

Denton County Master Gardener Association

# THE ROOT

Grow With Us



'Monsieur Tillier' Rose Photo Courtesy DCMGA Member Sharrie Ely

## Buds From The Board

BY KATHRYN WELLS, PRESIDENT

Happy New Year, friends!

After a challenging (to say the least!) year, doesn't it feel hopeful to start afresh? As we look forward to the promises of 2021, we have much to celebrate.

Congratulations to the Class of 2020 graduates, our newest DCMGA members! These fine folks persevered through more than they ever expected or preferred. About halfway through the curriculum, mandated COVID-19 protocols required Intern Class Administrators Kim Wootton, Barbara Beane, and Sonny Smith to quickly pivot and establish a virtual classroom for the remainder of the program. Of course, they rose to the occasion with faithful excellence, and this group of ever-enthusiastic interns moved through the unprecedented twists and turns with skill, grace, flexibility, and determination. Well done, y'all!

And, we are so delighted to welcome our new intern class: 30 intrepid individuals chosen for our first ever completely virtual training program. Hooray for the Class of 2021!

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<https://dcmga.com>

## WHAT'S GROWING ON

- .....
- 01 Buds From The Board
  - 03 Meet a Member:  
Pam Spooner
  - 05 Membership Renewal
  - 06 Plant of the Month:  
Soft Leaf vs Red Yuccas
  - 09 AgriLife Report
  - 10 Feature Article:  
Seasonal Slumber
  - 13 2021 Garden Tour  
Preview
  - 14 Going Old (Tool)  
School
  - 15 DCMGA Holiday  
Celebration 2020
  - 19 2021 Board of Directors
  - 21 Online Education  
Opportunities
  - 23 Help Desk Q&A:  
Winterizing Tools
  - 25 Sue Stunich Memorial

## Buds From The Board (Cont.)

Our Greater Aubrey Area Gardening Series kicks off this month, and the much anticipated presentations will be virtual. (How's that for an easy commute?!) Advance registration is required, but as always, the programs are free and open to the public. Be sure to check the flyer in this issue for more information, or visit the [Upcoming Events section of our website](#). Information and registration is also available via our [Facebook events page](#). Past President Pat Moyer kicks off the series with his "Texas Trees" presentation on January 21st.

Speaking of trees, the annual Denton County Soil & Water Conservation District tree seedling sale is currently underway. With ten species available at prices from \$4 to \$9.50, it's a tree-iffic deal, and proceeds benefit our Cool Shade for the Third Grade project. Quantities are limited, so branch out and [log on to our website to place your order](#).

As we begin this new year, conditions remain challenging due to necessary pandemic protocols. Still and yet, we will continue our mission of educating and engaging our community in the implementation of research-based horticultural and environmental practices that create sustainable gardens, landscapes, and communities. So, come on, y'all; let's get growing!

*Kathryn*



## Meet Pam Spooner

BY CHERYL HUCKABEE

When she was a child in Norfolk, England, U.K., Pam's father picked fresh vegetables from his allotment garden for Sunday dinner. An allotment garden is like a community garden in the U.S. except gardeners tend each garden individually rather than in a group. Gardening is a vital part of everyday life in the U.K., so it's only natural that gardening continues to be an important part of Pam's.

At eleven years old, Pam crossed the Atlantic Ocean in an ocean liner with her parents and pet parakeet. From the Port of New York, they made their way by bus to Odessa, Texas, to join her older sister, her U.S. Airman brother-in-law, and their children. Pam's father valiantly tried to continue gardening in the harsh Odessa soil and climate. After lots of failures, he settled on nurturing a beautiful turf grass lawn.

Having earned a BA in Humanities (UT-Permian Basin) and MS in Library Science (UNT), Pam made her way to Sul Ross State University in Alpine, Texas, to work as a reference librarian.

Alpine is nestled in a beautiful valley at an elevation of 4,500 feet. Pam rejuvenated her interest in gardening in Alpine's mild climate where she nurtured fifty-one rose bushes, ornamental plants, and, as a true Brit at heart, grew potatoes. As luck would have it, Pam met her late husband, Mark Penna, in the Sul Ross library over some soil survey maps. Mark was a highly respected, award-winning winemaker and proud Aggie horticulture graduate. Mark encouraged Pam's gardening by bringing her rose plants he acquired during his business travel.

Their next stop took them to Dripping Springs, Texas, for Mark's work to help design the vineyards and winery at Duchman Family Winery with Pam continuing her reference librarian career at Austin Community College. Their work-life was quite hectic, so, although they had plenty of space on their six-acre property, they did not have the time to garden or the will to exclude the many hungry deer. Mark passed in 2011 after a courageous battle with brain cancer. Pam stayed on in the Austin area, working for Austin Community College until mid-2017.

Pam returned to her old stomping grounds in Denton in June 2017. And, lucky for DCMGA, she reinvigorated her interest in gardening and began Master Gardener training in February 2018. Her home landscape in central Denton is highly shaded by Ash and Hackberry trees. In the past year, she's landscaped the "hell" strip and part of her front yard with ornamental grasses, daylilies (*Hemerocallis*), salvia (*Salvia officinalis*), and a variety of ornamental plants. In the few sunny spots in the backyard, Pam grows lots of varieties of coleus (*Plectranthus scutellarioides*), zinnias, purple perilla (*Perilla frutescens*), hyacinth bean vine (*Lablab purpureus*), and Mexican sunflower (*Tithonia rotundifolia*), and, of course, potatoes in 10-gallon pots. In the shady front yard, she's planted a variety of Texas natives and adaptives, including ajuga (*Ajuga reptans*) and elephant ears (*Colocasia esculenta*).



