

Denton County Master Gardener Association

THE ROOT

Grow With Us



Photo Courtesy DCMGA Member Janice Goetz

Buds From The Board

BY KATHRYN WELLS, PRESIDENT

Happy February, friends! This short transitional month from winter to spring is filled with sweet things. First and foremost, we celebrate and welcome our newest Master Gardeners—all 32 members of the 2021 intern class graduated and were celebrated at our January 19th Graduation and Awards Banquet. Additionally, two interns from the Class of 2020 completed their deferred requirements to certify. Hello, official DCMGA Texas-shaped name badge; congratulations, y'all!

Speaking of our newest Master Gardeners, hello and welcome to our newest Master Gardeners in training—45 individuals who are learning under the leadership of Intern Class Administrators Kim Wootton, Barbara Beane, and Melissa Migis. Thanks to the many individuals who work tirelessly and faithfully to ensure a successful intern program; we appreciate you all!

To kick-start our 2022 service, Vice President-Projects Tom O'Brien and our DCMGA Project Managers will feature our Association projects, committees, and events at the in-person

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

WHAT'S GROWING ON

- 01 Buds From The Board
- 03 Janet's Corner
- 04 Meet Ann Athey
- 07 Rockin'B's Creekside Wilderness
- 09 Plant of the Month: Dahlia
- 13 Tree Planting
- 17 Feature: Brighten Your Winter Landscape with Cool Season Color
- 20 Potato Gardening Starts Now
- 25 Pruning Roses
- 28 Awards Banquet & Class of 2021 Graduation
- 37 Online Education Opportunities
- 39 Help Desk Q&A: Gardening With Children
- 40 Soil Analysis

Buds From The Board (Cont.)

February 9th Volunteer Opportunity Fair. Many of those opportunities are also featured in this issue of *The Root*, so enjoy this full and fresh February issue ... and have your calendar handy.

Our speaker series are growing strong, including monthly in-person programs through March at the Aubrey Area Library and weekly virtual programs in partnership with the Flower Mound Public Library during the month of February. Look for the flyers in this edition of *The Root*, and reference the [Upcoming Events](#) page of our website for additional information and online registration.

Denton County Master Gardeners and Denton County residents—you are my favorites! May this month be filled with your very favorites, too.

Kathryn



TOP GARDENING TIPS

February

- Plant & transplant fruit trees.
- Sow leaf lettuces and other greens.
- Plant potatoes.
- Prune roses.
- Compost & mulch beds.

#DCMGA #GROWWITHUS

DENTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION

Janet's Corner

BY JANET LAMINACK, AGRILIFE EXTENSION HORTICULTURE AGENT, DENTON COUNTY

Garden Dreams

What are you going to grow this spring? Do you have some garden dreams and aspirations? Once again, I plan to grow some vegetables. The timing is always a challenge for me, since it is a busy time at work. And over the years, I have learned that seeds and transplants need to be watered frequently or they die. (I'm just doing my part to bolster the local green industry.)

I have had some veggie successes, but never all at once. One year I was really good at eggplant, but never again. This past year, I grew a purple bell pepper that tasted great. I also planted some luffa seeds. The plant took over the yard. Seriously. Vines were going up trees and shrubs. But, I did end up with some cool luffa sponges. I might grow it again, but it's going in the backyard. I'll do tomatoes again, but I stick with the cherry or smaller ones, huge heirlooms are not for me. It hurts my feelings when people complain about too much squash or zucchini since the bugs always get mine too soon. I don't know if I should give up or try harder ... maybe just one more year. I had burgundy okra that did amazing last year. Okra is a pretty plant, that's how I justified it being in the front yard. Also, that's where the sun is. I grew some nice green beans, but discovered I don't love eating them that much.

Of course, I can never have too many herbs. Seems like there is always a lemony variety that I need or a variegated something that I do not have yet! I will definitely make sure I have plenty of dill and fennel for the butterflies. Parsley reseeded everywhere and I got hooked on using it in all kinds of recipes. That was short lived and apparently, I am going to have to tend it if I want more.



Photo Courtesy Janet Laminack



Not to brag too much, but I am consistently good at growing lemongrass. Not only is it an attractive plant, it's essential in some Asian dishes. Yeah, I probably just jinxed myself, but hey, I'm helping the economy. I hope you are looking forward to new gardening adventures as well. 

Meet Ann Athey

BY CHERYL HUCKABEE

Ann has a nurturing spirit as an RN specializing in pediatric medical trauma and emergency care and as a gardener. She loves small things, both children and miniature African violets. Ann loves beautiful things: the many African violets she cares for, roses, blooming annuals, and a lovely home landscape. On top of all this, she's also a teacher with a genuine desire to help her community learn about gardening in small spaces and the joy of growing African violets.

Ann had two major childhood influences that helped grow her love of gardening: her paternal grandparents and her father. "My grandparents' home landscape was beautiful. I loved to spend time there. When my father was a boy in Pennsylvania, his parents and sisters had a large vegetable garden and apple trees. They used to throw apples at the trains that traveled on the eight train tracks behind their home," Ann shared.

Ann's father was an airplane mechanic in the U.S. Air Force, and Ann followed him everywhere when he was home from a tour of duty. "I worked on cars with him and gardened with him," Ann said. Although he wasn't home a lot, he gardened when he was. In South Dakota, he grew beautiful lilacs. In North Carolina, he had a vegetable garden. They ultimately landed in Las Vegas, and due to the harsh climate, he didn't garden there. That didn't deter Ann. That's where her love of growing African violets began.



Ann Athey

DCMGA Class 2021



**Just a small sampling of Ann's
beautiful African violet collection**

Ann Athey (Cont.)

Ann's husband also works in the medical field. During their busy professional life, they lived primarily in the Dallas-Ft. Worth area, mainly in Denton County. For a short while, they lived in Half-Moon Bay, CA, the largest floriculture area in the U.S. Ann describes being "surrounded by acres of tulips and sunflowers." At their home in south-central Denton County, Ann says, "we had a large vegetable garden and a so-so landscape." Growing African violets took a back seat due to lack of time.

Ann's interest in African violets was rejuvenated while recuperating from cancer. She purchased a bunch of clearance violets and nurtured them back to health while she was mending. After downsizing to a smaller Denton County home in 2019, she made a new friend, an expert African violet grower. Ann says, "my new friend encouraged me to join the First African Violet Society of Denton, introduced me to miniature African violets, and taught me everything I know about African violets." Now, she has African violets in various stages of growth in virtually every room of their home!



Before



After

Ann's front yard rejuvenation in progress

Their small lot's landscape had been neglected. They began by putting in a vegetable garden and removing the shrubs. Ann knew they needed a plan, so they hired a landscape designer. They've almost completed the front yard plantings; the backyard is in transition. She also grows climbing roses, colorful blooming annual, and is adding pollinator gardens to the front and back yards. She wants to set an example for her neighbors and help them learn to have a beautiful landscape on a small scale. It sounds like she is making progress. Once she set out extra Cosmos plants on her front sidewalk; they were all gone in an hour!

Ann Athey (Cont.)



Ann's healthy raised bed vegetable garden



A little art in the garden

Ann learned about the Denton County Master Gardener Association through the annual plant sales. "As a nurse, I am fully invested in science. I was attracted to the scientific basis of the Master Gardener mission," Ann says. She is a graduate of the "Zoomer" intern class of 2021, the first to complete all their training virtually due to the pandemic.

Ann volunteered at Friends of Shiloh Field community garden during her intern year, the members' only plant sales, and was an intern captain at one garden tour home. Ann also presented the November 2021 monthly educational program on growing African violets which can be viewed at this link on the DCMGA YouTube channel:

<https://youtu.be/7NrjMz3oWBw>

Ann hopes to continue learning to grow better perennials and vegetables and use garden space more wisely. As a natural nurturer and teacher, Ann is well on her way to achieving her goals! 



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>

2022 Garden Tour Preview

BY CHERYL HUCKABEE

Please plan to join us for the 2022 Garden Tour, May 7, 9 am to 4 pm.

