind in the state.



Photo courtesy Beth Sharum

Beth Sharum
and her son Zach.

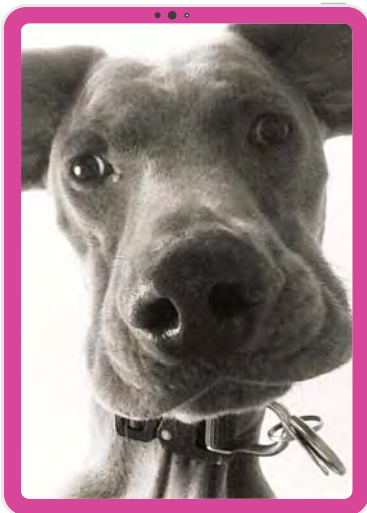


Photo Courtesy Zach Sharum

Gryf, short for Gryffindor,
is the Sharum family
Weimaraner.

Beth grew up in San Antonio and graduated from Texas A&M with a degree in Journalism. She and her husband, Pete, met at A&M through mutual friends. Their first date was to the Aggie bonfire. Beth worked and traveled extensively for GameStop for many years before becoming a stay-at-home mom to their eleven-year-old son, Zach.

One of Beth's passions is rescuing Weimaraners. She was on the Weimaraner Rescue Board for several years and has been a foster mom to seven Weimaraners. The family currently has a Weimaraner named for another of Beth's passions; Gryf is short for Gryffindor. Beth loves to read and admits that she has read most of the Hardy Potter series. She also plays Bunko and enjoys family road trips. Fall weekends in the Sharum household involve watching Aggie football games. Beth has taken up knitting during the game as a distraction to lessen her anger if the Aggies aren't doing well. This fall she will be knitting Christmas stockings while cheering on her favorite team.

Beth Sharum (Cont.)

Beth became interested in gardening out of necessity. When she and her husband purchased their first home in Grapevine, landscaping was not included. Beth and Pete sodded the entire yard, along with several friends they bribed with pizza and beer. Beth was gifted free pass-a-long plants and, using her newly acquired Neil Sperry book for inspiration, she began learning to landscape by trial and error.

After the family moved to Flower Mound, Beth and her father, who still lives in San Antonio, started vegetable-growing competitions. One year they had a sweet potato contest. Beth's father produced



Photo Courtesy Beth Sharum

A Self-Watering Tomato planter on casters designed by Beth's father. It produced a prolific harvest!

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reinvested in the garden. At the time, Beth was also taking a landscape design class offered by DCMGA. "I was very impressed with all the help I was receiving." Still, Beth wanted more "in-depth and updated background knowledge," so Jill encouraged her to apply to become a Master Gardener.

Beth became a DCMGA intern in 2016 and reveled in all of her newfound information. "We studied chemistry in the ground and it was very fun to have my brain learn again. Gardening is science and voodoo and you put it together and it works! Janie Farler was my mentor; Janie taught me that if a plant is unhappy, dig it up and move it. That was the most freeing thing I learned that year!"

Beth loves being a Master Gardener. As she continues to learn more about gardening from advanced training classes, other DCMGA members, and also from her father, she passes along horticultural knowledge to her son. Her face lights up as she recalls Zach recently pointing out that a Bur Oak in the neighborhood was starting to put on acorns. "He knows his trees," Beth says. It's obvious there's already another generation of gardeners in the Sharum family.

forty pounds of sweet potatoes and Beth produced five. "I was really proud of those five pounds," she recalls. "Then I drove down to San Antonio and helped Dad harvest all forty pounds of his potatoes.

When Zach became a student at Old Settlers Elementary School, Beth volunteered to be in charge of the school garden, which consisted of 25-30 overgrown vegetable beds plus several extremely weedy butterfly gardens. During her first summer, Beth planted pumpkins so that the kids returned to a school with a giant pumpkin patch. The second summer, Beth led a summer gardening series for the students. If the students participated in weekly workdays, they were allowed to take home their harvest. Beth oversaw the school garden for three years and mentored the new leader during the fourth year.

Beth says that when she initially took over leadership of the school garden, she quickly realized that she was in over her head. At the suggestion of her dad, she reached out to the MG Help Desk. Susan Kilpatrick and Jill Peak visited Old Settlers and shared helpful ideas, including how to get teachers

Seed Bombs

BY LEE ANN YATES

Autumn (September through December) is the optimum time to sow your wildflower seeds here in North Texas. Many wildflower seeds germinate quickly and establish a healthy root system before the winter cold sends them into dormancy. This gives plants the best chance to get well established before the summer heat hits. Seeds that don't germinate in the fall will remain dormant until the soil warms up in early spring.

Wildflower seed bombs (or seed balls) are a fun way to involve your whole family in spreading the beauty of wildflowers. Below is a recipe that Denton County Master Gardener Association volunteers have used with the Science With Attitude (SWAt) summer camps in recent years. It's an activity the campers always enjoy, both creating and distributing (throwing!) the seed bombs.

Seed Ball Recipe

Seed balls don't need to be very large, so it doesn't necessarily take a lot of matrix to make them. Make up as much matrix as you need. Whatever you use to measure – handfuls or measuring cups – keep it the same for compost and clay. Use a 4:1 ratio of compost to clay, emulating the top layers of soil where seeds prefer to germinate.