**Pam Spooner,  
DCMGA Class of 2018**



## Pam Spooner (Cont.)

Pam's service for DCMGA includes a variety of projects. Her thirty-year career as a college and university level reference librarian serves the DCMGA Help Desk exceedingly well where she is the assistant project manager. Most recently, she's taken on the role of 2021 Garden Tour co-captain for Steve and Joanne Spurgin's home. She most enjoys the continuous learning available through the Texas Master Gardener program.

Ever conscious of her role as an educator, Pam shared her two favorite gardening books and Facebook groups.

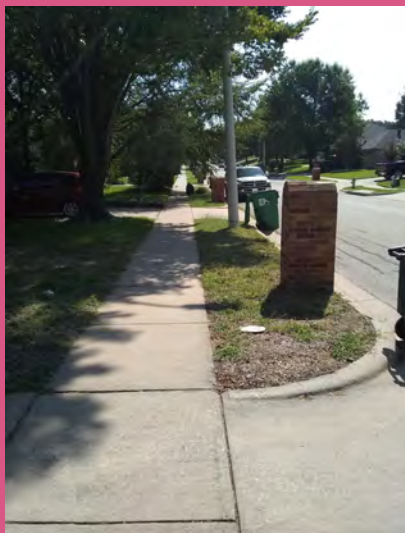
- *Passalong Plants*, by Steve Bender & Felder Rushing (2002), University of North Carolina Press
- *A Book of Salvias: Sages for Every Garden*, Betsy Clebsch (1997), Timber Press, Inc.
- [Insect Identification Facebook Group](#)
- [Plant Identification Facebook Group](#)
- [What's Wrong With My Plant Facebook Group](#)

Denton County Master Gardener Association is so lucky to have Pam as a member!



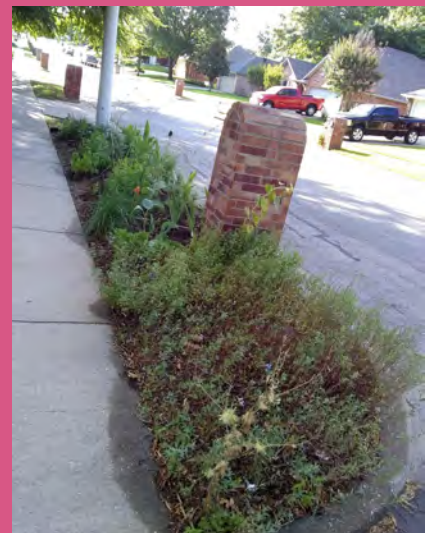
Photos Courtesy DCMGA Member Pam Spooner

**Beloved potatoes grown in 10-gallon pots**



← Before  
Pam's "hell" strip

After →  
"Hell strip" planted  
with ornamental  
grasses, daylilies,  
salvias, and Texas  
native ornamentals.



## It's time to renew your annual DCMGA membership!

- Annual dues paid by January 31, 2021 are \$15.
- Annual dues paid after January 31, 2021 will be \$25.
- All service hours and AT hours must be entered in VMS no later than January 31, 2021.
- Any member not in good standing as of March 31, 2021 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 Kathryn Wells or Member-at-Large Tammie Gurley with any questions or concerns.

## DCMGA Intern Graduation

Since an in-person banquet is not protocol-appropriate during the continuing COVID-19 restrictions, we're celebrating our Class of 2020 graduates with doorstep deliveries, Publisher's Clearinghouse style!

Our annual award winners will be announced during our virtual Volunteer Opportunity Fair on February 10th. (More information coming soon.)

Hopefully, we'll celebrate in person with a modified banquet sometime in late spring or early summer. In the meantime, let's get these hard-working graduates their official DCMGA Texas-shaped name badges!





## Plant of the Month - Soft Leaf Yuccas vs Red Yuccas

### *One is Real, One Masquerades, but Both are Beautiful!*

BY LEE ANN YATES

Both Soft Leaf Yuccas (*Yucca recurvifolia*) and Red Yuccas (*Hesperaloe parviflora*) are very popular plants in Denton County and the surrounding areas. They can be seen in pastures, along roadsides in mass plantings, and in home landscapes. There are many reasons these two plants are prevalent in Texas. They are very drought and heat tolerant perennials, but neither are bothered by our intermittent cold snaps. They are native to the Chihuahuah Desert of Mexico and West Texas, but have heartily adapted to the higher rainfall of North Central Texas. They enjoy living in full Texas sun, but will accept partially shaded conditions as well. Once established, they will prosper only on the natural rainfall, requiring no additional irrigation. In fact, you really should protect them from sprinklers as too much water will kill them off quicker than the bad guy in an old Western. They have striking, yet wildly different, appearances.

### **Soft Leaf Yucca**

Soft Leaf Yucca, *Yucca recurvifolia*, is a true Yucca and is named for its blue-green, strap-like leaves that recurve gracefully. The leaves have slightly, but not dangerously, sharp edges, so have a care if you run your fingers along them. They grow in a bold rosette form. Over time, Soft Leaf Yuccas can reach eight feet tall by six feet wide, so make sure you give these statuesque lovelies the room they will need. This is one plant that does not look right when it is pruned! It is a moderate grower, so plan ahead especially if you are using them in a mass planting or as a screen – they don't look pretty all jammed together either. If you are in an area where grass fires are a concern or where houses are built quite closely together, Soft Leaf Yuccas are considered a suitable fire-wise choice for landscape planting. They have such a strong architectural quality that they make excellent specimen plants. They play well with others in a landscape as long as the Soft Leaf Yuccas are not drowned by other plants' water needs. If salty soil or water is a concern, these plants are pretty salt tolerant also. Planted with other Texas natives and perennials, evergreen Soft Leaf Yuccas can really anchor a landscape. Remember to always consider water and light requirements for your plants and group them accordingly for best performance.