Self-guided tours of four beautiful Denton County properties will inspire and delight you. Master Gardener docents will be onsite to help you learn about all the beautiful plants and gardening techniques. Check dcmga.com on February 9th for ticket information

Rockin'B's Creekside Wilderness

The homeowners of Rockin'B's Creekside Wilderness deep roots in gardening are evident in their 3-acre property in north-central Denton County. Both Mary and her husband Reagan are Denton County Master Gardeners who have many horticulture interests. During the tour, you'll see and learn about pollinator gardens, raised vegetable beds, fruit and nut trees, native beehives, beautiful ornamental and native plants, and environmentally friendly gardening techniques.

The butterflies and bees spend lots of time in the pollinator garden. Here they feast on a smorgasbord of gladiolus, lyreleaf sage, canna, lambs ear, dewberry, mountain laurel, pipevine, Texas sage, Blacknight mist spirea, pink spirea, and wildflowers. An added bonus are the 19 tea and hybrid rose plants, Chinese pistache, Bur oak, Blackjack oak, post oak, elm, Japanese maple, and pawpaw trees scattered throughout their property.



**Mexican Mint Marigold
& Blue Mist**



Blanket Flower



Texas Gold Columbine

Rockin'B's Creekside Wilderness (Cont.)

Mary's childhood on the family farm has carried into their edible gardens. Three raised vegetable beds, blueberry and blackberry bushes, peach and pecan trees, and Celeste and brown turkey fig trees supply the couple with delicious produce throughout the year.



Blackberry, 'Navaho'



Brown Turkey Fig



Raised Vegetable Beds

Water conservation is a key strategy in their gardens. Drip irrigation and a 750-gallon rain barrel system irrigate the vegetable beds and peach trees.

Mary and Reagan enjoy a variety of wildlife on their property that backs onto a creek. Reagan maintains 4 native beehives, and birds and deer are frequent visitors. Denton Master Gardeners Pam Long and Bob Bender will be onsite to educate you and answer questions about Texas native bees.

We know you won't want to miss the terrific educational opportunities and beautiful gardens at the Rockin'B's Creekside Wilderness. 



750-Gallon Rainwater Harvesting System

Plant of the Month

My Friend Dahlia

BY SHERRI URSPINI

Like an artist looking at a blank canvas, I watched my small seedlings grow and imagined what beauty was going to spring forth. Every day was an added splash of color and surprise. Dahlias are the showstopper of the garden, from buttercup pompom to formal decorative dinner plate varieties; they all could take the lead role in any show. These magnificent blooms catch the attention of all eyes. It was a risk and a challenge I took on growing these treasures. They produce an abundance of blooms. I was surprised to see their loyalty and comfort as they blossomed for many months, from late spring to our first freeze in November. Let's just say I have fallen in love!

If you choose to start dahlias from tubers or seeds, they will not disappoint. Last year growing dahlias took a bit of research, as I watched videos and read books of growers close to our growing zone. I learned that dahlias are native to Mexico, and the rich history of this half-hardy, herbaceous root, had piqued my interest. I started some from seed in early February and also planted some tubers. Seed starting seemed to be more of a gamble but performed better than the tubers, to my surprise.

One of my most vigorous and floriferous dahlia plants in 2021 was started with

Johnny's Seed. During our February winter storm, I kept them warm by my fireplace when we lost power. I carefully protected the seedlings in my raised bed with an upside-down clear storage bin in the early stages. That works perfectly to protect them from the early spring wind. My other concern was the blasting sun in the summer. I had success by companion planting and carefully placing them to get morning sun and afternoon shade.

I didn't know at that time how much beauty they would bring to my garden. This flower started my interest in photography; I wanted to capture every bloom as if they were striking a new pose.



Photos Courtesy of DCMGA Member Sherri Ursini

Dahlia, 'Giants'

Dahlia spp.

My Friend Dahlia (Cont.)

Heat Tolerant Dahlia Cultivars

- 'Deuil du Roi Albert' – The blooms are purple with white tips and measure 4 to 6 inches. Plants grow 4 to 5 feet tall.
- 'Jersey's Beauty' – Pink flowers measure 4 to 5 inches. One of the tallest dahlias, it reaches 6 to 7 feet high.
- 'Juanita' – The cactus-style flowers are deep purple-burgundy. Blooms measure 6 inches, and the plant grows 4 to 5 feet tall.
- 'Kidd's Climax' – This easy-to-grow dahlia has 8- to 10-inch blooms that blend pink, cream, and lavender. Grows 3 to 4 feet tall.
- 'Prince Noir' – An early bloomer with deep burgundy flowers that measure 4 to 5 inches. Grows 4 to 5 feet tall.

Varieties

There are many varieties to choose from of unique bloom sizes, forms, and a kaleidoscope of colors. These varieties can be personalized according to the size of a garden. Designing a layered look with different height varieties is on my bucket list. I imagine it would look like a harmonious choir on risers with bushier plants in front and taller ones in the back.

The American Dahlia Society (ADS) classifies dahlias by size (B), form (ID), and color (R), but not all suppliers use this bloom key. ADS was founded in 1915 with over 70 societies connecting many Dahlia

enthusiasts. I have chosen to grow the spring cactus flowered seed mix this spring. Their unique petals are slightly curved and cactus-like, not full and rounded like the traditional dahlia. This type of dahlia comes in a range of colors that get to about 3ft. The bloom head can reach up to 5-6 inches across.

Planting & Growing

It is always a good idea to get your soil tested and an inexpensive way to find out what nutrients your soil might be missing to have a successful start. You can get these results from Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Services. Click this link for step-by-step instructions: [Soil, Water, and Forage Testing Laboratory Submittal Form](#).

Once all chance of frost has passed, amend the soil and plant the seedlings. Add 2 to 4 inches of high-quality compost or well-rotted manure, a light dusting of bone meal, and a balanced organic fertilizer. Plant tubers in the spring after the soil has warmed. Dig a hole several inches deep and lay the tubers horizontally with the eyes facing up. Once in place, refill the hole with well-drained soil. Allow at least 12 to 18 inches of space between plants. Adding a layer of straw or shredded bark mulch will keep weeds to a minimum and retain moisture. With each season, your tubers will multiply. I envision this being like a Cracker Jack prize for the dig!

My Friend Dahlia (Cont.)

These flowers can exceed 4 ft in height, with blooms ranging from 2 inches to 10 inches or more. Spring winds can damage them if not appropriately staked. Deadheading and discarding old blooms are encouraged because dahlias are truly a cut-and-come-again flower. Regular deadheading will encourage continuous growth. These plants can be topped to promote lateral branching and bushier plants. The best time to pick your dahlias is during the coolest part of the day. Sadly these flowers are not long-lasting, only about 5-7 days. Even though this is the case, dahlias are often used in bouquets and flower arranging. Before picking a bloom, check the back to ensure that it has firm petals. If the petals are somewhat limp and dry, then that flower is past the time of picking or overly ripe.

Dahlias require 8 hours of full sun; however, A Denton county gardener will need afternoon shade provided for the new blooms. Start watering dahlias after green shoots pop out of the soil. Overwatering before shoots emerge can result in tuber rot. Using a soaker hose or installing a drip system is best. Watering from overhead is not recommended because dahlias are susceptible to powdery mildew. To fortify your new beauties, use a light mixture of bone meal and a water-soluble, organic fertilizer for flowers once a month. Avoid using a high-nitrogen fertilizer, or you'll get lots of green growth with little flowering.



Pests

Slugs and snails damage young plants and earwigs ruin the flowers. Put down bait at planting time and periodically throughout the season. One downfall of leaving your tubers over winter is that the slugs, snails, and earwigs could make a home in the bedding, but the trade-off is bypassing the time-consuming process of digging, dividing, and storing. I personally have left many of my tubers in the ground as our winters are considerably shorter than other growing zones. I am considering digging and dividing them bi-annually each year. If the soil is well-drained and mulched, we can overwinter dahlias in zones 8-11. In cooler climates, gardeners lift dahlia tubers every winter and store them until the following spring according to variety.

My Friend Dahlia (Cont.)

Introduce These Blooms

I hope you are encouraged to introduce these blooms into your garden. I know it has been an exuberating experience for me! Gardening forward and intentionally is in us as gardeners. Let's continue to learn something new, try something new, take a risk and encourage one another to grow beauty in our community and our own gardens. Garden forward!