Ingredients

- Seeds
- Clay – powdered, dried clumps, or prepared.
Needs not be special red clay.
- Sifted aged compost
- Water or neutral pH compost tea

Procedure

1. Mix powdered or dried clumps of clay (see tip below) with water until it is the consistency of yogurt or soft-serve ice cream.
2. Mix with sifted compost in a 1:1 ratio clay:compost by volume. Cut the clay into the compost like creaming butter and sugar together and then knead like dough.
3. If you are using prepared clay, don't add water. Just knead it like dough to soften it enough to incorporate the compost. This will make the matrix for the seeds.
4. Add enough water so that the matrix is workable enough to make balls hold together, but not sticky. If it's too sticky, mix in some sifted compost until you have the right consistency.
5. Pinch a seed-ball's worth of matrix off of your prepared clump – about the size of your thumb.
6. Add some seeds. If they are easy germinators, 1-2 seeds. If they are stubborn, add 1-2 more. You don't want 8 germinating seeds in one seed ball. That will stress the seedlings and none will thrive.
7. Roll into a ball.
8. Air dry at room temperature until the batch is uniformly light color. Usually, this takes a couple of days.

Seed Bomb by Kevan Davis. CC BY 2.0



Seed Bombs (Cont.)

TIP:

If you are using hardened clumps of clay, crush them with rocks or a hammer and mix with water. For a less dramatic solution, you can slake clay in water. Fill a five gallon bucket with chunks of dried clay, then fill it with water about 2/3 the way up. Let it sit for a couple of weeks.

OR: You can search online for "seed ball" and buy ready-made matrix or seed ball mixtures.

Resource

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

Wildflowers In Bloom, Aggie-Horticulture

"When Do I Plant" - <https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/wildseed/info/5.1.html>



Seed Bomb aka Seed Ball by Herder3, CC BY 3.0

How to Make a Wildflower Seed Bomb

Texas A&M AgriLife horticulturist Daniel Cunningham shows you how to make and plant seed bombs for growing beautiful wildflowers and promoting healthy ecosystems wherever you are.

Find more at wateruniversity.tamu.edu and follow Daniel online @TxPlantGuy

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=__yPmEfBoLvU



Mexican Hat and Lemon Bee Balm

wildflowers
in bloom
along a
north Texas
highway,
May 2019..



Photos Courtesy DCMGA Member Karen Gibson

Plant of the Month – Succulents

BY LEE ANN YATES

Succulents are plants which have thickened, fleshy parts used to retain water in arid conditions. Gardeners grow them because of their varied, striking, unusual appearance, as well as their ability to thrive with relatively little care. Many plant families include succulents and some are almost completely succulents. It seems as if it would be easy to grow succulents – stick them in some soil, put them in the sun, water when the daylight savings begins and ends – easy peasy! But hold your horses, folks! Succulents can be a challenge for many gardeners.

Most succulents come to us from South Africa; however, in Texas we typically see those originating in Mexico. Carolyn Tinner, DCMGA Propagation Specialist and one of our succulent-growers-extraordinaire, introduced me to the International Succulent Introductions program at Huntington Botanical Gardens in California, which introduces several new varieties of succulents each year – and you can ORDER FROM THEM! Orders have ended for this year, but begin again in March (see Resources). There are hundreds, perhaps thousands, even millions of varieties of succulents in the world. Is your backyard big enough? We're going to need more space!

Succulent Challenges

Overwatering is one of the biggest problems succulents face and is a major challenge for growers. In their natural environments, succulents have adapted to survive with very limited water sources, such as mist and dew, so while they do need water, they certainly don't need very much.

A second problem succulents struggle with is a soil mix that is too rich in organic matter for them. Many people think of succulents as cacti with fatter leaves, but they are completely different animals – uh, plants. Bagged soils labeled for cacti and palms contain a lot of woody material to make it lighter. The organic matter makes a comfy place for infectious fungi to grow, which will be problematic for your succulents. They need lean, well-drained soil that is porous enough for water to run nearly straight through it. One way to test that the cactus soil you are considering is good for succulents is to just lift the bag. If it seems heavy for its size, it is a good mix that includes sand and is proper for growing succulents. If the bag seems light, you will need to modify the soil. You can also modify regular potting mixes so they can be used with succulents. These simple steps will help:



Photo Courtesy DCMGA Member Gay Campbell

Succulents

thrive with relatively little care, but can be a challenge for many gardeners.

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Succulents (Cont.)

Simple Steps to Modify Regular Potting Mixes

- Screen out woody particles from cactus mixes by sifting it through a sheet of 1/4 inch-grid hardware cloth. This will make it easier to keep from overwatering your succulents.
- Alternatively, you can modify regular potting mixes by mixing sharp sand (not play sand) with it until you have a 50/50 mix.

Note that different succulents go dormant at different times of the year. Some are dormant in the summer, while some wait for winter to move into dormancy. Check out the tables in Resources below or search the Internet for Dormancy information.

Fertilize During Active Growing

Because of the lack of organic material in the proper succulent soil, you should fertilize regularly with a low-dose fertilizer during the time of year when the plants are actively growing. You should pair succulents with other succulents rather than with plants that require richer soil and more moisture.

Succulents can be planted in a pot or bowl; the container is limited only by your imagination and the ability to have a drain hole – essential to keep your succulents from drowning or their roots rotting. Fill the container about 75% full with soil. Add your succulents and fill in around them with more soil. You can still use the "thriller, filler, spiller" style with succulents because there are SO MANY choices! To settle everyone into place, water in with a squirt bottle, but be careful not to overdo it. Rot is the enemy and must be continually guarded against!



Photo Courtesy DCMGA Member Ana Hunt Aifd

Thriller, Filler, Spiller

Thriller - a tall plant placed in center or towards the back which anchors your planter.

