

Denton County Master Gardener Association

# THE ROOT

Grow With Us



Photo Courtesy DCMGA Member Janice Goetz

Gaillardia pulchella (Indian blanket)

## Buds From The Board

BY KATHRYN WELLS, PRESIDENT

Happy July, friends!

As summer unfolds, many more of our activities, events, and meetings are now in-person experiences. That's great and welcome progress!

Speaking of in-person events, we were delighted to hold our annual Fruit, Vegetable, Herb, and Flower Show on June 19th at the Denton County Historical Park and Community Market. So many beautiful and unique items were entered by Denton County residents (adults and children), and category winners received cash prizes, ribbons, and bragging rights! Our August issue of *The Root* will feature event photos of the winning entries and their respective gardeners. Thanks to all for growing and showing your backyard bounty, and thanks to Project Manager Debby Ishee and her team for a successful show.

CONNECT WITH US ON THE WEB  
<https://dcmga.com>

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## Buds From The Board (Cont.)

While this is not an in-person event, please join us in cyberspace at 10 am for our July 14th General Meeting and Program. We're happy to welcome Denton County Master Gardener Sharrie Ely, who will present "Roses." A rosarian and leader of the Dallas Area Historical Rose Society, Sharrie is a fount of education, information, and inspiration! As always, our General Meetings and Programs are free and open to the public. Advance registration is required.

Denton County Master Gardeners and Denton County residents—it's a pleasure and privilege to serve you. Thank you for growing with us!


*Kathryn*






## Janet's Corner

BY JANET LAMINACK, AGRILIFE EXTENSION HORTICULTURE AGENT, DENTON COUNTY

The Denton County AgriLife Extension office is very pleased to announce the hiring of Chandani Kothari as the new Family and Community Health Agent and Steven Baringer as our 4-H Agent.



The Denton County Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service invites you to join us in welcoming our two new Extension Agents!

**Steven Baringer**  
4-H & Youth Development

**Chandani Kothari**  
Family & Community Health

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**WEDNESDAY, JULY 7, 2021**

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Please drop-in anytime between 4:00pm and 6:30pm. Refreshments will be served.

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Joseph A. Carroll Building  
401 W. Hickory Street, Room 115  
Denton, TX 76201

Chandani moved to Texas from India by way of Illinois. She recently graduated from a Master in Public Health program with a health promotion concentration from Northern Illinois University. In the past, she has worked with the University of Illinois Extension's SNAP-ED program, where she promoted healthy lifestyle choices and provided technical assistance to community agencies. She most recently worked as a COVID-19 Case Investigator. She looks forward to bringing her passion for nutrition and health education to her new role as a Family and Community Health Extension Agent in Denton County.

Steven Baringer is a 4-H alumni from Sulphur, Oklahoma, who graduated from Oklahoma State University in 2019 with a Bachelors in Agricultural Communications. He just finished his Masters in Agriculture Education at OSU, and moved to Texas to join us as our new 4-H Agent!

## Open to the General Public



### *Denton County Master Gardener YouTube Channel*

Click on "Videos" and check out our new presentations!  
And don't forget to subscribe!

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

## DCMGA HELP DESK

BY SUE MURRAY

Have you ever had something unusual pop up during the growing season? A plant you do not recognize shows up in your yard – is it a weed or a good plant? Are there strange bugs invading your garden? A previously healthy plant suddenly takes a turn for the worse. Where do you turn for help? Well, the DCMGA Help Desk of course.

As our association President, Kathryn Wells puts it "The Help Desk is the core mission of the Master Gardeners as the need to assist the public with their many horticultural questions is the very reason that the Master Gardener program was created." Master Gardener volunteers provide answers to North Texas residents' gardening questions based on research, training from Texas A&M's AgriLife Extension Service and years of experience with North Texas gardening.



The Help Desk and Master Gardener program has a distinguished history. In the early 1970s, Washington State University Extension Service was assigning horticulture faculty to county offices to help with a burgeoning interest in urban gardening. Two Extension agents, David Gibby and Bill Scheer, were involved from the start and focused on urban and commercial horticulture. Public demand for information on plant problems grew rapidly and became overwhelming. To get information out to the public, they first tried TV and radio gardening shows. This only drove demand higher by making the public aware they could get help from the Extension office. Other avenues needed to be explored to solve the problem of addressing the needs of the backyard gardener.

One approach that was considered was a careful selection process of recruiting and training volunteers to serve the demand. This would free Gibby and Scheer to become proactive in fulfilling educational needs rather than being reactive to demand. The two agents, whose background included time working in Germany, knew they needed a distinguished title for the program. In Germany, the highest level of horticultural proficiency is called "Gartenmeister" which translates to "Master Gardener."

A call went out for volunteers. Hundreds applied and were screened and 300 were chosen initially. A training curriculum was developed and faculty specialists from WSU participated in the teaching. The first program was funded with only \$500. Now there are over 3000 Master Gardener volunteers across the state of Washington who have served hundreds of thousands of gardeners. This horticulture "Master" volunteer concept has spread throughout the U.S. and



## DCMGA Help Desk (Cont.)

Canada, including our own Master Gardener program in Denton County. Janie Farler, a noted DCMGA member, started our Help Desk.