Resources

The American Dahlia Society. "Fundamentals of Growing Dahlias." Retrieved from <https://www.dahlia.org/growing/fundamentals-of-growing-dahlias/>

Dahliaholic. December 14, 2015. "How Geoff and Heather Grow Dahlias" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MFlgaojQkEM>

Floret, LLC. Copyright 2022. "How to Grow Dahlias." Retrieved from: <https://www.floretflowers.com/resources/how-to-grow-dahlias>

Stan Handley. "Ruminations of a Dahlia Tuber." **Central States Dahlia Society.** Retrieved from: <https://dahlia.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Ruminations-of-a-Dahlia-Tuber.pdf>

Arrowhead Dahlias. Copyright 2021. "New to dahlias? Here is some information to help you out." Retrieved from: <https://www.arrowheaddahlias.com/dahlia-culture.html>

Old House Gardens – Heirloom Bulbs. Copyright 2022. "Dahlia Bulbs." Retrieved from: <https://oldhousegardens.com/store/chart/Dahlia.php>

Utah State University, Yard and Garden Extension. Copyright 2021. "Growing Dahlias." Retrieved from: <https://extension.usu.edu/yardandgarden/research/growing-dahlias> 



A Few of Our Favorite Reads

Seed to Seed: Seed Saving and Growing Techniques for Vegetable Gardeners, 2nd Edition by Suzanne Ashworth. Seed Savers Exchange; 2nd edition (March 1, 2002).

Entangled Life: How Fungi Make Our Worlds, Change Our Minds & Shape Our Futures by Merlin Sheldrake. Random House Trade Paperbacks (April 13, 2021).

Nature's Best Hope: A New Approach to Conservation That Starts in Your Yard by Doug Tallamy. Timber Press; Illustrated edition (February 4, 2020).

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.

Tree Planting

BY PAT MOYER

I usually start most of the talks I do about trees with the old joke: "When is the best time to plant a tree?" with the answer, of course, being "30 years ago." That points out the fact that trees are most appreciated as they achieve their mature size. So, without a handy time machine now is the time to start planning for trees to enhance your future landscape.

Before you run down to your local Big Box store and buy the biggest tree possible, take some time and create a planning strategy that will give a new tree (or trees) the opportunity to be the highlight of your landscape.

Site Planning

Proper Site Planning will not only help you determine where planting a tree is advisable but also what type or species of tree will work best for you. Assuming you know your soil conditions, one of the first things to do is determine what you want your tree to do. There are several reasons for planting trees. Providing a screen or shade are two of the more common reasons.

I enthusiastically recommend using the *Texas Tree Planting Guide* on the AgriLife website at <http://texastreeplanting.tamu.edu/>. That site has two very informative links. These are the "Custom Tree Selector" and the "Tree Planting and Care" links (I really don't find the "Express Tree Selector" link very useful).

The "Tree Planting and Care" link on that site will take you to another set of links on various considerations prior to tree selection as well as some basic tree planting and maintenance recommendations. Note that each of the links also has an accompanying video that helps clarify each topic.

Tree Species Selection

Once you know the characteristics of the tree you want, it's time to look at some various species that meet those criteria. The most convenient place to find those is on the same AgriLife website, <http://texastreeplanting.tamu.edu/>. This time, use the "Custom Tree Selector" link.

That website has an extensive listing of trees by size, foliage, required soil conditions as well as native selections. (I always recommend native species over non-natives because native plants thrive under our local environmental variations, require less water, and provide vital habitat for birds and other wildlife benefits.) The only required field on this website is the county. So, if, for example, you want to peruse all the trees recommended for Denton County, just select "Denton" on the County Dropdown Menu and press the "Show Trees" tab and "Voila!" there is your AgriLife recommended list.

Tree Planting (Cont.)

Each species has a link that gives additional info for that type of tree. This info cites both the good and some of the not so good aspects of the tree. Make sure you review this info before deciding on a specific species.

Fruit trees are also something you may consider. Once again, AgriLife has some great resources for tree selection and care. General information about different types of fruits and nuts is available at <https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/fruit-nut/>. Fruit tree selection is covered in the AgriLife Today site at <https://agrilifetoday.tamu.edu/2020/10/23/plant-fruit-trees-the-agrilife-extension-way/>. Keep in mind that not all fruit trees do well in North Texas. So a little research will pay off.

Picking a Tree at the Nursery

Now the fun of hunting for your ideal tree begins. Depending on the species you want, "good" trees are available from numerous sources, including Big Box stores, if you take the time to evaluate them. Once again, the AgriLife website has several good tips at <http://texastreeplanting.tamu.edu/PickTreeAtNursery.html>. The accompanying video is also a good reference. Keep in mind pulling a tree out of its pot to check the condition is very important. If a retailer doesn't want you to pull the plant out of its container or the tree has severely girdled roots, don't buy that tree.

Also remember that there is usually less transplant shock to a smaller caliper (aka diameter) tree than a larger caliper tree of the same species. This means that, generally, a smaller caliper tree may start regrowth after planting more quickly than a larger caliper tree and may, in fact, overtake the growth of the larger tree.

If you're looking at buying a really large tree, over 15- to 20-gallon pots, you may want to have the nursery plant it for you. In that case, you may want to make sure you note an identifying characteristic (or even a photo) of the tree so you can make sure the tree that is delivered is the one you selected.



Tree Planting (Cont.)

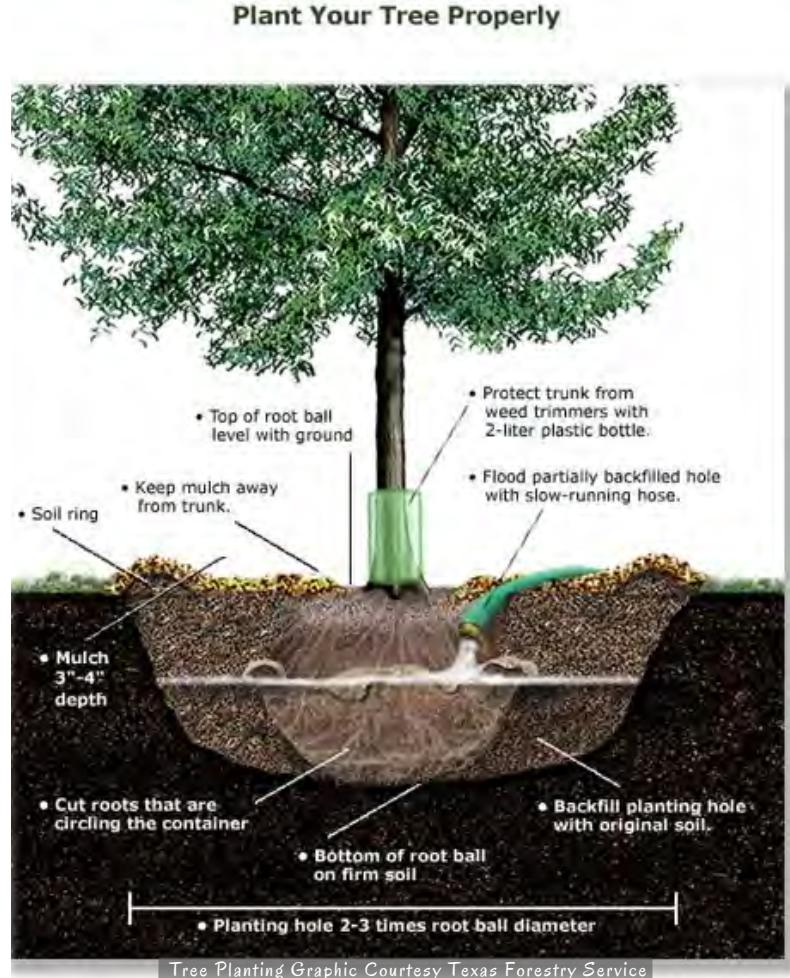
Planting The Tree

Returning, once again to the AgriLife website, at <http://texastreeplanting.tamu.edu/PlantTreeProperly.html>, there are several points to remember when planting the tree.

- The hole depth and width are important to establish the tree properly.
- Refilling the hole with the same soil that was removed also helps establish the tree.
- Using some form of trunk protector (they suggest using a liter plastic bottle) pays off, particularly when there are weedeaters nearby.
- Mulch retains moisture and slows weed development around the tree.
- Most important is proper watering. Watering of 6-8 gallons per inch of diameter is necessary at least once a week. In hot, dry periods this may increase to 2-3 times per week.
- Staking should only be done if necessary. Allowing the tree to develop without external support strengthens the tree.
- Trimming during the first year of a newly planted tree should be limited to removal of dead or broken limbs.
- While nurseries will plant trees all year round (particularly potted trees), planting should be done when the tree is dormant (late Fall through early Spring).
- Some trees with thin barks (red oaks, for example) may need to be wrapped to prevent scalding of the bark.