Filler - a dense, prolific, and showy medium height plant that fills the bulk of your planter.

Spiller - a trailing plant that gracefully spills over the sides of your planter.

Succulents (Cont.)

Planting Succulents Outside

Many gardeners overwinter their containers of tender succulents in a greenhouse or inside their home. Succulents that have a higher cold hardiness can be planted in the ground. According to Carolyn, there are very few varieties that would survive our winters, so choose carefully. Plant your succulent in a protected area and be sure they have good air circulation. Succulents enjoy the radiant heat from rocks or nearby hardscape in the winter and don't mind it much in the summer.

Amending the soil with at least six inches of specialized succulent soil will improve their chances by not getting bogged down with too much moisture. Of course, you can move your potted succulents outside in the summer to decorate patios, walks, and steps and then bring them inside in the winter. Succulents need to be in a partially shady area outside as they, like us, get sunburned in full sun. They are drought resistant – meaning they can go long times without water, but need the occasional good long drink.

Propagating Succulents

Propagation can be accomplished through seeds, dropped leaves, and stem cuttings. It is not recommended to start succulents from seed as they often do not grow true to their "parent" and are difficult to germinate. Carolyn feels that leaf starts are the easiest way to become successful. Because succulents lose leaves easily just from being handled or moved around, it is simple to use those leaves to start new plants. If you try to cut or tear leaves off, Carolyn says it can be difficult to get all of the bits needed to grow roots. Dampen soil in a shallow container (a clean takeout container works nicely) with a squirt bottle – the soil should be damp, not wet. Set dropped leaves on top of the soil – plain potting soil works at this point. Check the babies every couple of days and keep the soil damp but not wet – rot can easily set in if the soil and plants are too wet. You should see new growth from the leaves in three to four weeks! Eventually the original leaf will die off. When the baby is big enough for you to handle, transplant it to its new home using extremely well-draining soil.

Another method of propagation Carolyn advocates is to take stem cuttings from plants that need a trim. A crucial step with this method is to allow the cutting to form a callus on the cut end by letting it air dry for several days. The end will form a hard covering that will help to avoid rotting when you plant the cutting in soil. Carolyn always dips the callus in rooting hormone to help it along, then plants in well-draining soil that she keeps damp, not wet. A spray bottle is ideal for watering succulents of any age. If the cut end does rot, it is easy to cut off the mushy part, allow it to harden again, then dip in rooting hormone and repot!

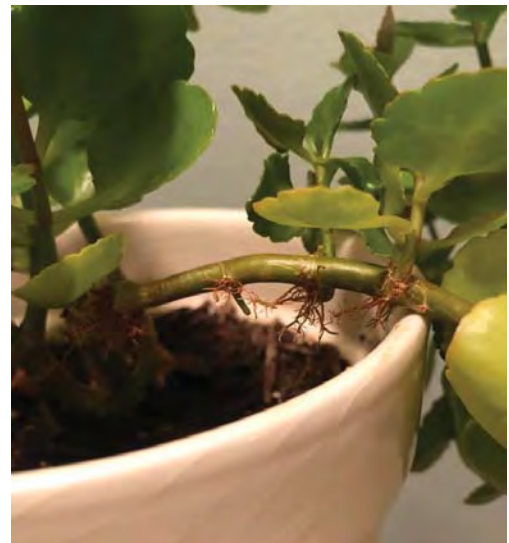


Photo Courtesy DCMGA Member Kathryn Wells

Air Rooting

MG Kathryn Wells snips off the air rooted stem of her Kalanchoe, lets the end form a callus, and then she "pots 'er up."

Succulents (Cont.)

Carolyn says that there is such a wide variety of succulents to choose from, information on growth habits, bloom times, cold hardiness, and dormancy season should be researched for each succulent you are considering. She added that you can't go wrong by having succulents around in the spring and fall as they are either coming out of or getting ready to go into dormancy, always exciting!

Pests

As for pests, Carolyn relates that mealy bugs are the pest she deals with most often. Good air circulation by not crowding plants helps, but she also uses a systemic houseplant insect control by Bonide for extra measure. It is a dusting powder that she adds to the soil when potting new babies and every time she repots a plant. On the plant itself, she uses a spray of 70% isopropyl alcohol and 30% water directly on the bugs. She advises to not spray this on plants in full sun or you will fry them – speaking from experience!

Exploring Succulents Group

With so many choices available, you will surely find a succulent to fit a spot in your garden or home! If you are interested in learning more about succulents, **the next meeting of the Exploring Succulents Group will be Tuesday, 26 November at the Extension Office, Carroll Building, Denton, from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. They meet every other month and are open to the public.**



Photo Courtesy DCMGA Media Team

The Exploring Succulents
booth at last month's Fall Garden Festival was a very popular spot.

Resources

Succulents have recently become very popular because of their ease of growth and care, but we found that most information available is from commercial sources. We are not endorsing these sources, but found their technical information to be credible and aligned with our own experience.

Succulents and Sunshine

"Succulent Dormancy Table"

<https://www.succulentsandsunshine.com/succulent-dormancy-table/>

Succulents Box

"Succulent Dormancy 101"

<https://succulentsbox.com/blogs/blog/succulent-dormancy-101>

Fine Gardening

<https://www.finegardening.com/>

Recipe for Succulent Soil – Combine 1 part Perlite, 2 parts coarse sand, 3 parts peat moss.

Pumice or tiny stones/grit can be added if you are missing one of these other ingredients.