*Yucca recurvifolia* by Cillas is licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0

**Soft Leaf Yucca**

## Soft Leaf Yuccas vs Red Yuccas (Cont.)

As architecturally striking as Soft Leaf Yuccas are all year, they really show off in the heat of summer when they produce a three foot to five foot tall flower spike. The creamy white blooms come at a time when not much else is in bloom and their very pleasant fragrance is a boon to flower lovers! If you co-exist with deer, be aware that those four-legged friends enjoy snacking on the blooms, but not the leaves of Soft Leaf Yuccas. As the blooms fade, the stalks should be removed at the base.

The Native Plant Society of Texas' website mentioned that Native Americans used native yuccas in a variety of ways. Referencing the book, *Texas Trees – a Friendly Guide* by Paul Cox and Patty Leslie, NPSOT reports indigenous peoples used the trunks for building stockades and the leaves for thatching shelters. Yucca flowers were eaten either raw or cooked and sometimes pickled. The roots can be used to make soap, and in some areas, fibers from the leaves are still used to make rope, twine, and other products.

### Red Yucca

Our so-called Red Yucca only masquerades as a Yucca. Some of its characteristics are yucca-like (leaves, fruit, and seeds), but others are not (the tubular flowers), so a new genus was created by Missourian George Englemann in 1871 – *Hesperaloe*. Red Yuccas, a member of the Agave family, are actually *Hesperaloe parviflora* – showcasing the importance of knowing botanical names. *Hesperaloe* translates from Latin as “Western” plus “aloe” while *parviflora* means “small flowers.” *Hesperaloe parviflora* was moved to the new genus officially in 1894. Red Yuccas can grow up to five feet tall by four feet wide, but are usually in the two to three feet range. Like the Soft Leaf Yuccas, they enjoy full sun or partial shade and are highly drought, heat, and cold tolerant. Red Yuccas have adapted to a variety of soils, but prefer drier, well-drained soil, so take care to not overwater.

The stiff, long, spear-like leaves grow from a woody rosette base in a clump which slowly expands over time. Leaves are ever-“green” – they turn from dark olive green, grey-green, or blue-green in warmer weather to a dark plum color in winter. The leaves have white, threadlike hairs along the edges and a sharp, pointy end. These architecturally striking plants need plenty of room to grow without



Photo Courtesy Gauthier, Jerry, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

Red Yucca



## Soft Leaf Yuccas vs Red Yuccas (Cont.)

pruning, like their Soft Leaf friends. Plant them at least two to three feet from sidewalks, driveways, and structures. The leaf ends can be slightly spiky, so you don't want them where people may brush against them. Friction will cause the leaf ends to fray and be unattractive, as well. They are long-lived plants that work well in large pots (with drain holes in the bottom!) or in rock or perennial gardens with well-draining soil.

Red Yuccas produce dramatic arching, pinkish flower stems that can be quite long. The reddish-coral hued tubular flowers appear between March and July, often later. They draw pollinating hummingbirds and night-pollinating moths – and deer, which eat both the foliage and flowers. The black, inch-long seeds grow in interesting tri-lobed pods that add to Red Yuccas' visual interest. The seeds can be planted to increase your numbers or be used as bird food. Pups, or baby Red Yuccas, grow at the base of the plants and can be carefully broken off, allowed to cure for a few days like other succulents, then planted in pots or beds.

You may also see these plants with buttery yellow flowers – this occurs naturally and is not a man-made hybrid. What a beautiful addition to your landscape! They are not as easily found in nurseries as the coral-red ones, so nab it when you see it! There are, however, several hybrid cultivars that have been developed by a nursery in Arizona. For a listing of some of these, as well as photos, refer to Neil Sperry's article from a 2019 newsletter here: <https://neilsperry.com/2019/05/red-yuccas-rule/>

As we sit inside during the winter cold contemplating changes or additions to our landscapes, I urge you to consider using Soft Leaf Yucca or Red (or yellow! Or one of the hybrids!) Yucca/Hesperaloe in your gardens. Spring will be here before we know it! Happy Planning!

### Resources

*Texas SmartScape*, "Yucca, Softleaf"

<http://www.txsmartscape.com/plant-search/plant-details.php?id=929>

*Texas A&M AgriLife*, "Top 100 Plants for North Texas"

<https://cdn-ext.agnet.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/top-100-plants-for-north-texas.pdf>

*Arizona Cooperative Extension*, Backyard Gardener, "Red Yucca: Drought tolerant and Colorful"

<https://cals.arizona.edu/yavapai/anr/hort/byg/archive/hesperaloe.html>

*Neil Sperry's Gardens*, "Red Yuccas Rule!"

<https://neilsperry.com/2019/05/red-yuccas-rule/>

*University of Arkansas*, System Division of Agriculture, "Plant of the Week, Red Yucca"

<https://www.uaex.edu/yard-garden/resource-library/plant-week/yucca-red-7-9-10.aspx>



## AgriLife Reports over \$1,000,000 in Volunteer Work in 2020 !

The work of educating our community never ends, and with the food shortages and other effects of the pandemic raging, Texas AgriLife Extension Service, parent organization to DCMGA, has been busier than ever. In its year-end report to the Commissioners Court, AgriLife reported 47,542 hours of volunteer work provided this year. That's a value to the county of \$1,293,163!

DCMGA members are proud to represent almost 20,000 of those hours for a value of \$539,267. That is a lot of work educating the public through video programs, outdoor teaching, overworking our Help Desk volunteers and helping Community Gardens across Denton County crank out over 50,000 pounds of produce donated to food banks!

*Thank you, DCMGA members!*



DCMGA volunteers helped Community Gardens across Denton County crank out over 50,000 pounds of produce to donate to food banks in 2020!

To see the entire AgriLife report, please visit the [Denton County Texas A&M AgriLife Extension](#) Facebook page, and scroll down to the "Watch this video to learn more..." posting OR click on this link: <https://fb.watch/2HqmMakOIN/>.