Result: Right Tree in the Right Place and More

Following the guidelines above will enable you to say you not only planted the "right tree in the right place," but 30 years from now you can also say you planted it at the right time. 



IT'S 2022 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL TIME!

Dues paid after January 31, 2022, \$25

The Fine Print

- Enter VS & CE hours in VMS by January 31, 2022
- Veterans need 12 hours VS & 12 hours CE in 2021
- Interns need 70 hours VS & 50 hours training in 2021
- On March 31, 2022 members not in good standing will be inactivated unless granted an exception by the CEA-Hort.

Questions? Email Kim Shaneyfelt through VMS



Scan or go to Annual DCMGA
Membership Renewal on dcmga.com to
submit your renewal and payment



What's Growing in Members' Gardens



Beefsteak Begonia
Begonia Erythrophylla 'Beefsteak'



Quince
Cydonia oblonga



Papalo Seed Pods
Porophyllum ruderale



African Violet Mini
Saintpaulia

Brighten Your Winter Landscape With Cool Season Color

BY PAT PAPE

It's much easier to maintain a colorful garden in the spring when the sun is shining, and temperatures are warm. And it's easy to give up gardening during cold, gloomy weather. Thankfully, various winter-hardy plants can revitalize a tired landscape without requiring hours of outdoor maintenance. Plus, they're typically available at local nurseries and big box stores.

February 2020 notwithstanding, North Texas gardeners have traditionally enjoyed mild winters with minimal snow and sleet, and there are several options for color during those frigid months. Here are proven beauty boosters for both sun and shade. Treat most cool-season color plants as annuals even when labeled as perennials.

Pansy is the common name for various cultivated plants – pansies, violas, and panolas – providing months of color in cooler temperatures. Hardy even in snow, they thrive in sunny spots and require minimal maintenance. Pansies have large faces and come in a wide range of solid and multi-colored varieties. There is even a black pansy on the market. While producing smaller flowers than pansies, petite violas deliver more blooms per plant. Panola, a hybrid between pansy and viola, has the best of both worlds – more prominent faces, more blooms, and superior cold hardiness, but all three do well in the ground or a container.



Photos Courtesy DCMGA Member Pat Pape

Pansies

As a bonus, pansy flowers are edible and make impressive garnishes for salads and desserts. Rabbits love to eat them, which may be something to consider if you have bountiful bunnies in your neighborhood. The plants grow 6-8" tall and 6-8" wide. Pansies, violas, and panolas are "heavy feeders." To encourage continuous blooms, apply a high nitrogen fertilizer or bone meal. They don't like to dry out entirely but are forgiving if that should happen.

Snapdragons are more tender than pansies, but they're also low-fuss flowers that come in many colors. Snapdragons prefer cool, moist soil and full to part-sun, attracting beneficial insects during cold weather. Typically, snapdragons bloom in fall and winter and drop seeds in spring. Standard snapdragons are classified as midget (6-8"), medium (15-30"), and tall (30-48"). Be aware that all parts of a snapdragon are poisonous if eaten.

Brighten Your Winter Landscape (Cont.)

Sweet alyssum is a member of the mustard family, and while technically a perennial, it's considered an annual in North Texas. Blooming plants look like mini shrubs with dense clusters of small flowers that give off a sweet, honey-like aroma. Sweet alyssum looks excellent in rock gardens, borders, pots, and hanging baskets. Although white is the most common flower color, they're also available in pink, salmon, purple and yellow. A typical plant grows 8-12" high.

Ornamental kale and cabbage add variety and texture to beds or pots. Available in pink, purple, or white and sporting beautiful green leaves, they do best in the sun but need afternoon shade. Plant them in moist, well-drained soil that is somewhat acidic, and feed a timed-release fertilizer about three weeks after planting. Ornamental cabbage plants are prone to the same problems as the cabbage and kale you would grow to eat, but much less so during colder months. Kale and cabbage grow 6-8" tall and 8-10" wide and partner well with petunias, chrysanthemums, and snapdragons.



Sweet alyssum



Ornamental cabbage

Dusty Miller is a perennial often treated at a biennial. It produces small, yellow, or cream composite flowers on stalks, but the flowers are not as showy as the plant's silver foliage. Plant Dusty Miller in well-drained, loose soil richly organic and avoid overwatering. This drought-tolerant plant grows 6-12" high and looks spectacular in beds, borders, or containers.

Brighten Your Winter Landscape (Cont.)

When it comes to enhancing shady locations, choose hardy cyclamen in shades of white, red, pink, or purple. Cyclamen requires regular watering and good drainage to flourish. Water the plant from below the leaves, avoiding the stems and leaves. Fertilize once every month or two with a water-soluble fertilizer mixed at half strength since excessive fertilizer can affect the plant's ability to rebloom. Cyclamen typically grows 8" tall and 9" wide. Avoid the varieties sold as houseplants. Those are tropical specimens that don't tolerate temperatures below 40 degrees.

Primrose is an herbaceous perennial that dies back to the ground in winter, but even horticulturists at the Dallas Arboretum don't guarantee that it will survive a Texas summer. In cooler weather, plant primrose in well-drained soil and part sun. The Arboretum recommends two varieties: Belarina and Kennedy Irish which are available in six vibrant colors. Belarina produces fragrant rose-shaped flowers. Kennedy Irish has burgundy foliage and produces either white flowers with a tinge of purple or dark red flowers with a yellow eye. The plants grow 4-8" tall and 6-12" wide.

English daisy grows well in the cool parts of fall, winter, and spring but will succumb to heat by June. Team these plants with spring-flowering bulbs, pansies, and alyssum in full sun or part shade for a beautiful display of color. According to information from Texas A&M, the English used daisy as a folk remedy for hundreds of years to treat varied ailments, including arthritis, diarrhea, bronchitis, and kidney problems. The plants grow 6-12" tall and 6-12" wide.



Photo: Pixabay Creative Commons

Daisy

Ivy vines will never be as flashy as winter blooms, but those green leaves are still gorgeous and can fill bare spots in a shady landscape. Consider evergreen needlepoint ivy, which grows up to 9" high. This high-maintenance woody vine requires regular upkeep, and some consider it invasive. But it performs well as a ground cover in full shade and even thrives in polluted inner cities. Needlepoint ivy gets thirsty, so don't let it dry out. Algerian ivy is an evergreen vine or groundcover with deep green leaves. A vigorous grower, a climbing vine can reach 20' at maturity, and unlike its needlepoint cousin, it's drought tolerant. However, both vines are toxic to humans.

To protect plants from the coldest weather, mulch beds right after planting and water them thoroughly before a cold spell. A good watering will insulate the roots from any cold air that might reach them. Wash any frost off the plants afterward, and once the soil thaws, they should bounce back and continue flowering.



Potato Gardening Starts Now

Let's Get Growing!

BY PAM SPOONER

Pam Spooner, DCMGA class of 2018, is an unabashed potato fan who has her own antique potato harvesting scoop.

If you have never had a "new" potato, you are missing one of the supreme joys of home vegetable gardening. They are a taste unlike anything store bought, I guarantee! Let's get you growing those little jewels of deliciousness in containers anywhere you have enough direct sunshine, but info about growing in raised beds or rows is also included, as well as links to additional information.

Timeline

In order to allow for prep and chitting (a.k.a. sprouting) you need to buy your seed potatoes 2-3 weeks before our potato planting date which is traditionally Valentine's Day (Feb. 14) through early March, so start time is now! Spuds are a 90-100 day crop and grow best in cooler weather so, by counting backwards, our inevitable May heat dictates an early start to the procedure.

The Seed

Potatoes (*Solanum tuberosum*) are not grown from seeds like most other plants but from actual potatoes you buy from nurseries or feed/farm stores that sell "certified seed potatoes," meaning they are disease and fungus free. Select firm, unwrinkled specimens without sprouts. Potatoes from the grocery store are treated with chemicals so they don't sprout and grow while stored and, of course, that's exactly the opposite of what you want in a seed potato.