So, you have a burning question, problem, or challenge that needs an answer. How do you get help from the Help Desk? There are three main ways to get help. First, the best method is to email the Help Desk at [master.gardener@dentoncounty.gov](mailto:master.gardener@dentoncounty.gov) or fill out the "ask an extension expert" form found at <https://dcmga.com/ask-extension/>. As detailed as possible, describe the problem and upload pictures, if available. This helps the volunteers narrow down the possible answers. A third option, recently added, is to submit questions via text message. Use 940-349-2882 for agriculture questions and 940-349-2892 for lawn and garden questions. This number is also used to leave a question via voicemail. If you have grass/turf, insect, or tree problems, there is some additional clarifying input you can provide found at <https://dcmga.com/north-texas-gardening/help-desk/>. Since the COVID crisis began, the Help Desk has expanded its reach via its own webpage on the DCMGA website. The purpose is to provide the public with answers to common questions that will reduce the necessity of calling or emailing.

### DCMGA Help Desk Project Managers



**Ann Hillman  
(left)  
Pam Spooner  
(right)**



*Photos Courtesy DCMGA Member Cheryl Huckabee*

When your question comes into the Help Desk, it is added to a log. The questions are addressed in the order they are received. A Master Gardener (MG) volunteer is assigned to answer the question and begins to research and compile information to provide a response. If more information is needed, the MG will reach out to the requestor to ensure they are giving the best answer. Only credible, science-based sources are cited, and commercial entities are never endorsed. MG volunteers make every effort to respond within 48 hours by phone or email. Since the Master Gardeners are an all-volunteer organization, they are unable to make visits to individuals' property for consultations.

The Help Desk Project Manager is DCMGA member Ann Hillman, and the Assistant PM is Pam Spooner. Together they coordinate over 30 different volunteers who research and answer

## DCMGA Help Desk (Cont.)

questions. Several have answered over 100 questions each. Once a volunteer is trained, he/she signs up for 2-hour time slots Monday through Friday to work on questions submitted. Since March of 2020 when the AgriLife office closed due to COVID restrictions, the Help Desk team has been working remotely for meetings and training. Twice a month, there is a "Splash" meeting for Help Desk volunteers and DCMGA members who want to continue their education. It is held via Zoom on the First Friday and Third Thursday of every month unless it is a holiday. Pending questions are discussed and once a month a CE topic is presented by a MG with a particular expertise. This program has been recognized as an exemplary project by the state.

This spring, the Help Desk received a large percentage of questions related to addressing problems in the aftermath of the February arctic blast. They logged many inquiries including "will my shrubs come back" or "my crepe myrtle is not sprouting" or "my live oak has only a few leaves.". Advice was sent out from the Tyler County Extension agent, Greg Grant, regarding oak trees and the freeze. In addition to the questions on the cold, some of the most popular questions concerned trees, grass and turf, insects and bugs, and veggies/fruits/herbs. Google Drive is used to maintain a list of often used links to research for answering questions. There is also a log of answered questions that can be accessed by volunteers. One of the primary sources of information is TAMU (Texas A&M University), as well as other university extension service websites. Occasionally, MG may refer a client to organizations such as the African Violet Society, as they are recognized experts in a narrow field.

The Help Desk volunteers are a dedicated group of Master Gardeners who strive to provide the best information possible. In addition to questions, they receive a myriad of "thank yous" each month from people grateful for their help. What can we help you with today?

### Denton County Master Gardener Association

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/>

HELP



Do you have **Canva** (or any "drag-and-drop" layout program) knowledge?

Are you interested in helping with the newsletter?

Contact the

Communications Director

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

**Earn Volunteer hours  
from home!**

HELP



## Meet Mary Branstetter

BY CHERYL HUCKABEE

Mary Branstetter has deep roots in gardening having grown up on a farm on the eastern edge of the Texas Hill Country in Seguin, Texas. Mom had a huge kitchen garden and Dad grew acres of potatoes and watermelon. Her grandparents were also gardeners.

Mary not so fondly remembers getting 'all itchy' picking green beans for her Mom to preserve. Mary is the fifth in a family of eleven children. They all helped tend and harvest their parents' gardens. Her favorites included greens and fresh tomatoes, but she hated crookneck squash. She and her siblings would eat raw potatoes straight from the field.

Her parents planned their planting by the cycles of the moon, being followers of the *Farmers' Almanac*. Mary follows those same planting practices today. She learned about enriching the soil with compost, eggshells, and coffee grounds from her parents. "I always had plants around, even when I lived in apartments I had houseplants," says Mary.

Fast forward to 1979.



Photos Courtesy DCMGA Member Mary Branstetter

**Common Poppy  
(Papaver rhoeas)  
in Mary's Denton County  
Garden**



**Mary Branstetter,  
DCMGA Class of 2016**

Mary lived in Austin, Texas, and grew cantaloupe, tomatoes, and green beans in raised beds. Her three-year-old son Steve toddled around assisting Mary with planting and weeding her garden. She met Reagan Branstetter in Austin and they married in the fall of 1979. Their next stop was Carrollton, Texas. She and Reagan gardened in a few raised beds. Mary recalls the soil in Carrollton "didn't have as much clay." Reagan's work then took them to Tucson, Arizona, in 1999.