## Safe and Sound Seasonal Slumber

### *Preserving Creatures' Habitat When It's Cold on the Thermostat*

BY KATHRYN WELLS

Winter in the garden looks still and cold. It may even appear lifeless. But, beneath the surface in a humanely cultivated garden, animation abounds. Quietly, yet unmistakably, a full-fledged ecosystem is evolving. Yet, this little biological community is, like the characters in Dr. Seuss's *Horton Hears a Who*, mostly invisible and unnoticed. However, our oblivion does not negate their existence, so let's take a peek at some of the life teeming under the seemingly static surface of our most severe season.

### ***Sleeping Beauties (Overwintering Butterflies and Moths)***

Shedding leaves are a seasonal dilemma for gardeners. Ask ten different gardeners how they handle leaf litter, and you'll probably get ten different answers. Ask this particular gardener and you'll hear, "Please leave the leaves!" because next season's butterflies and moths are pupating underneath the fallen foliage.

Red-Banded Hairstreaks (*Calycopis cecrops*), for example, lay eggs on fallen leaves under oaks (*Quercus sp.*), sumacs (*Rhus sp.*), and wax myrtles (*Myrica cerifera*). Sumacs are also host plants for the magnificent Luna Moth as well as the favored hickories (*Carya sp.*), persimmons (*Diospyros sp.*), walnuts (*Juglans*), and sweetgums (*Liquidambar styraciflua*). And these are but two examples of hundreds.

Nectaring on bright, sweet, full blooms in warmer seasons, adult lepidoptera steal the show, but, for these beauties to complete their metamorphosis, they must have a safe place to begin. So, before you rake it, bag it, blow it (or, yes, even compost it!), consider leaving at least of portion of your garden *au naturel*.



Photos Courtesy DCMGA Member Kathryn Wells

### **Luna Moth**

With a wingspan of up to 4 to 5 inches, the magnificent Luna Moth (*Actias luna*) is one of the largest moths in North America. In winter, the species pupates under fallen leaves of several native tree species including the Pecan (*Carya illinoensis*), state tree of Texas.

## Safe and Sound Seasonal Slumber (Cont.)



### Woodhouse Toad

A nocturnal insect-feeder, the Woodhouse Toad (*Anaxyrus woodhousii*) is one of many amphibious species that hibernates through winter in soft ground under a protecting layer of leaf litter.

### Toad-ally Torpid (Hibernating Frogs and Toads)

To survive winter temperatures, terrestrial frogs and toads bury below the frost line. Because the bodies of these cold-blooded creatures appropriate the temperature of their environment, leaf litter literally helps keep them from freezing.

These amphibians have a natural antifreeze (high concentrations of glucose) so they are able to withstand a state of torpor; however, extremely cold temperatures may form ice crystals, which puncture cells and organs (ouch!). Once that happens, there's no recovery.

These insect eaters are an important part of a healthy ecosystem, helping keep much of what bugs us (including flies and mosquitoes) at bay. So, leave an insulating leaf layer to help protect our amphibian friends for their long winter's nap.

### Bee-neath the Surface (Burrowing Bees)

Seventy percent of Texas native bees are ground dwellers. Among them are American Bumblebees (*Bombus pensylvanicus*). Once abundant in the United States, American bumblebees now have a NatureServe conservation status of "vulnerable." Contributing to their decline are practices such as habitat destruction and pesticide use.

Prized and productive pollinators, these gentle giants are essential workers within our ecosystem, and, when they're not laboring above the earth's surface, they're laying low beneath it, sheltered under the protection of fallen leaves and other organic matter. Habitat is especially important for overwintering queens, who will emerge to begin new colonies in the warmth of spring. So, bee thoughtful when considering your winter landscape, and allow some undisturbed areas in which our big ol' buzz pollinators can burrow.

Other native bee species such as those in the *Megachilidae* family (including Leafcutters and Masons) overwinter in hollow and/or pithy plant stalks, so it's a good practice to leave some of those in your



## Safe and Sound Seasonal Slumber (Cont.)

winter garden. Plant species such as Bee Balm/Wild Bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*) and Joe Pye Weed (*Eutrochium fistulosum*) are good choices. Helpful hint: the word "fistula" comes from Latin and means "long, narrow pipe; tubular; hollow; porous; ulcerous," so if you see a form of that word in a plant name, it's a sure sign of a bee-worthy habitat.



### American Bumblebee

Once the most prevalent bumblebee species in the southern United States, the American Bumblebee (*Bombus pensylvanicus*)

is experiencing a drastic population decline due, in part, to loss of habitat.

The continued survival of these essential ground-dwelling pollinators depends upon protected accommodations for their overwintering queens.

So, in the spirit of Horton, who once heard a Who, here is a pledge from me unto you. "My friends!" cried the (gardener). "Tell me! Do tell! Are you safe? Are you sound? Are you whole? Are you well? ... Don't give up; don't give up! I believe in you all. A (creature's) a (creature) no matter how small. ... I meant what I said, and I said what I meant. A (gardener) is faithful ... one hundred percent."



### Denton County Master Gardener Association



This year has brought a resurgence of interest in gardening and with it, an increase in Help Desk activity. With this in mind, the Help Desk page has been updated and streamlined. If you have a gardening/plant question, make the Help Desk page your first-stop resource. It's very likely you will quickly and easily find the answers you need.