For Denton County, the Texas A&M AgriLife Vegetable Variety Selector website (https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/publications/veg_variety/) recommends, among others, Norland or LaSoda for red potatoes, Kennebec for white, or Yukon gold. Some fingerling and blue potatoes are also recommended. Please note that ordering online may be problematic since producers' first shipping dates may be too late for Texas' planting calendar. You can select smaller seed potatoes (large chicken egg size) and plant them whole, but if you buy larger ones, cut them in 2" cubes so that each piece has at least two 'eyes' (dimples in the skin where the sprout will emerge).



Potato Gardening Starts Now (Cont.)

Lay your pieces out, cut side up, in a warm place for at least 2-3 days so that the cut surface dries thoroughly to help create a barrier against soil bacteria/fungal spores. Now onto chitting which may be termed "an old English technique" to give them a head start by allowing them to sprout before planting. Turn the cut pieces eyes up, not touching, in a warm place with indirect light and leave them. Placing them or the whole small potatoes in empty egg cartons, eyes upward, on a windowsill in indirect light is efficient and easy. In approximately 10-14 days when the tender sprouts are $1\frac{1}{4}$ - $1\frac{1}{2}$ ", it's time to plant.

The amount of seed potatoes to buy depends on your growing method. For raised beds, space your seed potatoes about 12"-18" apart. Mature plants are 18"-36" wide and tall. For containers, you can use half whiskey barrels, 5-gallon buckets, 3-gallon flower pots, black felt grow bags, or other re-purposed containers like heavy cardboard boxes, but just make sure the sides do not admit any light. (Potatoes exposed to light develop a chemical, solanine, and turn green which then all traces must be trimmed away before eating as it is toxic.) All containers must have several drainage holes. Plant 1-5 seed potatoes in each (see below). Containers have the "no dig" advantage of your being able to turn them over on a tarp at harvest time and never miss any, but container growing means, as always, you will need to water more than in-ground gardening.

Potatoes need approximately 6 hours of direct sunshine each day so choose your location accordingly, with awareness that your now leafless trees will be casting shade come March.

Soil Prep

For raised beds/rows

The ideal growing medium has good aeration (e.g. not heavy clay) so prepare the soil by digging over to loosen it to a depth of 6-8" and incorporate plenty of organic matter such as compost and leaves so as to provide nutrients and increase drainage. Do not add manure as it can increase the risk of potato scab disease. Ideally, it should resemble the texture of potting soil – loose and free draining. Avoid planting where you have grown members of the Solanaceae family (potatoes, tomatoes, peppers, eggplant) in the past 2 years. Heap the soil up in rows then flatten the top, then make a trench in the middle of that 'berm' about 6" deep, sprinkle the bottom of the trench with any granular complete fertilizer (e.g. 10-20-10) – about 1/3 cup per 10' row - then cover over the fertilizer with about 2" of soil. Do not use high nitrogen fertilizer (first high number like 20-5-5) as it will result in more leaves, less potatoes.

Potato Gardening Starts Now (Cont.)

For containers

Fill the container approximately 4-5" deep with good soil mixed with compost, so as to resemble loose potting mix. Sprinkle the soil with any granular complete fertilizer (e.g. 10-20-10) and cover with another 2" of soil. Water it in.

Planting

If you have chitted your potatoes, be careful with the sprouts as they are fragile. Place the seed potato eyes or sprout up, 12-18" apart in raised beds/row planting. With containers, place 1 seed potato in a 3-gallon pot, 2 in a 5-gallon pot, and 5 in a half whiskey barrel or approx 12" apart. For row planting, gently pull the soil over from the berm to a depth of 4-5" and add about the same amount to container planting. Water well. Shoots will appear in 2-3 weeks.

Growing procedure in a nutshell

With either container or raised bed/row gardening, potatoes are initially planted deeply so that their roots go down to fertilized soil below the seed, shoots grow up and emerge. When the plant is 8" tall, pull additional soil snugly up (called hilling up, earthing up, or laying by) around the growing shoot only leaving 2-4" inches of visible plant above the soil. The plant continues to grow, and in about 2-3 weeks, repeat the hilling up when the plant has grown again to 8-10". The stem and leaves will not be harmed by covering with light soil or compost. The young potatoes form below ground above the seed potato, attached to the main stem by their own thin stems called stolons so burying the main stem with the growing medium stimulates the production of spuds and excludes light.



Photo Courtesy WikiHow "How to Hill Potatoes," License CC BY-NC-SA 3.0

Hilling Up Potatoes

After the first hilling up, apply a second application of fertilizer in the row between the plants or on top of the soil in a container and scratch it in, then water.

Frost protection

Because Texas' climate mandates planting before the last average frost, be aware that potatoes are tender and can be nipped back or possibly killed by frost. Cover to protect them with frost cloths, towels, blankets, etc. and/or you can completely cover the young

Potato Gardening Starts Now (Cont.)

plants with soil and yes, they will re-emerge from that soil blanket on their own! Always remember that plants in containers are more vulnerable to freezing temps.

Watering

Potatoes need approximately 1-2" of water a week, more in sandy soil and more as temps rise. As we know, potatoes have a high water content so are heavy drinkers but don't like to be flooded or can rot. In other words, a steady level of moisture is vital to having a good crop. Keep an eye on containers as they will need more watering than in-ground crops.

Harvesting

When you see your plants have flowered, you can harvest "new" potatoes by feeling around in the soil with your hand and gently separating a few from their stolon. Be sure to replace the soil so as not to expose any growing potatoes to light. When the plants turn yellow and die down, the rest of the harvest begins (if you haven't nabbed them all as new potatoes!). Warning, should you spot any "fruit" resulting from the flowers, these are not potatoes and are poisonous, so do not eat! To harvest from a container, turn it over and sift through the soil or if in a raised bed/rows, use a garden fork or spade to gently turn over the soil, starting some distance from the plant so as not to spear your precious crop. You can also just pull up the plant but will still need to explore the soil for any that may have become detached. Undoubtedly, you will end up on hands and knees gathering all your bounty!

Potatoes are quite a forgiving crop as long as they are grown in light, free draining soil, get direct sunshine, fertilized (with chemical or organic fertilizer), and are watered regularly. All gardeners – young and old – enjoy this fast, fun gardening experience that results in delectable treats.



Photo Courtesy DCMGA Member Barbara Brown

Potato Plants Beginning to Flower

Potato Gardening Starts Now (Cont.)

Resources

with illustrations, plus information about possible pests/diseases and growing a fall crop:

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

"Easy Gardening Potatoes, E-511"

https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/organic/files/2011/03/E-511_irish_potato.pdf

"Potatoes"

<https://cdn-ext.agnet.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/how-to-grow-potatoes.pdf>

Vegetable Variety Selector

https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/publications/veg_variety/

University of New Hampshire Extension

"What is the best way to grow potatoes in containers?"

<https://extension.unh.edu/blog/2020/03/what-best-way-grow-potatoes-containers>



Denton County MGA Interns and Veterans:

Please join DCMGA
VP-Projects Tom O'Brien
and our DCMGA
Project Managers
for the February 9th
(in-person)

2022 Volunteer Opportunity Fair!

**Look for details in Plan Your
Week, coming every Friday to
an email inbox near you.**

Open to DCMGA members and interns only; not a public event.

TEXAS
MASTER GARDENER
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

DENTON COUNTY
MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION

In-Person
**VOLUNTEER
OPPORTUNITY FAIR**

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 9TH, 2022

9:30 AM - 11:30 AM

GLOBAL SPHERES CENTER

Program provider: The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, Denton County Master Gardener Association, and the Global Spheres Center. This program is made possible by the generous support of the following donors: [redacted]

Pruning Roses

BY SHARRIE ELY

February has North Texas gardeners preparing their roses for spring. February 14 is the traditional time for our area to start rose pruning. A few weeks after their February pruning, rose bushes will start putting out the new growth that shows us spring is here and beautiful roses will soon follow.

Pruning roses may sound a bit intimidating to the uninitiated, but it really is an easy process. Roses in the landscape are tough plants and can take quite a trim. Just as all gardeners do not garden in exactly the same manner, all rose growers do not prune in exactly the same way. The basics techniques are important but really, you can't go wrong. Don't be afraid to tackle this garden task. This garden chore will encourage new growth and blooms, clear out any dead wood, and shape the plant so it will look lovely in your garden.