Mary loved living and gardening in Tucson for thirteen years. "Tucson is in the high desert. It's really easy to grow things there. I mostly grew flowers and had great success with roses," says Mary. "I learned Indian gardening techniques in raised beds, amending the soil with wood ash, foraging techniques, and making flour from mesquite beans to bake muffins and cookies." Their two-acre property was between two washes and near the mountains. They were blessed with lots of

## Mary Branstetter (Cont.)

of wildlife such as coyotes, quail, and javelina. "We saw a mountain lion drinking from our swimming pool and a javelina pressed its face up to our back door," Mary shared excitedly.

In 2011, Mary and Reagan moved to north-central Denton County. There they incorporate some of the gardening techniques they learned in Tucson on their three-acre property. They have several edible gardens, including vegetables in raised beds, blueberry and blackberry bushes, peach, pecan, and fig trees. Chinese pistache, Bur oak, Blackjack oak, Post oak, Elm, Japanese maples, and Pawpaw trees are scattered around their property. Mary nurtures several ornamental and pollinator beds which include nineteen tea and hybrid roses, jasmine, gladiolus, lyreleaf sage, canna, lambs ear, dewberry, mountain laurel, pipevine, Texas sage, Blacknight mist spirea, pink spirea, and wildflowers. Whew!

They still enjoy the wildlife there. "Once, we caught a deer napping in our okra bed after having eaten all of the plants!", says Mary. Native bees are a passion of theirs. They have four native bee houses.

Water conservation is a key strategy in their gardens. They use drip irrigation, have a 700-gallon rain barrel and another 200-gallon rain barrel ready to be set up. Rain drainage is an issue in their landscape. They are planning a rain garden located at the end of a swale.

### Some of Mary's Favorites



**'Sun Flare' Rose**  
(*Rosa* 'Sun Flare')



**Clematis 'Negritjanka'**  
(*Clematis* x *jackmanii*  
'Negritjanka')



**Texas Gold Columbine**  
(*Aquilegia chrysantha*  
'Hinckleyana')



## Mary Branstetter (Cont.)

Mary and Reagan learned about the Master Gardener program from a work colleague while living in Tucson. Reagan completed his Master Gardener training first in 2014. Mary followed him completing her training in 2016. Mary's volunteer service with the Master Gardeners is almost as varied as her gardens. She led the Hospitality Committee, volunteered for the Gardenscapers program, helped establish the Aubrey Community Garden, participated in a landscape planning and education program with the Pilot Point Habitat for Humanity, and was a Garden Tour Captain in 2019. Mary has also completed advanced training in tree care.

As life begins to return to normal, Mary plans to broaden her training with continuing education in composting and rain harvesting. She would also like to volunteer with the Herbal and Succulent Master Gardener groups.

Mary's roots in gardening continue to grow in her children. Two of her sons and a daughter-in-law enjoy gardening. And, guess what? Her garden is planned for the 2022 DCMGA Garden Tour! I can't wait!



### YouTube Channel

*Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center at Dallas.* Lots of videos about sustainable, effective and safe gardening practices.

<https://www.youtube.com/c/TexasAMAgriLifeResearchandExtensionCenterDallas/playlists>

### Book

*"Trees of Texas Field Guide"* (2009). Stan Tekiela, Adventure Publications. Hundreds of illustrations trees found in Texas.

### Book

*"How To Prune, Train and Tie Rose Plants"* (2017). Tom Liggett, CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform. Expert advice on how to achieve beautiful results with roses from an internationally recognized horticulturist.

The information given herein is for educational purposes only. Reference to commercial products or trade names is made with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service is implied.

## Plant of the Month - Dakota Gold Helenium *A Pauper to Princess Story*

BY SUE MURRAY

There is an old saying "a weed is just a wildflower without any friends." Fortunately, this plant of the month found a friend in Dr. Michael Arnold at the AgriLife Research Center. From an unloved roadside "bitterweed" to a wildflower to a desirable ornamental plant, the Dakota Gold Helenium (*Helenium amarum*) has now been named a Texas Superstar. Master Gardeners Steve and his wife Joanne feature this beautiful drought-tolerant annual in their "A Hidden Cottage Garden" which is part of the 2021 Garden Tour. They love the continual yellow blooms from summer to fall which attract bees and butterflies.



**Dakota Gold Helenium (*Helenium amarum*)**

This tough Texas native loves full sun and well-drained soil but will even do well in part shade. Helenium grows to a height of one to two feet and only spreads about a foot, thus easy to contain. This low-maintenance aromatic plant is drought tolerant, fast-growing, and self-seeding. It has daisy-like yellow flowers which feature five to ten wedge-shaped golden rays, each having three lobes at the tip. The rays droop

downward from a bulbous center containing numerous tiny florets. Originally found primarily in the southeast and the south-central United States, it is now found in the eastern and central U.S., Great Plains, and California.