<https://dcmga.com/north-texas-gardening/help-desk/>

## 2021 Garden Tour Preview

### *My Garden Playground*

*Editor's Note: For the next few months, we will share a sneak peak of this year's Garden Tour locations. Be prepared to see some colorful and creative gardens.*

This well-established yard will delight your senses as you experience colorful yard art, delightful aromas, subtle sounds, and colorful happy plants that have been planted in the right place. Notice the eight-year-old pineapple guava tree at the gate to the yard. It produces beautiful flowers and fruit that has a pineapple taste. Pass through the gate and proceed to walk under huge crepe myrtle trees that are at least thirty years old and have incredible bark. As you continue along the walkways, search for the hidden door that leads to your mind's imagination and notice the succulent area on the back ledge of the pool. Some of the flowers the cacti produce are breathtaking and only last for a day. Unique art pieces are exquisitely placed throughout the yard.

Another feature is the bog garden located at the bottom of the retaining wall. This area gets a lot of water, has poor drainage, and is one of the hottest spots of the yard. Henry Duelberg salvia does well here, which the bumblebees



appreciate, as does the bog sage blooming with bright blue blossoms. The dry creek bed on the south side of the garden solves a drainage issue and is also aesthetically pleasing to the eye.

The owner loves the back porch and calls it "my spot in the world." From the porch, most of the yard is visible and is so "relaxing" for her. Bur Oaks planted sixteen years ago provide shade and (later in the season) leaves, which are ultimately used as compost. The garden has hot spots, super-hot spots, shade, super shade, wet, super wet, etc., and as the owner says, "right plant, right place –that is half the battle!"

## Going Old (Tool) School

BY NICK BARROWS

I love tools. I love really old rusty tools that have been neglected, new tools that use technology, and basic everyday items that make accomplishing tasks easier. There are common tools that gardeners rely on for normal tasks, but we also have specialty tools that are prized for that one task.

Well-made tools give me the fizz. Over the years, I have collected orphaned tools from friends, family, and neighbors. I never asked for them; I guess they just thought I should have them. I often gawk down the garden hand tool aisle at Home Depot – fiberglass-handled shovels, composite-handled implements, and shiny gloss finishes on the wooden ones, all designed to attract the eye of a customer. I pick them up and they feel all wrong. They don't give me the feeling that they know what they are supposed to do. They have no soul.

I like to find tools at yard sales. I know, it's a bit of an acquired taste, but you grab someone's old \$5 shovel at a yard sale and that thing screams at you, "I know how to dig a hole." I believe it. I buy it. I place it next to the other shovels that also convinced me they know how to dig. One day we are going to get some serious work done. That's the fizz.

This summer I found a NEW tool that gives me the fizz – a Nejiri Gama. It originated in Japan and its design is thousands of years old. The Nejiri Gama is a weeding tool, but you could also describe it as a sickle or a scraper tool. It is about 15 inches long and basically is a knife edge with a handle. It is super cool, it is dangerous, and it absolutely destroys weeds!



Designed to work hard and be used again and again, the Nejiri Gama will need to be sharpened occasionally. Some may find that task too much, but if you can put an edge on a blade or use a file, it is an easy enough task. The Nejiri Gama isn't expensive, about \$35, and can be purchased online. I highly recommend you check one out.





## DCMGA Holiday Celebration 2020 - Virtual Style



Against all odds, and despite all the obstacles, nothing could dampen the resolve of Denton County Master Gardeners to celebrate the holiday season together and learn a little too. The first-ever virtual Holiday Celebration was held on December 9. We laughed and learned and enjoyed one another's company as the impressive, creative virtual program went off without a hitch.

### Eight of our talented Master Gardeners presented mini-programs

From her back porch, Lori Barr presented *Holiday Decorating with Natural Elements*. Lori demonstrated how to use plant cuttings and common garden supplies to create holiday porch pots, Christmas trees, and wreaths.



## DCMGA Holiday Celebration 2020 (Cont.)

*Veggie Gardener's Christmas Tree.* Lynda Harvey and her dog Penny demonstrated turning a large flower pot and tomato cage into a Christmas tree complete with juniper branches, seed-filled glass ornaments, and vegetable seed package ornaments.



### 12 Days of Christmas

**REVERSE ADVENT CALENDAR:** Each day add an item to a box. On Sunday, December 20, bring it to Church and it will be taken to the Shepherd's Storehouse for distribution.

December 12	Box of cereal Peanut butter
December 13	Stuffing mix Boxed potatoes Macaroni and cheese
December 14	Canned fruit Canned tuna Dessert mix
December 15	Jar of applesauce Can of sweet potatoes Cranberry sauce
December 16	Canned beans Box of crackers Package of rice
December 17	Package of oatmeal Package of pasta Spaghetti sauce
December 18	Chicken noodle soup Tomato soup Can of corn
December 19	Can of mixed vegetables Can of green beans/ carrots



Bonnie Ambrose shared her blended families' 12 Days of Christmas Box Tradition, which includes a gift for each grandchild on each of the 12 days before Christmas and a new tradition of a donation from each grandchild to the Pilot Point Food Pantry.

### Beginning on December 12

- › Box unique to each child
  - 12 gifts
  - One for each day
  - Wrapped in brown paper
  - Traditional gifts included
    - › Underwear
    - › Pillowcases
    - › Books



## DCMGA Holiday Celebration 2020 (Cont.)

Sharon Clark showed us how to make gorgeous artwork with *Flower Pounding* by "pounding" images of flowers and foliage onto paper or fabric with a hammer.



We learned how Ann Hillman, the middle child of 11, knew Santa had arrived each year when the Christ-child appeared in the manger in her story *Has Santa Been Here Yet?*



Another outdoor holiday decorating idea using finds from her landscape was presented by Cece Kenney in *Quick and Easy Mailbox Swag*.





## DCMGA Holiday Celebration 2020 (Cont.)

Debby Ishee showed us how to use an abundant harvest by making Jalapeno Jelly.



Lisa Lebsack, all decked out in her finest, presented a *Christmas Tea* complete with menu ideas, table decorations, and proper etiquette.