Let's check the list of tools needed and get ready to tackle this project. You will need bypass hand pruners, a long-handled lopper, and hedge clippers. Yes, hedge clippers. Before starting make sure your tools are clean and sharpened. Also, don't forget that you will need heavy-duty garden gloves and arm protection.

As you prune you will need to clean your tools from one shrub to the next to prevent the spread of some rose diseases. Ammonia-based wet wipes are good to use. It is not recommended to use bleach or bleach wipes to clean your tools as bleach can be corrosive.

Start the pruning process by assessing the shape of your rose. Is it mostly shrubby? Or is it tall and with more of a lanky growth? Is it a climbing rose? If it is a shrubby rose, use the hedge clippers and reduce the rose by 30 to 50%.

In thinking how much you need to prune, consider your garden. In a smaller, urban garden, you may need to keep your roses smaller so you can reduce them by 50%. If size is not an issue, you may choose to reduce your shrubs by only by 30%. Both shrubs will increase in size as they put on leaves and buds in the spring.



Canva Stock Photo

Pruning Roses (Cont.)

After cutting the shrub, use your hand pruners to remove dead canes, longer, thin canes (less than a pencil's width), and canes that are crisscrossing or touching another cane. Make sure your tools are sharp and make clean cuts. Remove extra canes from the center of the shrub by cutting them all the way to the ground. This will open up the center of the shrub for good air-circulation. Leave up to four or five canes. Shape the remaining shrub with your hand pruners. You can prune these remaining canes at a 45-degree angle, a $\frac{1}{4}$ inch above an outward-facing bud but in shrub roses it does not make much of a difference.

The pruning process for a taller and lankier rose is very similar to a shrub rose. There are fewer canes to prune so start with loppers to remove dead canes, pencil-thin canes, and canes that are touching. Leave three or four canes. Trim them up to 30 – 50%. Because this variety has fewer canes it is easier to cut these at a 45-degree angle, $\frac{1}{4}$ inch above an outward-facing bud. Because the bud is “outward-facing” the cane will grow outward and leave the center of the rose open for air circulation.

Pruning climbing roses is different than pruning other varieties of roses. Start by removing the dead wood. Pick the long canes that you wish to keep, any number from four to six. The number you keep depends on the size of the garden area.

Remove extra canes so the remaining canes can grow unhindered. Do not shorten the long canes as this variety will produce spring blooms laterally along a horizontal cane. When trained upright on a fence or structure, you will only have blooms produced on the ends of the canes. Tie these canes horizontally on a structure such as a fence and you will see blooms laterally, along the long canes.

While pruning your roses if you come across an abnormal, bunched up growth, your rose may be infected with Rose Rosette Disease. RRD is caused by a virus. This virus has been in the United States since the 1940s but in the last few years it has become prolific in the North



Dan Costin/flickr/CC BY 2.0

Pruning Roses (Cont.)

Texas area. At this time, there is no cure. This virus is spread by an eriophyid mite, a tiny arthropod that can ingest the virus when feeding from an infected rose. The infected mite can then carry it to another rose plant and feed on that plant and infect it.

Instead of pruning out the mutated growth, you should remove the entire rose, roots and all. Leaving a virus-infected rose in your garden means the virus can spread to other roses in your garden and to roses in your neighborhood. It can be a sad affair but cut and bag the infected rose and dispose of it. Do not drag the infected plant through your garden.

After the rose is removed the soil does not need to be treated as the virus can only live in the plant material. You can wait two weeks and then plant another rose in the same spot if you want to try again.

After you have finished pruning your roses there are two optional tasks. These include stripping the leaves and applying a horticulture oil. A busy gardener may run out of time to do these two steps. Not all rose gardeners apply horticulture oil or strip the leaves but the choice is yours.

Finally, remove rose leaves and debris from the garden and apply the fertilizer of your choice. This is an important step that will give your roses the added boost for spring blooms. Fertilizing is the final step of pruning and prepping your roses.

Spring is coming and if you take the time now to do these rose pruning tasks, you will soon see the rewards in the blooms to come.

For more information on this and other gardening topics, visit the Denton County Master Gardeners Association website at dcmga.com; submit questions to our free help desk; and subscribe to our monthly newsletter *The Root* at <https://dcmga.com/home/join-the-dcmga-email-list/>.



Photo: Kerry Wixted Flickr

Rose Rosette Mutated Growth

Awards Banquet & Class of 2021 Graduation

BY KATHRYN WELLS

What a joy to gather together and celebrate our Association's newest Master Gardeners – the Class of 2021. In a remarkable achievement, the entire class (100%!) completed their requirements to graduate and certify. Class of 2021, welcome...and congratulations!

During our January 19th Graduation and Awards Banquet, we also had the pleasure and privilege of announcing the 2021 Award recipients for their exceptional service contributions and recognizing our 2021 Member Milestoners – those folks who celebrated DCMGA tenures of 5, 10, 15, 20, and 25 (wow!) years. And, we were thrilled to finally include the Class of 2020 in an in-person banquet, since their graduation ceremony in January of 2021 was limited to doorstep deliveries!

The introduction and induction of our 2022 Board of Directors capped our fun-filled and festive evening. Many thanks to Graduation & Awards Banquet chair Dee Payne and her remarkable team including Judy and Russ Allen, Kathi Efflandt, Cece Kenney, Lisa Lebsack, Clarice Luce, Pat Pape, and Marti Wingo. Those talented folks transformed the Robson Ranch banquet room with a fresh palette of blue, white, and yellow emphasizing our "Zest for Success" theme.

While we all accomplished so much in the two years we were mostly serving socially distanced, it was a really sweet treat to celebrate together with those who were able to join us. (And, for those who weren't able to be there, your presence was still among us!)



2022 Board of Directors

From left to right: President Kathryn Wells, VP-Projects Tom O'Brien, VP-Outreach Georgiana McCoig, Communications Director Cheryl Huckabee, Secretary Kelli Bixler, Treasurer Courtney Dunn, Past President Pat Moyer, and Education Director Daniel Arenas.

Not pictured: Member at Large Kim Shaneyfelt.

Congratulations to the Class of 2021!

Georgia Albury

Russ Allen

Ann Athey

Suzanne Barnard

Margaret Calabrese

Vicki Campbell

Rhonda Curtright

Cindy De La Cruz

Dana Depew

Nancy DiMarco

Courtney Dunn

Brittney Fears

Kathy Finch

Lauren Hausheer

Celia Horner

Beverly Ivey

Noel Kaplonski

Kristie Kilgore

Kathleen Kinser

Karen LaCroix

Tiago Magane

Susan Marchus

Sherry Massey

Anne McMahon

Susan Murphy

Angela Naughton

Debra Noguera

Lauren Rambo

Margaret Rogers

Susan Schattle

Liz Tobias

Ruth Tweto

Sherri B Ursini

Melissa Weaver



Class of 2021 Graduates

Flanked by Intern Training Administrators Kim Wootton (far left) and Barbara Beane (far right).



2021 Award Recipients

The John Cooper Educator Award,

named after Denton County MGA's founding County Extension Agent for Horticulture, honors select veteran members for consistent excellence in educational volunteer service. Our 2021 recipients, Shirlee & Claud Singer, fit the bill!

Both from the Class of 2008, this royal couple has made innumerable contributions to our Association and to our community over the years including (but not limited to) creating DCMGA's highly successful Design Your Yard public program.

Together with son John (Class of 2014), they make gardening (and education!) a true family affair.

Congratulations, Shirlee and Claud, and thank you for a lifetime of educational excellence!



DCMGA President Kathryn Wells (middle) presents the 2021 John Cooper Educator Award to recipients Shirlee and Claud Singer.

Educator Awards

are annually presented to veteran and intern members who have demonstrated excellence in our mission of educating and engaging our community. Our 2021 recipients are Daniel Arenas (Class of 2013) and Ruth Tweto (Class of 2021).



Daniel Arenas, Veteran Educator of the Year with 2021 VP-Projects
Joanne Spurgin



Ruth Tweto, Intern Educator of the Year (left) with Intern Class Administrator Barbara Beane



Congratulations



2021 Award Recipients

Project Managers

Project Manager Awards
are annually presented to members who have demonstrated excellence leading Association projects.

Our 2021 recipients are Kathy Rainey (Class of 2017) for her collaborative and comprehensive work leading Gardenscapers and Karen Roberts (Class of 2016) for her extensive work leading our Garden Tour.