Originally a common weed, Dakota Gold Helenium (a.k.a. Yellow Bitterweed or Yellow Sneezeweed) is a "pauper to princess" story. Fortunately, in the 1990s, this unloved plant caught the attention of Dr. Arnold at AgriLife. He mentioned to his graduate students that with some TLC, this plant would make a good environmentally friendly ornamental. So, with a little work, Dakota Gold became a Texas Superstar in 2010. Superstars go through rigorous testing and are not just beautiful but also perform well.

Plants that can survive along a roadside in the Texas heat and drought must be strong to survive. That and roadside mowing produced a type of natural selection process that resulted in a shorter,

## Dakota Gold Helenium (Cont.)

more compact plant. This would make it more desirable as a bedding plant. Dr. Arnold and his team of graduate students retrieved seeds from along street locations where mowing had occurred. They then used a plant breeding method known as "open pollination recurrent selection" where plants are grown outdoors and are allowed to be cross-pollinated by natural means: insects, birds, bees, or wind. For ten years, the process continued. The crosses with favorable traits (low growing, more flowers) were kept, while unfavorable were rejected. Ready for the outside world, Texas A&M licensed the line to Ball Horticultural for further improvements.

Dakota Gold Helenium initially grows as a tight flattened rosette of foliage. Then, as it puts up flower stalks, the plant becomes more erect with more finely textured foliage. As it matures, this plant becomes a princess with a gown of dark green circular foliage crowned with bright yellow flowers. It works well in borders or as an accent with other Texas favorites such as blue sage, Mexican feather grass, verbena, and Blackfoot daisies. It has no serious insect or disease problems although the foliage is susceptible to powdery mildew, leaf spot, and rust. Consider adding this outstanding Texas Superstar to your garden.

To learn more about this Texas Superstar go to these websites:

<https://agrilifetoday.tamu.edu/>

<http://texassuperstar.com>

<https://www.wildflower.org>

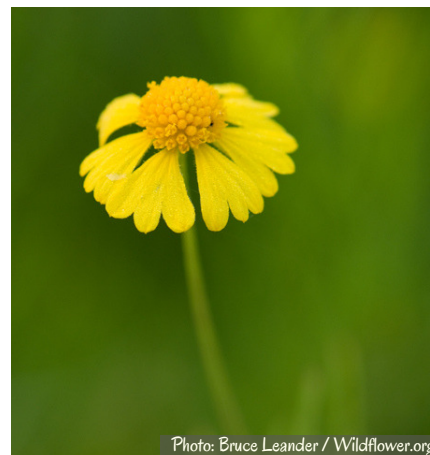


Photo: Bruce Leander / Wildflower.org

**Dakota Gold Helenium**  
(*Helenium amarum*)



### What's Growing in Members' Gardens



**Elderberry**  
*Sambucus*



**Sunflower Heirloom Beauties**  
*Helianthus annuus*



**Butterfly Weed**  
*Asclepias tuberosa*



**Sea Holly**  
*Eryngium planum*

# Landscaping for Energy Conservation

## *The 'Smart' & Beautiful Landscape*

BY CHERYL HUCKABEE

It's not your imagination. The weather extremes in North Texas are increasing. It's hotter and wetter, and we all experienced the effects of Winter Storm Uri in February this year. According to the Texas A&M University Office of the Texas State Climatologist, the average temperatures in North Texas will be 1.6 degrees Fahrenheit warmer in the future than the 2000 - 2018 average. And, the number of 100 degrees Fahrenheit days will nearly double!

All is not lost, however. Carefully planning the landscape around your home can mitigate the effects of these weather extremes on your heating and cooling costs.

### ***Quick Facts . . .***

- Shading the roof of your home can reduce the inside temperature 8 to 10 degrees Fahrenheit
- Shading your air conditioner's condenser unit can reduce the temperature in your home 3 degrees Fahrenheit
- Reducing the wind velocity with windbreaks around your home can save 25% on heating costs

The U.S. Department of Energy divides the U.S. into 4 microclimate regions: Temperate, Hot-Arid, Hot-Humid, and Cool. According to this map, North Texas is in the Hot-Humid and Temperate region. Landscape strategies for North Texas include maximizing shade during the summer, maximizing the warming effects of the sun in the winter, deflecting winter winds away from your home, and tunneling summer breezes towards your home.

### ***Planning for Energy Conservation***

The first step is to sketch your house to scale with 1/4 inch equal to 1 foot. It helps to use 1/4-inch grid paper for this. Identify the north, south, east, and west orientations of your home. Mark the doors, windows, and glass areas. Draw in existing large trees or shrubs you expect to keep.

Next, make note of the sunlight in different seasons and areas of your landscape. In winter, most sun exposure is south facing between 9 am and 3 pm. In summer, the sun exposure is on the south and west exposure in the early morning and late afternoon.

Lastly, make note of the wind direction in different seasons. Typically, in the winter the winds are most often from the north or northwest, and in the summer from the south or southwest.