There were virtual party games and door prizes too! Keeping with our annual tradition, Member-at-Large Tammie Gurley shared charitable giving opportunities for DCMGA members.

Our beloved CEA Horticulture Janet Laminack and her sidekick Nikki Johnson presented a fun Holiday video.



Many thanks to Party Chair Dee Payne, Program Co-Chairs Beverly Duncan and Gay Campbell, our talented presenters, and emcee President Kathryn Wells for putting this together. We may have started a new tradition!

## 2021 Board of Directors



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Kathryn Wells**



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**Past President  
Pat Moyer**





## 2020: A Retrospective

BY PRESIDENT KATHRYN WELLS

As 2020 came to a close, I spent a good bit of time reflecting on all that we collectively accomplished as an Association.

The results of my pondering is a year in review retrospective, "(Hindsight is) 2020 Vision", which can be found on the Newsletter page of our website.

While it is not comprehensive and only covers the highlights, it certainly is a great reminder of "mission accomplished" . . . despite the most daunting odds.

Many thanks to each of our members, interns, committee chairs, project managers, directors, and officers for adapting and excelling through an unprecedented (at least in our lifetime!) year. I am grateful for your sunny spirits and indefatigable efforts!

On a personal note, while many individual members experienced great victories this year, others endured (and continue to endure) tremendous hardship. Please know that I celebrate your joys and grieve your trials.

May you be blessed with every protection and provision in the new year. You are valued and appreciated!

Kathryn Wells  
DCMGA President



## January Cover Photo

BY SHARRIE ELY

'Monsieur Tillier' is a lovely Old Garden Rose variety that blooms well for me. It blooms in December and continuously blooms throughout the year. It even blooms in the heat of summer with blooms in July.

The color is described as "coppery" or orange-pink.

Bred by Alexandre Bernaix,  
France, 1891







## Online Education Opportunities

### For Master Gardeners and the Community We Serve

Science-based knowledge on a variety of topics in an innovative and interactive virtual format.

#### AgriLife Online Courses

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

(Most, but not all, are free.)

<https://agrilifelearn.tamu.edu/catalog?pagename=Plants-and-Garden>

#### Earth-Kind® Online Master Gardener Training

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

<https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/earthkind/training/>

#### Introduction to Plant Identification

UDSA NRCS Science & Technology

<http://www.conservationwebinars.net/webinars/introduction-to-plant-identification>

#### Aggie Horticulture YouTube

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCbp4wkScRVoHlN3Hi1\\_KUQ/](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCbp4wkScRVoHlN3Hi1_KUQ/)

#### DCMGA General Meeting CE Programs

"The Ease of Effective Hardscaping"

"Preserving the Harvest:

"Growing Green and Saving Blue,"

Daniel Cunningham, AgriLife

"Gardens Gone Wild"

"Getting Buggy"

Business meetings

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

#### Gardening 101 + Virtual Learning Series

Aggie Horticulture

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

Texas AgriLife posts great videos to the Aggie Horticulture Facebook. There are over 50 presentations here. View them at:

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/Aggie-Horticulture-26803072143/1541129202716211/>

#### Citrus Varieties:

#### Gardening on the Gulf Coast

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

Stephen Brueggerhoff, Extension Agent – Horticulture

<https://youtu.be/wSIRjQJnxhE>

#### Chat with Green Aggies

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

All previous recordings:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLxT5cUdFaycrUzUiWSA4.6JRPGBYSFiFzH>

#### DCMGA Members

Watch for a VMS email with current Online CE Opportunities.

See our [Member Handbook](#) for approved CE sources and guidelines.

Note that members may claim up to three hours of annual discretionary education; veteran members with 10+ years of service may claim up to six.

## Online Education Opportunities (Cont.)

### DCMGA Fall Garden Fest Presentations

Dr. Hennen Cummings at 10:00 am Presenting "Your North Texas Turf Needs"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?=EpMG6dvYdEY>

Toni Moorehead at 1:30 pm Presenting

"Fall/Winter Tips & To-do's for North Central Texas Gardens"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sjCVnRQyX74>

Betsy Marsh at 3:00 p.m. Presenting

"Gardens that Give Back: Lovely, Low-Water, Life-Giving Landscapes"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G5a2HXvkmYs>

### DCMGA Greater Aubrey Area Gardening Series

January 21, 2021. 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM.

"Texas Trees" presented by Pat Moyer.

Event location: (VIA Zoom) Aubrey Area Library

To preregister: <https://dcmga.com/gaags/>

February 18, 2021. 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM.

"Gardens Gone Wild: Putting Out the Welcome Mat for Wildlife Habitat," Presented by Kathryn Wells

Event location: (VIA Zoom) Aubrey Area Library

To preregister: <https://dcmga.com/gaags/>

### Special presentations from DCMGA Christmas party

begin at 24:36 minutes on our YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a7j2R5xA1EU>

## AgriLife Water University

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

The educational presentations and handouts previously provided from Water University are no longer available to the public effective November 10, 2020. We are sorry for any inconvenience the loss of this valuable resources creates for subscribers of *The Root*.

In the absence of the resources of Water University, AgriLife offers these suggestions for sustainable gardening information: [Texas Master Gardener](#) program or the [Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service](#) online. For additional online classes, check out AgriLife's digital course offerings at [AgriLife Learn](#).

## Denton County Master Gardener YouTube Channel

Our virtual General Meetings and other programs can be viewed on our YouTube Channel. Check it out! And don't forget to subscribe!

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



### BY HELP DESK TEAM

*Q: I started gardening this year for the first time and bought several garden tools. I want to take care of them so they'll last a long time. What is the best way to clean them and prevent rust?*

**A:** Thanks so much for a great question. It's terrific that you're planning to continue gardening! A relevant quote comes to mind:

"When fishermen cannot go to sea, they repair nets." — Nabil Sabio Azadi

During the winter while not much outdoor gardening is going on, preventative maintenance of your garden tools is a great way to prepare for spring. This maintenance includes cleaning and sanitizing your tools, sharpening blades, and maintenance of any power tools you may have.

