



Denton County Master
Gardener Association



THE ROOT

Grow
With
Us 



35 YEARS AND STILL GROWING



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Buds From The Board

BY CHERYL HUCKABEE, PRESIDENT

As May blossoms into full swing, gardeners eagerly anticipate not-to-be-missed events hosted by DCMGA, adding extra allure to the month's vibrant tapestry. First up is the annual [Plant Sale on May 4th](#), a verdant paradise where enthusiasts can discover a vast selection of native, well-adapted, and hard-to-find plants. Master Gardeners will be on-site at Trinity United Methodist Church in Denton to offer expert advice and guidance, ensuring your garden dreams flourish. Don't forget to bring your wagons or carts to load up your botanical treasures!

Next on the agenda is a captivating journey into the world of Monarchs on May 8th at 10 am. Join us at the Global Spheres Center as Denton County Master Gardener Pam Carroll illuminates the fascinating overwintering habits of these majestic butterflies in central Mexico's oyamel fir forests. Prepare to be enthralled as you learn about the unique ecosystem providing the essential winter survival conditions. [May 2024 Monthly Meeting & Program "Monarchs in the Mountains"](#)

And let's not forget the pièce de résistance: the highly anticipated [2024 Garden Tour on May 11th](#). Explore four exquisite Master Gardener home gardens and a community garden in Flower Mound and Double Oak, where sustainability takes center stage. Get inspired and learn about growing mushrooms, erosion control, shade gardening, keyhole gardening, design within an HOA, and more during self-guided tours of the gardens. At the same time, our knowledgeable Master Gardeners stand ready to share insights and answer your burning gardening questions. Don't miss this chance to be inspired and enlightened by the wonders of nature right in your backyard!

These events promise to enrich you with knowledge, inspiration, and a deep appreciation for the beauty of nature. Whether you're stocking up on plants for your garden, delving into the enchanting world of Monarchs, or embarking on a journey of discovery through our Garden Tour, there's something for every gardening enthusiast to enjoy. So, let's embrace the magic of May, cultivate connections with fellow green thumbs, and let our gardens flourish as we sow the seeds of joy and wonder together.



**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>

2024 Garden Tour Preview

Flower Mound, Double Oak = Four Gardens + One Community Garden

May 11, 2024

Keyhole Gardening, Mushrooms/Mycology, Erosion Control/Drainage, Drought-Tolerant Shade Plants, Design within an HOA, Oak Trees, Native Plant Ecosystems, Pollinators, and Wildlife.

[Purchase your tickets now!](#)

Flower Mound First Baptist Community Garden

Their mission is to raise fresh produce to feed the hungry through the Christian Community Action (CCA) Food Pantry in Lewisville. To provide an opportunity for nearby neighbors to plant and grow their own garden. To serve as a demonstration and education resource for the area.



In 2015, Lori Giesler, member of the Flower Mound First Baptist Church, proposed that unused land on the church property be turned into a garden to provide fresh produce for those in need, as well as a place for the neighboring community to grow their own food and learn about gardening. Today, 50% of the garden is designated for growing produce which is donated to the local food pantry at CCA, while the remaining 50% is set aside for neighbors.



2024 Garden Tour Preview *Member Gardens*

Possum Creek

A garden on a 1.25-acre lot with mature oaks, elms, and cedars. During heavy rains, water flows through the creek beds and an adjacent neighborhood on its way to Grapevine Lake. From the beginning, waterflow through the property and the need for erosion control has influenced the garden design. Creek beds with river rock and boulders are used extensively with French drains.



Shades of Eden & Art

This one-acre property features native and adaptive showstoppers in a carefully curated design. The front, HOA-approved beds are beautified by the native oak and ornamental understory plantings, varied perennials, and a selection of reseeding annuals. A stair-step display of decorative pots defines the entrance and adds color, while an innovative wave topiary of shrubs provides privacy to the side yard and truly steals the show!

Hidden Gem

Besides the two large Savannah Hollies flanking the front door, not a single contractor plant remains. This yard has been turned into a natural garden scape and all plants must be hardy and survive with little maintenance. Wildflowers and Texas natives such as Poppies, Yellow Columbine, Gaura, Purple Coneflower, Brazilian Verbena, Larkspur, Rudbeckia, and Skullcap are allowed to freely seed and travel as long as they behave themselves.