### ***Plan the Plants & Locations***

Medium to large deciduous trees with 35 to 50-foot mature height should be located on the south and west-facing walls of your home, 15 - 20 feet from the side or 12 - 15 feet from the corner of the home. A deciduous tree loses its leaves in the winter allowing the sun to shine through and warm



## Landscaping for Energy Conservation (Cont.)

your home. In the warmer months, the tree will shade your home from the sun's heat. As a young tree, it will shade the windows and doorways, and as it matures and reaches full height it will shade the roof and cool your home.

Ornamental trees should be placed a little closer to the home to shade the windows and doorways. They can be placed 10 to 15 feet from the home on the south and west-facing sides.

Vines grown on arbors or pergolas can be placed over doorways and windows to provide shade. In addition, vines grown on a trellis against the walls of the home insulate against summer heat and cold winter winds.

Evergreen shrubs along the foundation of the home also insulate the home from heat and wind. Place these shrubs a few feet from the foundation to provide air space between the wall and shrub for increased insulation. In addition, shrubs placed around the air conditioner compressor reduce the indoor temperature 30 F according to the American Refrigeration Institute. Be sure not to obstruct the airflow into and out of the compressor.

To protect from winter wind and channel summer breezes toward your home, place evergreen trees on the north and northwest sides of the home. They should be planted 5 to 7 times the mature height of the tree away from the house. For example, an evergreen tree that is 20 feet tall at maturity should be placed 100 feet away from the home. Dense evergreen shrubs planted close together 4 to 5 feet from the home on the north and northwest sides can also protect from the wind.

### Selecting Plants

The plants listed below meet the recommendations for an energy-efficient landscape and are recommended for the North Texas area. Of course, consider the soil, drainage, and sun exposure when choosing the variety to achieve the best results.

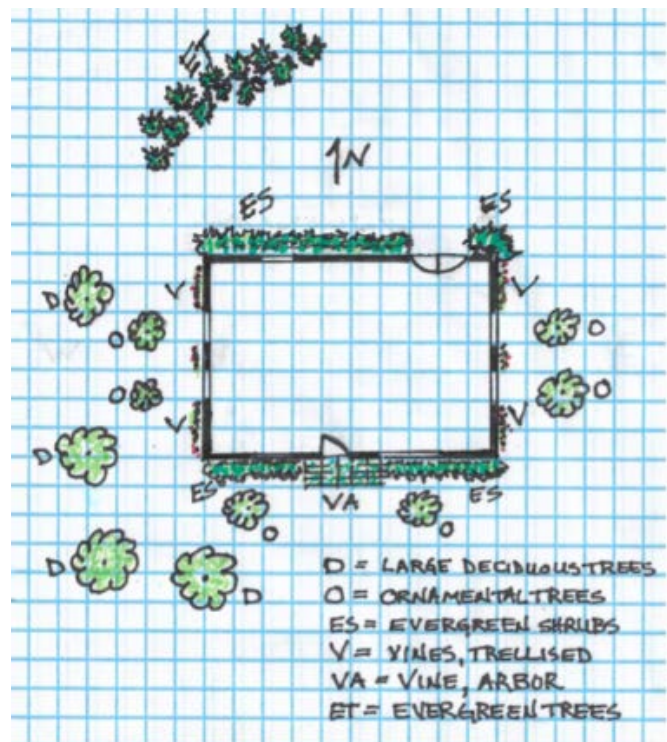


Illustration Courtesy DCMGA Member Cheryl Huckabee

## Landscaping for Energy Conservation (Cont.)

### Benefits Galore

A beautiful, 'smart' landscape is a win-win. Not only will it reduce your energy costs, but it will also increase your property value, and make your home and community more attractive and enjoyable year-round.

### Recommended Plants for Energy Efficient Landscapes in North Texas

Shade Trees - Medium to large deciduous trees (35 to 50 ft mature height)

Oaks (*Quercus* spp.) - Chinquapin, Bur, Red, Lacey

Elms (*Ulmus* spp.) - Lacebark, Cedar

Ginkgo (*Ginkgo biloba*)

Pistache/Chinese Pistache (*Pistacia chinensis*)

Windbreak Trees - Large evergreen trees (20+ ft mature height), best if growth extends to the ground

Cypress, Bald (*Taxodium distichum*)

Eastern Red Cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*)

Hollies, Large (*Ilex* spp.) 'Nellie R. Stevens,' 'Mary Nell'

Eldarica Pine (*Pinus eldarica*)

Ornamental Trees - Mature height 15 to 20ft

Desert Willow (*Chilopsis linearis*)

Vitex (*Vitex agnus-castus*)

Eve's Necklace (*Sophora affinis*)

Possumhaw Holly (*Ilex decidua*)

Redbud (*Cercis* spp.)

Red Buckeye (*Aesculus paria*)

Smoketree (*Cotinus obovatus*)

Magnolia, Deciduous (*Magnolia x soulangeana m. stellata*)

Crapemyrtle (*Lagerstroemia indica* hybrids)

Maples, Japanese & Shantung (*Acer palmatum*, *Acer truncatum*)

Mexican Plum (*Prunus mexicana*)

Fringe Tree (*Chionanthus virginicus*)

Shrubs, Evergreen - Small to medium/foundation

Dwarf Yaupon Holly (*Ilex vomitoria* 'Nana')

Andorra Juniper (*Juniperus horizontalis* 'Andorra')

Dwarf Wax Myrtle (*Myrica cerifera*)

Rosemary (*Rosemarinus officinalis*)

Abelia, Kaleidoscope & Rose Creek (*Abelia x grandiflora* 'Kaleidoscope' & 'Rose Creek')

Azalea Encore Series (*Rhododendron* spp.)