#### Supplies:

- Safety glasses and thick gloves to protect your eyes and hands
- Mill file, carborundum stone, and vise grip for sharpening
- Water-displacing penetrating lubricant to remove and prevent rust, and lubricate moving parts (examples WD-40®, Blaster® Penetrating Catalyst, Liquid Wrench®, 3-in-One® Multipurpose Drip Oil).
- Turpentine to remove plant sap
- Boiled linseed oil to preserve wood handles
- Wire brush and a putty knife to remove soil
- Sandpaper to smooth wood handles and steel wool to polish fine metal surfaces

#### Step 1

Clean and remove any soil and debris. Use the wire brush and/or putty knife and soap and water on hand tools (shovels, spades, trowels, rakes, hoes, pruning shears, loppers, and hedge clippers). Remove any plant debris from under the mower deck, string trimmer, and other power garden tools to eliminate weed seeds that may be hanging out there.

Disinfect the blades of pruning shears and loppers to eliminate spreading disease. This should be done after every use.

Use steel wool or the wire brush to remove rust from metal surfaces.

#### Step 2

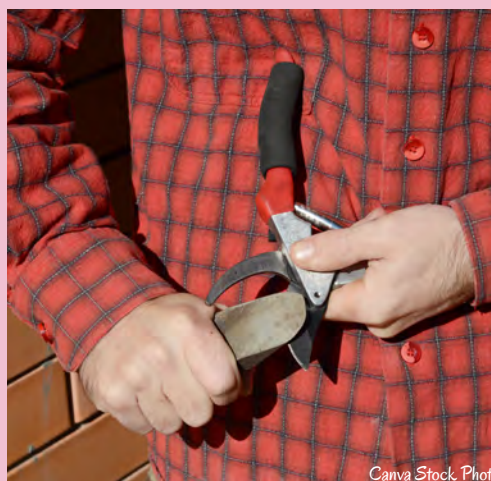
Sharpen the cutting edge of pruning shears, loppers, hedge clippers, and mower blades. Sharpen the scoop edge of shovels, spades, and trowels. Click these links for excellent how-to guidelines for sharpening hand tools.

Cornell University Cooperative Extension:

[https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/cwas/files/2013/01/Caring\\_for\\_Your\\_Tools.pdf](https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/cwas/files/2013/01/Caring_for_Your_Tools.pdf)

University of Florida Gardening Solutions:

<https://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/care/tools-and-equipment/sharpening-your-tools.html>





If you're not comfortable taking on the sharpening task, many local hardware stores will sharpen tools.

Step 3.

*Wipe all metal surfaces with lubricating oil to remove and prevent rust. After cleaning and sanding any nicks, wipe wood handles with boiled linseed oil.*

Step 4.

Follow the owner's manual to *maintenance power tools*. Typically these steps include tightening loose screws and nuts, removing fuel from the tank, changing the oil, checking and replacing spark plugs as needed, and replacing any damaged or worn parts.

Step 5.

Now that you have all your tools in tip-top shape, *store them in a clean and dry location*. Hand tools should be stored upright off the floor on a pegboard or a 5-gallon bucket for example. During the growing season, keep a wire brush or putty knife near where you store your tools to clean them as you put them away. Remember to disinfect cutting blades after every use.

These websites offer additional information about caring for your tools:

University of Florida: <http://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/leonco/2013/12/20/winterizing-garden-tools/>

Clemson Cooperative Extension: <https://hgic.clemson.edu/winter-tool-care/>

Best of luck with your garden next spring! Please reach out to us again if we can be of assistance.



*If you have questions about any horticulture-related subjects,  
please contact our Master Gardener Help Desk at 940.349.2892  
or [master.gardener@dentoncounty.com](mailto:master.gardener@dentoncounty.com).  
It's free of charge, and it's our pleasure to assist you.*

*November's Help Desk Q&A on Pruning Perennials was so well received that it now has it's own dedicated DCMGA webpage:*

***"When and how to prune perennial flowering plants"***

**<https://dcmga.com/north-texas-gardening/perennials/when-and-how-to-prune-perennial-flowering-plants/>**



Sue Stunich, Class of 2013, passed away early December after privately battling pancreatic cancer - she will be missed by the many Master Naturalists and Master Gardeners who had a chance to share with Sue the beauty of The Prayer Garden at Global Spheres. Here are a few words from her co-worker and friend, Daniel.

Sue was part of our garden crew for years. She was actually the first official volunteer at the prayer garden, 10 years ago, when we first started working the grounds here. Her passion for our church and gardens secured her a special place, not only with the Land we care for, but mostly in our hearts and families. She was our "duck lady", taking our kids to say hello to our duckies. She was also our propagation specialist, our prayer garden care taker and our community garden tomato lover, so many tomato plants that we always enjoyed many different varieties because of her. She was our year long flower girl, our mom and grandma sometimes too, when we were about to do something wrong :) or just when we were talking about life.

Our beach girl, that made sure to go visit her family every year in California, with the excuse that she needed to jump in the ocean.... She always felt like once a year wasn't enough .... I agree with her!

She planted many seeds, and took care of our wild life and animals. It was like her heart always had a little more room for a little more of this or that. She loved with excellence!

We miss her, will remember her and honor all those seeds that have been sprouting because of her passions. We love you Sue. You are with the Father now enjoying true love, and you will always be in our hearts. Every time we see a flower blooming, a bird flying by, or hear chickens clucking, we will remember you and honor your life!