Succulents (Cont.)

Sources Used For This Article

Denton County Master Gardener Association

<https://dcmga.com/>

"Container Gardening Basics," North Texas Gardening

<https://dcmga.com/north-texas-gardening/community-gardening/container-gardening-basics/>

Carolyn Tinner, DCMGA Member and Propagation Specialist

Fine Gardening

"10 Outstanding Succulents"

<https://www.finegardening.com/article/10-outstanding-succulents>

Garden Design

"8 Succulent Container Arrangements"

<https://www.gardendesign.com/succulents/containers.html>

The Succulent Source

"A Guide On How To Plant Succulents"

<https://thesucculentsource.com/blogs/succulent-cactus-news/a-guide-on-how-to-plant-succulents>

The Huntington (Botanical Gardens)

"International Succulent Introductions: Plant Introductions of the Huntington Botanical Gardens"

<http://media.huntington.org/ISI/catalogintro.html>



Some DCMGA Member Succulents

Project Manager Symposium

BY KATHRYN WELLS, DCMGA VICE PRESIDENT

Project Manager Symposium Scheduled for November 20th

Featuring a Dynamic and Interactive Program by Kaber Communications President Karen Reid

Who has more excellent Project Managers than Denton County Master Gardener Association? (No organization that I know!)

So, to better equip, encourage, and support our stellar PMs, DCMGA is holding a 2019 Project Manager Symposium on Wednesday, November 20th, from 9 am to 12 pm in Room 115 of the Joseph A. Carroll Building (401 W. Hickory Street, Denton).

Who is invited? All current PMs (rookies and veterans), assistant PMs, and wannabe PMs are welcome. The event is open to our entire membership, so if you're not currently leading a project, but you'd like to, it's a great opportunity to water and nourish those seeds of leadership.

Sessions include Mission and Governance, Administrative Protocols (incorporating information about budgeting, planning, promoting, and reporting your project), Leading and Motivating a Team (featuring guest presenter Karen Reid), and a Board Member/Support Staff Panel Discussion (open to questions from the floor).

As a special treat, Kaber Communications President Karen Reid will share "Planting the Seeds of Engagement," a dynamic and interactive presentation that will help foster collaboration and communication within your team, empowering team members to do what they do best. Karen will share strategies for recruiting and engaging your core team, and you'll leave with tips and techniques for identifying potential volunteers, upgrading recruitment methods, communicating team needs, and rethinking project outcomes and impact. With a Master Gardener for a mother-in-law and a fresh presentation customized for DCMGA, Karen's session is sure to be the highlight of the day.

The PM Symposium is approved for three VMS hours. Mix and match Advanced Training (AT) and Volunteer Service (VS) at your discretion. The Sign Up Genius (SUG) is live, and RSVPs are due by November 6th. As always, carpooling is encouraged.

Thank you to those who lead, those who want to lead, and those who serve. You are the heart and soul of DCMGA, and you are the hands and feet of our mission. We appreciate you all, and we look forward to welcoming you on November 20th.



Photo Courtesy of Karen Reid

Kaber Communications President Karen Reid

will lead "Planting the Seeds of Engagement," a dynamic and interactive highlight of this year's PM Symposium.

Propagation

BY KATHY RAINEY

A trip to the nursery is one of the most pleasurable ways to spend your day if you love gardening. For many Master Gardeners, our favorite nurseries feed our addiction to plants, especially in spring and fall. If your piggy bank is suffering a loss due to those numerous trips to the nursery or garden center, consider propagating from your existing plants. Annuals and perennial plants can be propagated from cuttings, layering, root/tuber/rhizome separation, or by collecting seeds. Propagation does require patience, patience, patience, but it yields virtually free plants!

Cuttings are stems or leaves from a parent plant that will grow roots and form new plants. Layering is placing a stem still attached to the parent plant into the propagation medium until it forms its own roots. Once rooted, the new plant is severed from the parent plant.

Propagation By Cuttings

Among the easiest plants to propagate are succulents. Pictured at the right are leaf cuttings from various succulents. The leaves were simply placed on top of the propagation medium that was kept moist and within a few weeks, roots, and new little plants sprouted.

Also easy to propagate are plants with softwood, such as aster, butterfly bush, and salvia. The butterfly bush and salvia pictured on the next page have been cut from the mother plant and bottom leaves removed to expose the nodes. These are now ready for propagating as described in the following "recipe."

The recipe for successful propagation from cuttings includes a good propagation medium, moisture, light, humidity, temperature, rooting hormone, and the stem or leaf cutting. Propagation medium is made up from combinations of peat moss, coconut coir, perlite, vermiculite, and sand, or similar materials. The propagation medium provides support and moisture while the plant develops. This propagation medium is quite different from commercial potting soil, which is developed to maintain mature plants.

The moisture level of the propagation medium should be kept moist but not wet. Many organic materials like peat moss or coconut coir may look wet on the surface but can be powdery dry in the middle, so it's important to ensure even moisture throughout the propagation medium. Diffused light (sunlight)



Photo Courtesy Kathy Rainey

Succulent Leaf Cuttings

placed on top of propagation medium and kept moist will sprout new roots in a few weeks.

Propagation (Cont.)

provides tender cuttings an optimum environment for rooting without causing injury to the cuttings. If setting your planted cuttings in a window, make sure they don't receive direct sunlight through the window. Maintaining high humidity around the cuttings reduces the amount of moisture loss. This condition can be achieved by placing a clear plastic bottle or bag over the propagation area. Condensation will form on the underside of the plastic to provide the necessary humidity. For best results, maintain temperature of the root zone to 70-75 degrees F.