Boxwood (*Buxus* spp.)

Mahonia, Leatherleaf (*Mahonia bealei*)

Yew (*Taxus x media densiformis*)

Cherry Laurel 'Otto Luyken' (*Prunus laurocerasus* 'Otto Luyken')

Shrubs, Evergreen - Large/windbreak

Aucuba (*Acuba japonica*)

Cleyera (*Ternstroemia gymnanthera*)

Pittosporum (*Pittosporum tobira*)

Podocarpus (*Podocarpus macrophyllas*)

False Aralia (*Fatsia japonica*)

Bush Germander (*Teucrium fruticans*)

Texas Sage (*eucohyllum frutescens*)

Abelia, Glossy (*Abelia x grandiflora*)

Vines, Non-clinging

Wisteria, American (*Wisteria frutescens*)

Coral Honeysuckle (*Conicera sempervirens*)

Crossvine, evergreen (*Bignonia capreolata*)

Carolina Jasmine (*Gelsemium sempervirens*)

Clematis, Evergreen & Sweet Autumn (*Clematis armandii* & *terniflora*)

Jasmine, Confederate or Star, evergreen (*Trachelospermum jasminoides*)

## Landscaping for Energy Conservation (Cont.)

### Sources & Resources

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Colorado State University Extension. Weblink: <https://extension.colostate.edu/topic-areas/yard-garden/landscaping-for-energy-conservation-7-225/>

"Energy Saver 101 Infographic: Landscaping" (April 2014). U.S. Department of Energy, weblink:  
<https://www.energy.gov/articles/energy-saver-101-infographic-landscaping>

"Assessment of Historic and Future Trends of Extreme Weather in Texas, 1900-2036" (March 5, 2020). Texas A&M University Office of the Texas State Climatologist, Weblink:  
<https://climatexas.tamu.edu/files/Climate-ExecutiveSummary-Flyer.pdf>



#### Join Denton County MGA in cyberspace for our July General Meeting & Program.

We're pleased to feature Denton County Master Gardener Sharrie Ely, who will present, "Roses."

**Advance registration is required.**

As always, our General Meeting programs are open to the public and free of charge.

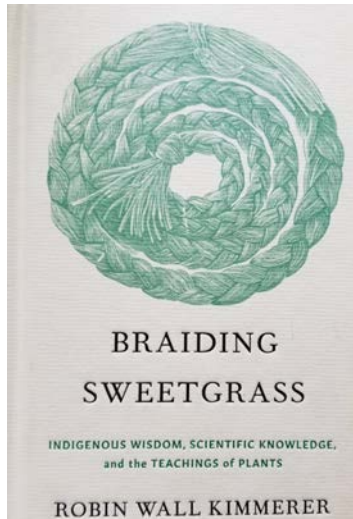
We look forward to seeing you in cyberspace ... and hope to see you at an in-person meeting soon!

TEXAS MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION  
DENTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION  
JULY 2021  
*Virtual*  
**GENERAL MEETING & PROGRAM**  
*"Roses"*  
PRESENTED BY SHARRIE ELY  
WEDNESDAY, JULY 14TH, 2021  
10:00 AM - 12 NOON  
VIA ZOOM VIDEOCONFERENCE  
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## Braiding Sweetgrass

### A Book Review and Recommendation

BY BARBARA BROWN



I was gifted *Braiding Sweetgrass* for Mother's Day in 2021. From the first page, I was captivated by the exploration of nature that shifted seamlessly between scientific information and the knowledge of indigenous people acquired through centuries of observation.

The author, Robin Wall Kimmerer, is a State University of New York Distinguished Teaching Professor of Environmental Biology and the founder and director of the Center for Native Peoples and the Environment. In 2015, she was invited to address the United Nations General Assembly on "Healing Our Relationship with Nature."

The engaging narrative did not prompt a quick-read, page turner for me. Rather, I limited myself to one chapter a day with some quiet time afterward to reflect on what I learned. In the first few chapters, the author draws a distinction between viewing plants as isolated objects as she was required to do during her training as a scientist — "What are you? How do you work?" — and viewing plants as teachers about the way the interconnected natural world works that she learned from her Native American elders.

The author believes that science and indigenous wisdom together offer valuable guidance on the best way to protect and benefit from the plants that feed us, shelter us, and offer us their beauty. In her chapter on the honorable harvest, she offers this advice when foraging for plants, such as switchgrass for making a braid:

*Know the ways of the ones who take care of you, so that you may take care of them. Never take the first or the last. Take only what you need. Never take more than half. Leave some for others. Harvest in a way that minimizes harm. Use it respectfully. Never waste what you have taken. Share. Give a gift in reciprocity for what you have taken. Sustain the ones who sustain you and the earth will last forever.*





## Volunteer Service Opportunity *General Meeting Program Chair*

Beverly-the-Great-Duncan is stepping down as our Program Chair after this year. (She's creating a little margin in her schedule to co-chair our 2022 Garden Tour with Lori Barr, as current Garden Tour Chair Karen Roberts has moved out of the area...sniff, sniff!)