Daniel





## 2021 GREATER AUBREY AREA GARDENING SERIES

**Jump start your 2021  
gardening with this  
free educational series.**

**Aubrey Area Library**  
226 Countryside Drive  
Aubrey, TX 76227



**JANUARY 21**

**Texas Trees**

*Pat Moyer*



**AUGUST 19**

**Waterwise  
Gardening**

*Jolayne LaCour*



**FEBRUARY 18**

**Gardens Gone Wild:  
Putting Out the Welcome  
Mat for Wildlife Habitat**

*Kathryn Wells*



**SEPTEMBER 16**

**Texas Native Plants**

*Liz Moyer*



**MARCH 18**

**Roses**

*Pat & Don Edwards*



**OCTOBER 21**

**Made for the Shade**

*AgriLife TBD*

**WE'RE GOING  
VIRTUAL!**

Until we can meet in person, all  
sessions will be presented virtually  
through Zoom.

Register for each session at:  
[www.dcmga.com/upcomingevents](http://www.dcmga.com/upcomingevents)

**6:00 PM - 7:00 PM**

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

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**KEEP  
AUBREY  
BEAUTIFUL**



KEEP AMERICA BEAUTIFUL AFFILIATE





## TREE SEEDLING SALE

*Denton County Soil & Water Conservation District*

### Plant A Conservation Tree!

The Denton County Soil & Water Conservation District is once again offering tree seedlings for sale. Ten species are available for purchase. Plant a conservation tree and add beauty and shade to your property as well as many other benefits. Trees provide oxygen, windbreaks, soil protection, and wildlife habitat. All proceeds will benefit the *Cool Shade for Third Grade* program in the Denton County schools.



*Bur Oak*



*Mexican White Oak*



*Vitex*



*Mexican Plum*



*Desert Willow*



*Pinyon Pine*



*Shumard Oak*



*Live Oak*



*Afghanistan Pine*



*Austrian Pine*

Mail or submit orders to Denton County SWCD, 525 South Loop 288 Suite C-1, Denton, Texas 76205. If you have any questions, please phone 940-383-2691 Ext 3 or visit the USDA Service Center in Denton. Orders are reserved upon payment and quantities are limited, so please order soon.



*(order form on back)*

**2021 TREE ORDER FORM**  
**DENTON COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT**  
**Phone: (940) 383-2691 Ext. 3**  
**LIMITED QUANTITIES - ORDER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
 ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
 CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP CODE: \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

**CONTAINER: \$4.00 per tree (6-12 inch top, 10 cubic inch)**

	Quantity	x	\$4.00	=	Cost
Afghanistan Pine	_____				_____
Austrian Pine	_____				_____
Pinyon Pine	_____				_____

**POTTED: \$9.50 per tree (1-4 foot top, one gallon)**

	Quantity	x	\$9.50	=	Cost
Bur Oak	_____				_____
Live Oak	_____				_____
<del>Mexican White Oak</del>	_____				_____
Shumard Oak	_____				_____
Desert Willow	_____				_____
Mexican Plum	_____				_____
Vitex	_____				_____

**Total No. of Trees**

**SUBTOTAL:** \_\_\_\_\_

**8.25% TAX:** \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL DUE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PAYMENT DUE AT TIME OF ORDER**

Cash ☐ | Check ☐ | # \_\_\_\_\_

Comments:

*Make checks payable to Denton County SWCD.* Mail or submit orders to Denton County SWCD, 525 South Loop 288 Suite C-1, Denton, Texas 76205. Orders are filled on a first come first serve basis, so place your order early. **Trees must be picked up on Friday, February 26, 2021 at the North Texas Fairgrounds in Denton from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.**

# DENTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION

## 2021 Events

**Denton County Speaker Series:**

**Aubrey: Jan 21-Oct 21**

**Flower Mound: Coming Spring 2021**

**Lewisville: Watch for updates:**

**<https://keepLewisvillebeautiful.org/garden-secrets/>**

**Children's Garden: TBD**

**Plant Sale: TBD**

**Garden Tour: May 8**

**Junior Master Gardener Camp: TBD**

**Fruit, Vegetable, Herb, and Flower Show:  
June 19**

**Design Your Yard Class: TBD**

**Fall Garden Fest: Oct. 2**

**DCMGA New Member Round Up: Oct. 19**



# DCMGA.COM





### 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.

### 2021 Board of Directors

President	Kathryn Wells
Vice-President - Projects	Joanne Spurgin
Vice-President - Outreach	Kathy Rainey
Secretary	Katherine Woodward
Treasurer	Jolayne LaCour
Communications Dir. - Systems	Cheryl Huckabee
Communications Dir. - Promotions	Kathi Fast
Education Director	Barbara Brown
Member-at-Large	Tammie Gurley
Past President	Pat Moyer
Extension Agent - Horticulture	Janet Laminack

### Social Media

Facebook:

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

Instagram:

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

Twitter:

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

Pinterest:

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

YouTube:

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

### Save the Date

January 6 Virtual Board Meeting

February 10 Virtual Volunteer Fair / Annual Awards

### Contact Information

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension  
Joseph A. Carroll Building  
401 W. Hickory Street  
Suite 112  
Denton TX 76201-9026

Office: 940.349.2883

Help Desk:

940.349.2892

[master.gardener@dentoncounty.com](mailto:master.gardener@dentoncounty.com)

Webmaster:

[dcmga.webmaster@gmail.com](mailto:dcmga.webmaster@gmail.com)

Communications:

[dcmga.communications@gmail.com](mailto:dcmga.communications@gmail.com)

Website:

<https://dcmga.com>

### Content

**Submission deadline for the February edition of *The Root is Friday*, 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 or Communications Director Cheryl Huckabee at [dcmga.communications@gmail.com](mailto:dcmga.communications@gmail.com).

All photos are courtesy of DCMGA's Creative Visual Arts (CVA) Team unless otherwise attributed.