Rooting hormones are often used to promote root formation. Simply dip the cutting into the rooting hormone and tap the end to remove excess hormone before inserting it into the propagation medium.

At least one node must be below the surface of the propagation medium. Stem cuttings should be 4-6 inches long. Pinch off the leaves on the lower half of the cutting and remove any flowers. Where the leaves were attached to the stem is the node. The butterfly bush and salvia cuttings have been dipped in rooting hormone, flowers and lower leaves removed, and are ready to insert into the propagation medium.

Photo Courtesy Kathy Rainey



Butterfly bush cutting.



Butterfly bush with rooting hormone.



Salvia cutting.



Salvia with rooting hormone.

Layering Method of Propagation

The Layering method of propagation has a high success rate because the stem or tip is attached to the mother plant, which provides water and carbohydrates needed for growth. However, it is still necessary to keep a constant supply of moisture to the propagation medium. For tip layering, dig a hole 3-4 inches deep, insert the shoot tip, and cover it with soil. For simple layering, gently bend the branch or stem of your existing plant to the ground. Cover part of it with soil, leaving 6-12 inches towards the tip exposed. Bend the tip into a vertical position and stake it in place. The sharp bend typically will induce rooting and wounding the bottom side of the branch or stem many also help promote rooting. Some examples of plants that are easy to propagate using the layering method are lantana, azalea, boxwood, honeysuckle.

Propagation (Cont.)

Separation / Division Method

Separation (often referred to as division) of roots/tubers/rhizomes is required to maintain a healthy bed in some species. These include iris and fall asters. Iris should be done when the plants are dormant, early November until the end of February. Just dig up the whole batch, sort through the tubers to determine the healthiest ones, replant as many as you want 3-4 inches apart, and share the rest with your friends and neighbors – or go start another bed! Asters should be done in early spring when the tiny rosettes appear at the base of the dead stems. Cut the dead material back, leaving a 2-inch or so stem to use for a handle when replanting, separate the rhizomes and trim them up so you can fit them about every 2-3 inches in the bed. Extras present another opportunity for sharing or adding fall color to another part of your landscape for free!

Seeds

Collecting and sprouting or just planting seeds is one of the easiest means of propagation, but the success rate is unknown until the babies come up. Keeping the soil moist is key to creating an environment for seeds to sprout and grow. Seed packets have step-by-step instructions printed on the inside of the seed packet. Supplies required for successful seed starting include containers to grow the seeds, a tray for water run-off, a dome or plastic cover to keep in the moisture, and soil. Seed starter soil mixed with perlite or vermiculite (50/50 ratio) helps retain moisture. Remember to label your plants using a pencil because it won't wash off like ink will. Your seed packet will indicate if your seeds need any preparation before planting and how long it should take to sprout.

Other common types of plant propagation include grafting and budding, mostly used on fruit and nut trees. These techniques are used to propagate cultivars that do not root well as cuttings or whose own root systems are inadequate. If you would like to learn about more methods for propagating plants, download and read "Principles of Grafting and Budding" from Aggie-Horticulture (see Resources).

I hope you have been inspired to give plant propagation a try this fall. Harvest small stems and leaf cuttings before the first prolonged frost following the recipe above, pot them indoors, and they will take root over the winter. Growing flowers, herbs, and other plants from cuttings is free and an excellent way to fill your garden next spring.



Photo Courtesy DCMGA Member Karen Gibson

MG Katherine

with assistance from MG Suzie Cook, demonstrate at the 2018 Intern Class Propagation Day how to trim away the pot-bound roots and divide a potted native grass.

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Propagation (Cont.)

Resources

Aggie Horticulture, *Texas A&M AgriLife Extension*

"Principles of Grafting and Budding"

https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/faculty/davies/pdf%20stuff/ph%20final%20galley/M11_DAVI4493_08_SE_C11.pdf

"Propagating Foliage & Flowering Plants" – Provides a list of common plants that can be propagated from stem and leaf cuttings.

<https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/ornamental/a-reference-guide-to-plant-care-handling-and-merchandising/propagating-foliage-flowering-plants/>

Denton County Master Gardener Association

<https://dcmga.com/>

"Seed Propagation – Care of Seedling" – <https://dcmga.com/upcomingevents/handouts>

The Root, July 2018

"Plan Now to Divide and Transplant Your Iris in September"

<https://dcmga.com/files/2018/06/The-Root-July-2018-Newsletter.pdf>



Meet Your AgriLife Staff Nadia Rosales

4-H and Youth Development Administrative Assistant

Nadia Rosales was born and raised in Denton, Texas. She attended Billy Ryan High School, followed by the University of North Texas, where she obtained a Bachelor's degree in Sociology in 2017 and a Master's degree in Women's and Gender Studies in 2019. During this time, she also worked as a Research Assistant at the University of North Texas and completed an internship in the Marketing and Development Program at Denton County Friends of the Family.

Nadia is passionate about giving back to her community and enjoys volunteering with local organizations in her spare time. When she is not volunteering, she can be found outdoors with her family.

In her role as the administrative assistant for 4-H and Youth Development, Nadia promotes 4-H activities and events and also communicates with club members and leaders. She is new to the AgriLife team and thrilled to be working with Denton County 4-H!



Photo Courtesy Nadia Rosales

Nadia Rosales

Pass-Along Marking

BY LIZ MOYER

Avoid Plant Sale Prep Horror!