So, we're looking for someone to step into the role of Program Chair. Responsibilities include researching and scheduling the presenters/speakers for our monthly General Meeting programs. Only nine months need to be booked (March through November), as there are no programs for December (Holiday Party), January (Graduation & Awards Banquet), and February (Volunteer Opportunity Fair).

A little something to sweeten the pot: Beverly and Gay Campbell are still willing to help identify and plan some fun field trips for us as opportunities arise, so new Programs Chair – whoever you are – you'll have some support!

Interested? Contact DCMGA President Kathryn Wells.





## 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.

#### DCMGA General Meeting Presentations

July 14, 2021. 10:00 AM – Noon.

Open To The Public

"Roses" presented by DCMGA member Sharrie Ely.

To Register:

<https://uso2web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMud-6rrjMiE9R-E6sklO9TuHkYHQOz7owi>

August 11, 2021. 10:00 am to Noon

Open To The Public

"Texas Native Plants" presented by DCMGA member Liz Moyer

#### Upper Trinity Regional Water District, City of Lewisville and Keep Lewisville Beautiful virtual classes

Information to help you save water year-round.

[Spring Into Action for Long-Term Success](#)

[Soil Preparation and How to Plant a Plant](#)

[Lawn Care Basics](#)

[Getting Started With Natives](#)

#### Metroplex Tamil Sangam Gardening – "Perennial Gardening in North Texas" By "Sharrie & Rick Ely"

Presentation by DCMGA Member Sharrie Ely

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pF-BMdAaoqM>

#### Growing a Greener World® (GGWTV)

is an Emmy Award-winning TV show appearing on national Public Television that features organic gardening, green living and sustainable land management. Each episode focuses on compelling and inspirational people making a positive impact on the planet through gardening and shares DIY information that we can all use at home.

Currently in its eleventh season, this gardening series covers everything from edible gardening to urban homesteading and hobby farming.

<https://www.growingagreenerworld.com/episodes/>

(Approved for up to 3 CE hours – each episode is 30 minutes)

#### The Bee Short Course – Ohio State University

["Building wild bee conservation skills together"](#)

<https://u.osu.edu/beecourse/>

#### Tuesdays with Texas Master Naturalists

On the Second Tuesday of each month at the noon hour (12PM Central Standard Time), the TMN State Office will offer an hour-long virtual advanced training event. These will be recorded each month and shared to the website by the following day of each month. Here's a link to one YouTube video: A Presentation by Doug Tallamy – "Nature's Best Hope"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WY4aV5hqlkxY>



FYI: Underlined Texts are active Internet Links throughout this publication.



## Online Education Opportunities (Cont.)

### 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/UCbp4wkcScRV0HlN3Hi1\\_KUQ/](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCbp4wkcScRV0HlN3Hi1_KUQ/)

### DCMGA YouTube CE Programs

"The Ease of Effective Hardscaping"

"The Pleasures & Pitfalls of Perennial Plants"

"Gardens Gone Wild"

"Getting Buggy"

"Texas Trees: Caring for Your Legacy"

"Using Technology for Plant Identification"

Business meetings

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

### Home Grown Lecture Series from Harris County Master Gardeners

Join us for our Free, 30-minute, bi-weekly ONLINE on Thursdays at 10 AM Central time. Must register through Eventbrite to get the webinar link.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/home-grown-lecture-series-tickets-143797364789?aff=erelexpmlt>

July 3, 2021 - The Latest & Greatest in Bedding Plants For 2022 - Paul Winski, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Agent-Horticulture

July 15, 2021 - Garden Hummingbird Safety - Brandi Keller, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Agent-Horticulture

### 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-268030721431541129202716211/>

### 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=PLxT5cUdFaycrUzUiWSA46JRPGBYSFiFzH>

### DCMGA Members

Plan Your Week emailed each Friday has the most current Online CE Opportunities.

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

Note that members may claim up to 3 hours of annual discretionary education; veteran members with 10+ years of service may claim up to 6 hours.



#### BY HELP DESK TEAM

*Q: I have been wanting to try to grow a small fall vegetable garden. I have an area of grass about a 6-foot square that I plan to convert. A friend suggested I try making a lasagna garden. What is that? And, is a lasagna garden a good idea for my small space?*

**A:** Fall is a great time to grow vegetables in North Central Texas. There are fewer severe storms and bugs that can ruin your plants. So, what about creating a lasagna garden for your fall vegetable plants? The bad news is that it takes about a year for the lasagna process to complete and the bed to be ready for planting. However, if you begin the lasagna garden now (late spring) with the goal of planting in the fall, you can add a 4- to 6-inch layer of completed compost on the top of the processing lasagna pile to give your plants soil to grow in.