2024 Garden Tour Preview *Member Gardens (Cont.)*

Century Oak Garden

Named after its nearly 200-year-old Post Oak, features seven types of oak trees, an important part of this ecosystem and a major educational focus for the property. Growing herbs, and their culinary qualities, are also an important theme running throughout the property.



OUR PARTNERSHIPS - Flower Mound First Baptist Church, Christian Community Action Food Pantry. Denton County Master Gardener Association, Tractor Supply Company (Bartonville).



What to Plant in May

- All warm season grasses, flowers, and tropicals.
- Plant early in the month to avoid the heat that is coming
- Start an herb garden
- Plant extra dill, fennel, and rue for Swallowtail caterpillars
- Plant annuals in containers for a beautiful summer display
- Climbing roses can be pruned after their first bloom

For more monthly tips:

[https://www.dcmga.com/maintain-and-solve-problems/maintain/
monthly-gardening-tips/](https://www.dcmga.com/maintain-and-solve-problems/maintain/monthly-gardening-tips/)

Cultivating Growth: How DCMGA's Gardening Program Transforms Young Lives

BY CHERYL HUCKABEE

In 2023, the Denton County Master Gardener Association and Denton County 4-H embarked on a heartwarming journey to inspire and educate the Denton County Juvenile Detention Center youth through gardening. What began as a simple wildflower bed project evolved into a transformative program that nurtures plants and young minds.

The program received a significant boost with the help of Jeri Housel, Garden Lead at Denton County ACE Hardware. Jeri's steadfast support led to donating three raised bed kits and plants for the fall and spring vegetable gardens, equipping the kids with the necessary tools to create their green oasis. DCMGA volunteers constructed the raised beds and planted fall edibles like broccoli, cabbage, and cauliflower.

From the first day of planting the fall vegetable garden, Martha Cantrell, a passionate Denton County Master Gardener, was captivated by the idea of nurturing young minds through gardening. Eager to share her love for plants, Martha took on the responsibility of caring for the gardens and engaging with the kids every week. She even enlisted her spirited 98-year-old mother to knit cozy caps for the kids, ensuring they could help tend to the gardens comfortably during cooler weather. In a heartwarming gesture of gratitude, the boys surprised Martha's mother with a crocheted blanket and a collective 'Thank You' note.

Under Martha and Center Residency Director Brooke Leird's guidance, the kids are learning to nurture their garden, from planting seeds to harvesting vibrant vegetables. They experience the satisfaction of watching their efforts bloom. With Brooke's culinary skills, the harvested produce is transformed into delicious meals, a novel experience for many of the kids.

Teaming up with Brooke, Martha organizes creative rainy-day activities for the kids, such as starting seeds in repurposed milk jugs and painting vibrant rocks to decorate the wildflower bed. Through her dedication, Martha inspires the kids with the joy of growing their own food and imparts valuable lessons in innovation and resilience.

The program extends beyond gardening to instill values of responsibility and achievement. Brooke establishes high expectations for the children, encouraging a sense of accomplishment and self-esteem. Participation in the program requires meeting stringent criteria, including



Photos Courtesy DCMGA Member Cheryl Huckabee

Cultivating Growth: Denton County Juvenile Detention Center (Cont.)

good grades, exemplary behavior, and other standards. The kids' enthusiasm is unmistakable, demonstrated by their consistent eagerness to participate week after week.

As the program flourishes, so do the kids' aspirations. Some, inspired by their newfound passion, dream of careers in the gardening industry. To support their continued growth, a graduation packet awaits each child, equipped with seeds, instructions, and resources to nurture their green thumb even after leaving the detention center.

None of this would have been possible without the unwavering dedication of Martha Cantrell, Brooke Leird, Jeri Housel, Ace Hardware Denton, and the DCMGA volunteers' tireless efforts. Their commitment to these kids and the project's empowerment mission transcends job requirements, creating a lasting impact that extends far beyond the garden.

Looking ahead, Martha and DCMGA remain committed to nurturing plants and each child's potential. Together, they will continue cultivating growth, resilience, and self-esteem, empowering these young individuals as they prepare to embrace the world beyond the garden's gates.

**Director Brooke Leird
in Knitted Cap**



**Raised Beds
Ace Hardware Donation**



Girls at Raised Beds



Kids With Their Harvested Broccoli



You're Invited

May 2024 Monthly Meeting & Program
"Monarchs in the Mountains"



Join us for an eye-opening presentation! Explore the fascinating journey of Monarchs as they overwinter in central Mexico with Denton County Master Gardener Pam Carroll.