Kathy Rainey,
Project Manager of the Year with
2021 VP-Projects Joanne Spurgin

(Not pictured: Karen Roberts)

Award of Excellence

The Award of Excellence
is periodically presented to a member who has demonstrated overall excellence in representing and leading Denton County Master Gardener Association.

For helping lead the Association through the pandemic in 2020 and 2021, the 2021 Board of Directors chose President Kathryn Wells to receive this year's honor.



President Kathryn Wells (second from left) with CEA-Hort Janet Laminack (left), 2021 VP-Projects Joanne Spurgin (second from right), and 2021 VP-Outreach Kathy Rainey (right).



2021 Award Recipients

Special Merit Awards

Special Merit Awards

are annually presented to veteran and intern members who have significantly contributed to our Association and community in the past year.

For 2021, our veteran recipients include Jerry Alexander (2015), Linda D'Amanda (2019), Beverly Duncan (2018), Lee Greer (2020), and Clarice Luce (2003).

Intern recipients from the Class of 2021 include Russ Allen, Ann Athey, and Sherri Ursini.



Veteran Special Merit Award recipients Lee Greer (left, with 2021 VP-Projects Joanne Spurgin) and Clarice Luce (far right).

Intern Class Administrators Kim Wootton and Barbara Beane present the Intern Special Merit awards to recipients Russ Allen (left), Ann Athey (middle), and Sherri Ursini (right).

(Not pictured: Jerry Alexander, Linda D'Amanda, and Beverly Duncan)



2021 Award Recipients

Community Partner

The Community Partner Award

is periodically presented to a member of the community who has demonstrated a spirit of collaboration and support for Denton County Master Gardener Association.

To honor her vision in creating FMFB Community Garden (and to recognize her continuing work on its behalf), our 2021 Community Partner is Lori Giesler.



President Kathryn Wells (right) presents DCMGA's 2021 Community Partner of the Year Award to Lori Giesler. Lori, the "founding mother" of FMFB Community Garden, continues to generously give both her time and talent to the project.



Volunteers at FMFB Community Garden include (from left to right) Karen LaCroix (2021), Project Manager David Huffman (2017), Kelli Bixler (2020), Pat Moyer (2013), DCMGA Community Partner Lori Giesler, Project Manager Carol Noble (2016), Sherri Ursini (2021), Ann McMahon (2021), and Chris Hunt (husband of DCMGA Member Ana Hunt, 2012).
Thanks, everyone, for your service!



2021 Graduation & Awards Banquet



Carol Brantley (2011) celebrating her 10-year member milestone.



Communications Director Cheryl Huckabee (2018) (left) and Kathi Efflandt (2010).



Joan Stanley (1994) – our most tenured veteran in attendance at this year's banquet.



Class of 2020 member Kendrick Lewis (right) led the evening's invocation. Chris Davidson (2015) interpreted.



CEA-Hort Janet Laminack (right) congratulates three Class of 2001 members and friends celebrating their 20-year milestone (from left to right): Tracy Durmick, Brenda Wellenreiter, and Mary Morrow.



Graduation and Awards Photos Courtesy DCMGA Member Lea Watson

2021 Member Milestones

Congratulations to our Member Milestoners!



Carolyn Gold

25
YEARS
Class of 1996



Donna Wolfe

20 Years

Brigid Corbett
Tracy Durmick
Carol Fitch
Kaye Gross
Mary Morrow
Brenda Wellenreiter
Class of 2001

15 Years

Kimi Dailey
Lynda Harvey
Lee Ann Keener
Leah Knack
Sara Spencer
Class of 2006

10 Years

Jeris Bashor
Dana Bays
Carol Brantley
Sharon Coleman
Carol Langdon
Larry Legg
MaryBeth Mayfield
Jacqueline Perkins
Dale Powell
Sharon Stratman
Class of 2011

5 Years

John Ankeny
Lillian Bell
Mary Branstetter
Teresa Owings
Patty Cooke
Mike Crawford
Carolyn Dempsey
Kathi Fast
Bernadette Gilbert



Carol Noble
Stephanie Porter
Barbara Ridge
Karen Roberts
Barney Sanborn
Megan Schmidt
Beth Ahrum

George Slack
Cheryl Terry
Laura Thompson
Lynn Thompson
Lee Ann Yates
Mike Yordy
Class of 2016

Pass-Along Marking

BY LIZ MOYER

Avoid Plant Sale Prep Horror!

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

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

Oh, the horror!



Knife Marker



Photos Courtesy DCMGA Member Liz Moyer

Flag Marker

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

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



Mini-Blinds Wanted

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

The Plant Sale Committee can use any and all mini-blinds for Plant Sale ID stakes. If you have some to donate, contact Bob Bender through VMS.





Online (& In-Person) 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 YouTube CE Programs

"Waterwise Gardening"

"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"

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

Tarrant Regional Water District &

Tarrant County Master Gardeners

Toni Moorehead "Tough Texas Plants"

Part 1: <https://youtu.be/GPkDJtkn-Jc>

Part 2: <https://youtu.be/3wwDY38VVLg>

Part 3: <https://youtu.be/kZKX0iexJMw>

New! Small Fruit Propagation

Workshop, Square Cloud Winery & Texas A&M AgriLife

February 25, 9am-1pm

Square Cloud Winery, Gunter TX

Come join us at Square Cloud Winery as we learn how to propagate berries and grapes that are well adapted to North Texas! We will demonstrate techniques such as layering, cuttings, and bench-grafting. Everyone will get to take home plant material. Seating is limited!

Cost: \$45 per person. Plant material, lunch, and wine tasting included.

For more info & to RSVP, contact Jackson Anderson, Square Cloud Winery. 214-717-8490 winegrower@netzero.com



Citizen Forester

Cross Timbers Urban Forestry Council

Interested in becoming a Citizen Forester?

The Citizen Forester program presents a wonderful opportunity for individuals to become skilled at planting, pruning, and maintaining trees in an urban environment. It also provides interested persons with the chance to get involved with local city and county agencies and help their community take care of its public trees.

Application deadline Feb 12, 2022.

Learn more at this link:

<http://ctufc.org/citizen-forester/>

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=WY4aV5hqkxY>

The Bee Short Course – Ohio State University

"Building wild bee conservation skills together"

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

Online (& In-Person) Education Opportunities (Cont.)

AgriLife Online Courses

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

(Most, but not all, are free.)

<https://agrifilearn.tamu.edu/catalog?pgenname=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/UCbp4w_kcScRVoHlN3Hi1_KUQ/

New! Tending Nature, Native Plants and Every Gardener's Role in Fostering Biodiversity - Ohio State University

This 6-session webinar series focuses on the ecological roles of native plants and some of the creatures that depend on them. Click to view the 1-hour webinar recordings:

<https://u.osu.edu/6plus/recordings/>

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-BMdBaoqM>



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-2022-tickets-221010808277>

February 3, 2022 - Basic Grafting Techniques - Shannon Dietz, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Agent-Ag & Natural Resources

March 3, 2022 - Tomatoes on the Patio - 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-26803072143/1541129202716211/>

Citrus Varieties: Gardening on the Gulf Coast

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

Stephen Brueggerhoff, Extension Agent – Horticulture
<https://youtu.be/wSIRjQJnxhE>

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.

DCMGA
HELP DESK
Question of the Month



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

BY HELP DESK TEAM

Q: Is there anything I can do to make our school garden more interesting and fun for the younger children?

A: It is great that you are striving to educate young children on the pleasures of gardening and being out in nature. For many, that experience will provide an interest they can enjoy for the rest of their lives. Because preschool and early elementary school students can get bored quickly, so how about creating a sensory garden to engage them in many, different ways?

As the name implies, a sensory garden strives to stimulate all the senses: sight, smell, sound, taste, and touch through plants and garden enhancements. A sensory garden may be small or large and usually has areas where plants are selected for the sense they stimulate. First though, here are some plants NOT to use in your children's garden according to the Philadelphia Children's Hospital: "Know the Plants in Your Garden — For Your Child's Safety"
<https://www.chop.edu/news/health-tip/know-plants-your-garden-your-child-s-safety>.