We've all been there. It's time to pot up pass-alongs for the Plant Sale, but:

1. We can't remember which plants were outgrowing their locations and need to be thinned and/or dug around the margins (edges)
2. The ones we think probably were candidates are still too small to be sure
3. We can't remember the names of the plants, and they are too small for ID



Photo Courtesy DCMGA Member Liz Moyer

Knife Marker



Photo Courtesy DCMGA Member Liz Moyer

Flag Marker

Oh, the horror!

Act now! Grab a permanent felt tip pen and a bunch of plastic knives or utility marking flags and get out there. Mark your plants now for digging in early March. It's a good idea to make yourself a diagram or some notes when you mark them. Check your markers periodically throughout the winter to be sure they are still legible and to remind yourself where they are ...

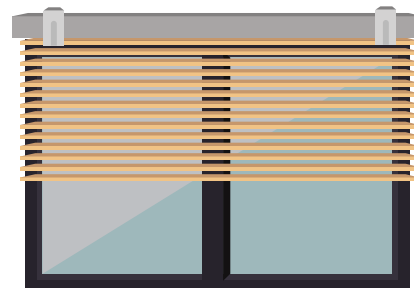
Another advantage: utility flags and plastic knives come in a variety of colors and can really add a pop to your winter landscape!



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. They are also in need of trays and pots. If you have some to donate, contact Bob Bender through VMS.



Gift Ideas For The Gardener In Your Life

BY BARBARA BROWN

As leaves fall and there is a nip of frost in the air, our thoughts often turn to the upcoming holiday season and the challenge of finding just the right gift for the special people in our lives. If one of those people is a gardener (or a gardener want-to-be), here are a few ideas that are guaranteed to put a smile on their face.

Small Treasures

Indoor garden

If your gardener enjoys preparing or consuming flavorful homecooked meals, an indoor herb garden may be a winner.

All you need is a location that receives about 6 hours of sunshine per day—often a south-facing window—and a few herb plants. If enough light is not available, adding a small grow light suspended above the pots will do the trick. You can choose a complete kitchen herb garden kit from local retailers or purchase one online. Or, you can creatively make one using a cute tray, some planting pots or even large decorative cups or jars, and potting soil. Many perennial or cold-tolerant herbs are available for purchase year-round, others can be started from seed.



An Indoor Herb Garden

requires at least 6 hours of light from either a south-facing window or grow lights.

Personalized garden sign

Some folks like to mark their territory. So how about a sign that identifies the outdoor garden's caretaker? You can let your creative juices flow when making a personalized sign. Depending on your skills and available tools, a sign can be made of wood, slate, metal or stone. Add the person's name, e.g., Grandma's Garden, and some decorative touches such as flowers or butterflies. Painting smooth rocks with paint pens is a great way to keep little ones busy while you are busy with other holiday prep! Alternatively, many online sites that offer to create a personalized garden sign for you.



Garden tote

If the gardener in your life has lots of tools but cannot ever seem to find the one they need when they need it, consider giving them a garden tote. This handy carrier has slots for 8 to 10 tools and a center compartment for larger items like a kneeling pad, small plants in pots and seed packets.

Gift Ideas For The Gardener In Your Life (Cont.)

Handy Helpers

Hori hori knife

Made by several manufacturers, a hori-hori is a heavy-duty knife with a sharp, serrated blade. At 8 to 13 inches long, it tackles hard jobs like digging in our tough North Texas soil with ease. The knife is made of stainless steel so it does not rust and cleans easily. A hori-hori knife helps chop and remove weeds, plant or transplant flowers and vegetables and can dig down deep to remove stubborn plant roots.



Photo Courtesy DCMGA Member Liz Moyer

A Potting Bench,

whether homemade or purchased, helps keep a gardener organized, productive and less messy.

Potting bench

Although a potting bench may be purchased from retailers, for those with carpentry skills making one can be a fun project. A potting bench provides a work surface and a storage area for potting soil, amendments and tools. Many benches also have a sink or depressed area to easily hold residual materials for later disposal. From a gardener's perspective, a big advantage of a potting bench workstation is the ability to plant, prune and propagate standing up rather than having to bend over.

Ergonomic tools

Gardening helps maintain joint flexibility, bone density and range of motion, which is especially important as we get older. However, gardening tasks that require strength, a lot of repetitive stooping, kneeling and lifting can become painful to do as our bodies age. That's where ergonomic tools can help make gardening

tasks easier on the body by offering longer handles, lighter weight materials and smaller grips. You can find special ergonomic tools at local garden centers or online. Manufacturers are proud of their ergonomic designs and will often feature the Arthritis Foundation's Ease of Use Commendation on their packages.

Kneeler

Pads to cushion your gardener's knees are sure to be a welcome gift. Some even come with handles to make getting up and down safer and flip over to become benches for small pruning jobs.



Gift Ideas For The Gardener In Your Life (Cont.)

Stocking Stuffers

Seeds packets

Excitement can come in a small package. Big box stores and even local nurseries often have a limited selection of vegetable and flowering transplant types. But deciding to start some plants from seed offers hundreds of varietal choices. And, starting seeds indoors provides a gardening activity when it is too cold to garden outdoors. Don't forget to check the packet instructions or do some research first to make sure the plant can grow successfully in North Texas.

Magazine subscription

Gardening inspiration and information in monthly (or bi-monthly) doses. Magazines specializing in gardening tell us about new plants, successful gardening techniques and how to solve gardening problems. There are several gardening magazines written just for Texas and our State's plant growing challenges. However, be aware that a gardening magazine may also inspire your gardener to want to create garden and landscape areas.