#### What is a lasagna garden?

Lasagna gardening, also known as sheet mulching, is a gardening method that does not require tilling or digging. Rather, it turns materials like cardboard, kitchen waste, straw, and newspapers into rich, healthy soil. There are several advantages to lasagna gardening. It saves money when

you are able to use materials you have on hand instead of buying them. You are creating composted soil that provides plants with most of the nutrients they need. Because you have blocked weeds, your garden requires less maintenance. (Caveat: Bermuda grass is stubbornly successful in breaching your blocking layer or sneaking in from the outside.)

How to make a lasagna garden: The lasagna garden is created in layers.

**Step 1:** Lay out the area to be gardenized. Using a raised bed border made of wood or stones is ideal but not essential. The advantage of using a raised border is that it keeps the materials in place.

**Step 2:** Cover the bottom of the area. The bottom layer is usually made with pieces of cardboard or several newspaper sheets that are laid down to completely cover the area making sure that the pieces overlay one another so that there is no space that is not covered. This creates a barrier against weeds and grass. Before adding compostable materials, wet the layer thoroughly to keep it in place.

**Step 3:** Add alternating green and brown layers of compostable materials. Layers should be about 2 inches thick. Continue building by layers until the depth of about 3 feet. As decomposition happens, the depth will shrink by about 50 percent.





**Green (nitrogen) materials include:**

- Fruit and veggie scraps
- Egg shells
- Tea bags, tea leaves
- Fresh green grass clippings and plant trimmings (grown without pesticides or weed killers)
- Green grass clippings
- Coffee grounds

**Brown (carbon) materials:**

- Chopped dry leaves, dried grass clippings
- Wood shavings or sawdust
- Nuts and shells
- Untreated coffee paper filters
- Pinecones, pine needles—chopped
- Shredded newspaper and other paper products
- Twigs
- Peanut shells

NEVER add fats, meat, bones, dairy products, pet poop, diseased plants, weed seeds or any materials containing pesticides or herbicides in your compost pile.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

"Composting"

<https://agrilifeextension.tamu.edu/library/gardening/composting/>

Step 4: (optional) add a layer of straw or cover with heavy plastic

Step 5: When the future gardening bed is full, keep it moist – but DO NOT soak – to encourage decomposition.

Step 6: wait patiently.

Lasagna Gardening info:

<http://warren.cce.cornell.edu/gardening-landscape/warren-county-master-gardener-articles/lasagna-gardening>

<https://hgic.clemson.edu/lasagna-gardening/>



Photo courtesy of DCMGA member Mary Morris

## Step 2: Adding a layer of cardboard




*If you have questions about any horticulture-related subjects, please contact our Master Gardener Help Desk at 940.349.2892*

*or [master.gardener@dentoncounty.gov](mailto:master.gardener@dentoncounty.gov).*

*It's free of charge, and it's our pleasure to assist you.*

**TEXAS A&M  
AGRI LIFE  
EXTENSION**

The Denton County Texas A&M AgriLife Extension  
Service invites you to join us in welcoming our  
two new Extension Agents!

&

**Steven Baringer**  
4-H & Youth Development

**Chandani Kothari**  
Family & Community Health

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**WEDNESDAY, JULY 7, 2021**

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Please drop-in anytime between 4:00pm  
and 6:30pm. Refreshments will be served.

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Joseph A. Carroll Building  
401 W. Hickory Street, Room 115  
Denton, TX 76201

DENTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION

## 2021 Garden Tour

**Saturday, October 2  
9 am to 4 pm**

**A favorite family-friendly event you don't want to miss!  
Inspiration abounds on self-guided tours of four unique Denton  
County private properties.**

**Master Gardeners are on-site in each garden to provide  
information about the garden, as well as featuring learning  
opportunities on a variety of gardening topics.**

**Our SWAT (Science With Attitude) team will be on-site to  
provide hands-on learning opportunities for children.**

**Our "Ask a Master Gardener" booth will also be on-site at one of  
our gardens to answer your gardening questions.**

**Go to [www.dcmga.com/upcomingevents](http://www.dcmga.com/upcomingevents)  
for tickets and further information as the date draws near.**



**#GrowWithUs**



@DentonCountyMGA





# Denton County Master Gardener Association

## 2021 Events

### DCMGA General Membership Meeting program:

July 14 at 10:00

Program: "Roses" by Sharrie Ely

### Keep Lewisville Beautiful

August 5: Getting Started with Natives by Liz Moyer

August 19: Growing a Sustainable Garden by Sue Newhouse

September 2: Caring for Christmas Cactus by JoAnn Spurgin

### Greater Aubrey Area Gardening Series:

August 19: Waterwise Gardening JoLayne LaCour

September 16: Texas Native Plants by Liz Moyer

October 21: Made for the Shade by Daniel Cunningham

Garden Tour: October 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

- July 7 Board Meeting - (Virtual)
- July 14 General Meeting & Program - "Roses" (Virtual)

### 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.gov](mailto:master.gardener@dentoncounty.gov)

Webmaster:

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Communications:

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

Website:

<https://dcmga.com>

### Content

**Submission deadline for the August edition of *The Root* is Thursday, July 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.