- Sight plants: bright colors and consistent blooms such as zinnias, butterfly weed, coneflower, and sunflowers.
- Touch: lambs ear, artemisia 'Powis Castle', cockscomb (Celosia), yarrow
- Smell: herb plants are a great choice for stimulating the sense of smell when rubbing the leaves to release their essential oils. Some easy-to-grow herbs include sage, thyme, oregano, chives, and mint. (caveat: several types of mint grow well in North Central Texas but be aware that mint is an aggressive spreader and is usually best grown in a container.)
Caution: although roses are wonderfully fragrant plants, the thorns make them less desirable for a children's garden.
- Taste: herb plants also fit this category along with vegetables.
- Sound: one way to include sound in your sensory garden is with garden enhancements such as a fountain or a bird feeder that offers chirps, songs, and squawks when feathered friends stop by to snack.



Photo Courtesy DCMGA Member Barbara Brown

Lamb's Ear
Stachys byzantina

Be sure to put a label with each plant type using its common and botanical name and any cautions that should be followed as children move through the garden and enjoy the experience.

"Creating a Sensory Garden":

<https://extension.psu.edu/creating-a-sensory-garden>

"Creating a Sensory Garden":

<https://extension.sdstate.edu/creating-a-sensory-garden>

"Sensory Gardens":

<https://gardenningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/design/types-of-gardens/sensory-gardens.html>



CANVA Stock Photo

Birds add color & sound to the garden

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

Soil Analysis

Have a soil analysis done to get a jump on a beautiful garden next spring.

- The soil is the source of all the elements plants need to grow.
- A soil test can identify nutrient deficiencies, acidity or alkalinity, amount of organic matter, & the texture of your soil.
- The AgriLife Extension Service Soil, Water & Forage Testing Laboratory offers a soil testing service for a nominal fee.
- The results are mailed or emailed to you with recommendations for which nutrients & how much should be applied. How easy is that?!

Visit [DCMGA's Help Desk Question on Soil Testing](https://dcmga.com/north-texas-gardening/community-gardening/soil-testing/) (<https://dcmga.com/north-texas-gardening/community-gardening/soil-testing/>) for more information and a link to the AgriLife Testing Laboratory. The forms and sample bags are also available at the Denton County office of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service.



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

Master Gardener docents on-site in each garden.
Learn about a variety of beautiful plants and gardening techniques.

----- **TICKETS AVAILABLE FEB 9, 2022!** -----

Advanced purchase \$15, at the gate \$20. Children 12 and under are FREE.
Purchase online at dcmga.com or from a Denton County Master Gardener.

BarB Legacy Farms & Garden

Cross Roads, TX



Big Sky Oasis

Pilot Point, TX



Rockin' B's Creekside Wilderness

Aubrey, TX



Urban Butterfly Haven

Aubrey, TX



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



Scan to buy tickets
dcmga.com





2022 GREATER AUBREY AREA GARDENING SERIES

Jumpstart your gardening in 2022 with this free
educational series



JANUARY 20

6 - 7:00 pm

Vegetable Gardening

Dana Bays, Mike Crawford



FEBRUARY 17

6 - 7:00pm

Drought Tolerant Plants

Charlotte Canion



MARCH 17

6 - 7:00pm

Pollinator Plants

Kim Wootton

Location

Aubrey Area Library
226 Countryside Dr., Aubrey, TX 76227

Sponsored by



Aubrey Area Library



Texas A&M AgriLife Extension is an equal opportunity employer and program provider. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating. We seek to provide reasonable accommodation for all persons with disabilities for this program and ask that you notify the Denton County AgriLife Extension Office of the auxiliary aid or service that will be required.

The Denton County Master Gardener Association's

2022 Spring Gardening Series

in partnership with The Flower Mound Public Library

February 7:

Permaculture Design

Permaculture creates a sustainable environment in harmony with nature. Human activity melds with natural surroundings for an ecosystem that reduces work and energy to maintain it.

Presented by Daniel Arenas, Denton County Master Gardener and Master Naturalist, Certified Permaculture Design Specialist

February 14:

Bees and the Ecosystem

Learn how to identify bees. Discover what bees need to help them thrive in their hives, as well as what pests and parasites can harm them.

Presented by Erik Dietrich, Experienced Beekeeper and presenter for the Texas Beekeepers Association

February 21:

Growing Microgreens

Grow fresh, nutritious greens at home, even during winter months!

No special equipment is required to enjoy the healthy edibles.

Presented by Lynda Harvey, Denton County Master Gardener

February 28:

Gardening for the Birds

Birds have basic needs to thrive and prefer native plants for their resources. Find out what determines "plant nativeness" that will attract an endless supply of birds to your yard year-round.

Presented by Cecil Carter, Native Plant Society of Texas, Trinity Forks Chapter



All programs start at 7 p.m. and will be presented virtually through Zoom.

For more information and to register,
visit dcmga.com



3030 Broadmoor Lane, Flower Mound
fmlibrary.net • 972.874.6200





The flyer is for the Denton County Master Gardener Association's Plant Sale. It features a green border and a background of flowers and bubbles. The Texas Master Gardener logo is in the top left. The event details are in the center: April 23, 2022, 9:00 A.M.- 2:00 P.M. or Until sellout!! at Trinity United Methodist Church, 633 Hobson Lane, Denton. A list of items for sale includes Texas native plants, perennials, roses, ground covers, bedding plants, herbs, container plants, and pass-along plants. Master Gardeners are available to help. A note at the bottom encourages bringing wagons or carts. For more info, visit dcmga.com, email master.gardener@dentoncounty.gov, or call (940)349-2892. Small icons of a butterfly, a hummingbird, a rose, and a Texas map are scattered around the text.

DENTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION'S

Plant Sale

April 23, 2022
9:00 A.M.- 2:00 P.M. or Until sellout!!

Trinity United Methodist Church
633 Hobson Lane, Denton

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

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

For more information, visit our website: dcmga.com,
Email: master.gardener@dentoncounty.gov
Call Help Desk phone: (940)349-2892

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

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

*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.



Denton County Master Gardener Association

Upcoming Events

Feb 7 **Permaculture Design**
Virtual: Flower Mound Library 2022 Spring Gardening Series, presented by Daniel Arenas. 7 - 8 pm, register on dcmga.com

Feb 14 **Bees & the Ecosystem**
Virtual: Flower Mound Library 2022 Spring Gardening Series, presented by Erik Dietrich. 7-8 pm, register on dcmga.com

Feb 17 **Drought Tolerant Plants**
Greater Aubrey Area Gardening Series, presented by Charlotte Canion. 6-7 pm, Aubrey Area Library

Feb 21 **Growing Microgreens**
Virtual: Flower Mound Library 2022 Spring Gardening Series, presented by Lynda Harvey. 7-8 pm, register on dcmga.com

Feb 28 **Gardening for the Birds**
Virtual: Flower Mound Library 2022 Spring Gardening Series, presented by Cecil Carter. 7-8 pm, register on dcmga.com

Mar 9 **General Meeting & Program**
Business meeting & program "Gardening Under Glass", presented by Marilee Crawford. 10 am-noon, Global Spheres Center

Mar 17 **Pollinator Plants**
Greater Aubrey Area Gardening Series, presented by Kim Wootton. 6-7 pm, Aubrey Area Library

Apr 13 **General Meeting & Program**
Business meeting & program ""Gardening as a Therapeutic Resource", presented by Raeline Nobles, Denton County MG, 10 am, Global Spheres Center

Apr 23 **DCMGA Annual Plant Sale**
9 am - 2 pm or sell-out. Trinity United Methodist Church, Denton, TX

For detailed information:
dcmga.com/upcoming-events

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

TEXAS
MASTER GARDENER
TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION
Denton County



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.

2022 Board of Directors

President	Kathryn Wells
Vice-President - Projects	Tom O'Brien
Vice-President - Outreach	Georgiana McCoig
Secretary	Kelli Bixler
Treasurer	Courtney Dunn
Communications Dir. - Systems	Cheryl Huckabee
Education Director	Daniel Arenas
Member-at-Large	Kim Shaneyfelt
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

February 9 Volunteer Opportunity Fair (Interns & Members Only) - Global Spheres

March 9 General Meeting & Program, "Gardening Under Glass" - Global Spheres

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

Webmaster:
dcmga.webmaster@gmail.com

Communications:
dcmga.communications@gmail.com

Website:
<https://dcmga.com>

Content
Submission deadline for the March edition of *The Root* is Tuesday, February 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.

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