Although finding a gift for your gardener may require a bit of extra effort, rest assured that you will be rewarded with gratitude for your thoughtfulness and maybe even some home-grown vegetables.



Photo Courtesy DCMGA Member Barbara Brown

Starting Seeds Inside

is a rewarding way to "garden" in the winter.



*"Even if something
is left undone,
everyone must take
time to sit still and
watch the leaves
turn."*

~ Elizabeth Lawrence



MGer Advanced Training and also DCMGA Public Presentations

Our members share their science-based knowledge
and experience on a variety of topics.

Clear Creek Natural Heritage Center

November 9, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Hugelkultur Gardening Workshop

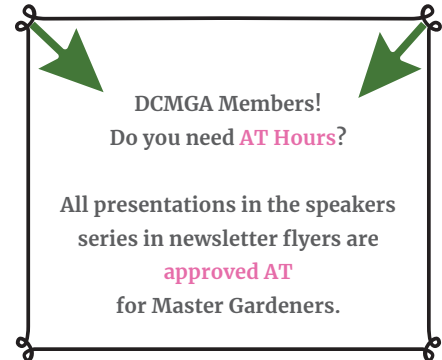
Clear Creek welcomes you to a free, introductory workshop on how to build and use a hugelkultur garden bed — a raised bed with a woody core that requires no digging after initial construction. Hugelkultur beds are said to manage water well both in wet and dry periods, and to provide years' long soil fertility. This is a great way to get rid of rotting firewood, downed tree limbs, or a downed tree in your yard.

This class will provide you the basics of hugelkultur gardening, as well as some best practices. It will be taught by Master Gardener Brigid Corbett. The hands-on portion includes the construction of a hugelkultur bed, so bring your gloves if you want to join in!

Registration is requested: You can register at: Sustainabledenton.com

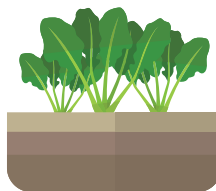
Event contact: Sarah Luxton: Sarah.Luxton@CityofDenton.com

Location: Denton Clear Creek Natural Heritage Center, 3310 Collins Rd, Denton



DCMGA Brings Knowledge to Your Backyard!

DCMGA is pleased to be kicking off our 2020 Speaker's Series with the Greater Aubrey Area Gardening Series. On January 16 Master Gardener Dana Bays will present "Veggie Gardening 101." Check out the flyer on page 28 for additional dates and topics.



Additional series are planned in Lewisville and Flower Mound, so watch for flyers in every issue of *The Root* and also on our website and Facebook pages!

2019 Fall Garden Fest Recap

Fall Garden Fest on October 12 had wonderful weather and was a great event. Vendors from all over North Texas set up their wares for the public with lots of items for the home and garden. Twenty-seven Master Gardener booths were set up to provide free educational information on various garden-related topics to gardening citizens of North Texas. This event was led by Sharrie Ely, Susan Novak, Carolyn Stoy, Steve Spurgin, and Russell Tyson.

The speakers, Jay White of Texas Gardener magazine (texasgardener.com) and Dee Nash of Red Dirt Ramblings (reddirtrambblings.com) were fantastic and informative speakers. And they were really nice folks too. We hope you got a chance to meet them. Dee Nash gave away several items from Fiskars at her talk and Jay White gave away several gardening items at his talk, including seeds and a Cobra weeding tool.

The new location at the Denton First United Methodist Church offered lots of room for the kid's activities, speakers, Master Gardener booths, and vendors. As fate would have it, we had construction on Locust Street, but determined visitors found our location and were rewarded by a fun event. Two hundred fifty attendees were recorded as attending this event, with forty-four kids attending the Kids' Activities area. Our free giveaway items included reusable shopping bags and a Texas/Oklahoma wildflower seed mix.

Many thanks to our wonderful Master Gardener volunteers that showed up and were a positive and delightful group to greet and help our public. A special thank you goes to those Master Gardeners that volunteered to lead Master Gardener booths. Your extra step in helping organize these educational booths is greatly appreciated. We love that several Master Gardeners invested their time, effort, and research into creating new educational booths from the ground up. These new ideas help keep our event fresh and new.



Photos Courtesy DCMGA Media Team

Multiple Master Gardener Booths

provided education to North Texas gardeners at this year's Fall Garden Fest.

2019 Fall Garden Fest (Cont.)

Another big thank you goes to our sponsors. Southwest Displays and Events (southwestdisplays.com) for the donation of the pipe and drape we use at our event. They deliver the pipe and drape and pick it up as part of their donation and we greatly appreciate their donation. Thanks also goes to Justin Seed Co. (justinseed.com) for their donation of the Texas/Oklahoma Wildflower seed mix that we handed out at the Wildflower booth at the event. This great seed mix has proven to be very popular for North Texas gardeners that visit Fall Garden Fest.

Our Fall Garden Fest team is already working towards Fall Garden Fest 2020. The date set for FGF 2020 is October 3. There are many fun fall activities going on in October and several were on the second weekend. We want to allow attendees plenty of time to take the information from our event and then utilize it in their fall garden, because fall is the best time to plant and feed your garden. Therefore, we are returning Fall Garden Fest to the first Saturday of the month in October.

Our follow-up meeting yielded several ideas and positive responses that can be utilized for 2020. This will be the last year for this leadership crew and new leaders will be needed for the future. For 2020 we are looking for a specific volunteer for the upcoming year that can help us in the role of volunteer coordinator. Be part of the process and have your ideas implemented to continue making Fall Garden Fest better each year.



It's time to renew your annual DCMGA membership!

- Annual dues paid by January 31, 2020 are \$15.
- Annual dues paid after January 31, 2020 will be \$25.
- All service hours and AT hours must be entered in VMS no later than January 31, 2020.
- Any member not in good standing as of March 31, 2020 will be inactivated, unless granted an exception by the CEA-Hort.

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.



BY BARBARA RIDGE

Q: I want to plant thornless blackberry bushes this fall. My husband grew up in Washington state near a berry farm and said that blackberries grow aggressively. Are less-aggressive varieties available that will grow well in north Texas?

A: As a child, I relished picking fresh, wild blackberries, warm from the sun! A wonderful option in North Texas, cultivated blackberries delight the senses just as well as the wild ones, with less aggressive growth.

The thornless variety recommended for our area is Natchez, a semi-erect plant that requires some simple trellising in the second year. Late winter is the right time to put in root cuttings, but dormant plants can be planted anytime, although early spring is optimal. Blackberries need excellent drainage, so you may need to plant in berms of compost-amended soil.

Texas A&M North Texas Regional Viticulture Extension Program Specialist Michael Cook also recommends Ouachita -- "another excellent thornless cultivar that has potential to perform (well) ... especially in the heavy soils of Denton County."

With regard to aggressive growth, it would be best to corral these vigorous plants behind in-ground metal edging or another barrier and to pull any young shoots from undesirable locations. Make sure to keep branch tips away from the soil, as they will propagate themselves via this "layering," as well. The cultivated varieties are not as aggressive as the wild, thankfully, but as with any hardy plant, you'll want to keep a watch on its growth.

The articles below offer excellent recommendations.

Detailed, Texas-specific information:

https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/fruit-nut/?fbclid=IwAR2uHENDV8ZudHupkQNIk3X_tiKoo2wlxyfC2WFXodMvLC-IXTYc09j_9vo

Recommended variety:

Natchez, a Texas Superstar™

<https://today.agrilife.org/2013/02/14/natchez-thornless-blackberry/>



Stock Photo Courtesy of Canva



If you have questions about planting blackberries 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



TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION

Thank you to



Southwest Displays & Events
for supplying our pipe and drapes



Justin Seed Co.
for their wildflower seed donation

2019 our
Fall Garden Fest
Sponsors



Keep Lewisville Beautiful Presents...

2019 Garden Secrets Classes

Join Keep Lewisville Beautiful and City of Lewisville for FREE community classes led by Denton County Master Gardeners and The Texas Agrilife Extension Office. **Classes are free but seats are limited to first 40 participants to RSVP.**

All classes will be held either in Classroom 1 or Recital Hall at the MCL Grand (100 N Charles St, 75057).

RSVP REQUIRED: 972-538-5949
info@keeplewisvillebeautiful.org



The mission of Keep Lewisville Beautiful is to engage the citizens of Lewisville through service and education to enhance their community environment.



RSVP: 972-538-5949

keeplewisvillebeautiful.org

info@keeplewisvillebeautiful.org



*For All DCMGA Project Managers
(Rookies & Veterans)
And Those Who Would Like to Become One!*

• NOVEMBER 20, 2019 •

Project Manager Symposium

• 9 AM TO 12 NOON •
Approved for 3 Hours of AT or VS

Room 115
Joseph A. Carroll Building
401 W. Hickory Street, Denton

**Featuring a dynamic presentation by
Kaber Communications President Karen Reid:
"Planting the Seeds of Engagement"**

Sessions Include:

Mission & Governance

Administrative Protocols

Leading & Motivating a Team

Board Member & Support Staff Panel Discussion



Texas A&M AgriLife Extension is an equal opportunity employer and program provider. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating.

Persons with disabilities needing accommodations for effective participation in the meeting should contact Denton County AgriLifeExtension office at least a week in advance of the meeting or event to request mobility, visual, hearing or other assistance.



2020 GREATER AUBREY AREA GARDENING SERIES

**Jump start your 2020 gardening with this
free educational series.**



JANUARY 16
Veggie
Gardening 101
Dana Bays



AUGUST 20
Waterwise
Gardening
Shirlee & Cloud Singer



FEBRUARY 20
Texas Plants
AgriLife TBD



SEPTEMBER 17
Roses
Pat & Don Edwards



MARCH 19
Texas Trees
Pat Moyer



OCTOBER 15
Pots in Small Spots:
Container Gardening
AgriLife TBD

AUBREY AREA LIBRARY

226 Countryside Drive
Aubrey, TX 76227

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

6:00 PM - 7:00 PM

**Third Thursday: Jan, Feb, & March
and August, September & October**

SPONSORED BY

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KEEP AMERICA BEAUTIFUL AFFILIATE



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:

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Instagram:

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

Twitter:

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

Pinterest:

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

YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCtNGrhH1hopNTVcMNnUyi2A>

Save the Date

November 13	General Meeting & Elections
November 20	PM Summit
December 11	Christmas Party & Ugly Sweater Contest
January 15	Graduation & Annual Banquet

Contact Information

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Denton TX 76201-9026

Office: 940.349.2883

Help Desk:

940.349.2892

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Webmaster:

dcmga.webmaster@gmail.com

Communications:

dcmga.communications@gmail.com

Website:

<https://dcmga.com>

Content

Submission deadline for the November edition of *The Root* is Friday, November 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.

<https://dcmga.com>