May 8, 2024, 10 am
Global Spheres Center
7801 S Interstate 35E, Corinth, TX 76210



DCMGA Garden Tour - May 11, 2024
[Purchase Your Tickets Now!](#)



Plant of the Month - Champanel Grapes

BY DONNA HULL

My first encounter with the Champanel was, I have to admit, at a large box store. I was looking for something new, something different, and something edible. It was early spring, and outside with the fruit trees was this grapevine that I had never heard of before: Champanel. I took the bait and decided to give it a try. Our first year together did not go particularly well, and I realized that I had much to learn about my new vine. There is not a great deal of information available about the Champanel grape, but I found enough to get started, and I continue to learn every season with my now three Champanel vines. Fortunately for me, it is an incredibly forgiving vine, and it continues to bear fruit every year. Here is what I have learned.

The Origin of Champanel

Grape-bearing plants belong to the Family Vitaceae, all of which bear their fruit on vines. To take a short stroll through the taxonomy of the grapevine, the Family Vitaceae is divided into American grapevines and Eurasian grapevines. The Eurasian species *Vitis vinifera* is the source of the majority of grape varieties cultivated for wine and food today. Unfortunately, *V. vinifera* does not find the alkaline clay soils that cover most of North Texas a good home for growing. But there are options!

In the American Group, there are two major genera - the Genus *Muscadinia*, which has only 3 species in North America and tends to prefer acidic soils, and the Genus *Vitis*, which has a variable number of species in North America, depending on which taxonomist is consulted and how the group is divided. The most common *Vitis* species in America include:

Vitis labrusca L., the northern fox grape;
Vitis aestivalis Michaux, the summer grape;
Vitis riparia Michaux, the riverbank grape;
Vitis rupestris Scheele, the sand or rock grape;
Vitis berlandieri Planchon, the fall grape;
Vitis cinerea Engelmann, the winter grape; and
Vitis candicans Engelmann, the mustang grape (synonym to *Vitis mustangensis* Buckley)



Photos Courtesy DCMGA Member Donna Hull

Ripe Champanel Grapes

Champanel Grapes (Cont.)

The Champanel grape is a cross between *Vitis champinii*, a natural hybrid of *Vitis candicans* Engelmann (the mustang grape) and the “Worden cultivar”, a hybrid cross of *Vitis riparia* (the bank grape) and *Vitis labrusca* (the northern fox grape, which includes the Concord grape). Well-known grape vine horticulturalist T.V. Munson developed the Champanel in Denison, Texas in 1893. Each species in the cross brings important traits to this hybrid that make it a successful grape to grow in our area. *V. labrusca* has vigorous climbing ability, tenacious tendrils, and beautiful, juicy purple-black clusters of medium-sized fruit that can be used for juice jam, jelly and fruity wine. *V. candicans*, a native of the southern U.S. and another vigorous climber, is drought tolerant and somewhat lime tolerant, resistant to powdery mildew, downy mildew, and Pierce’s disease, a bacterial disease spread by sap-sucking insects and the ruination of grapevines worldwide. This cross of the disease-resistant, southern-loving species and the Worden cultivar has brought us a wonderful grapevine for the home garden in North Texas.

Plant Description

Champanel grape vines are indeed vigorous growers, and gardeners need to be prepared to provide them space and a solidly built arbor or trellis for growth. The plant is described as having a “procumbent” growth habit, meaning that their long canes prefer to grow downward – part of what makes this vine a good arbor cover. The numerous leaves are multi-lobed, serrated, and large – 6 to 8 inches across. These leaves (and the shoots as well) are pubescent, having surfaces of small trichomes (outgrowths of the epidermis) that make them appear “hairy” and give a silver-green color to the plant. Grape clusters typically have up to 30 berries per cluster, and upon ripening (called veraison in the grape world), they become dark purple, slip-skin berries. Each plant can produce 10 to 20 pounds of grapes per season.



Grape Clusters



Trellised Grapes

Champanel Grapes (Cont.)

How to Grow Champanel

Champanel grapes are usually sold the way I received mine - as bare rootstock. The vine is generally produced by growers as un-grafted, or own-rooted vines, although it may be used as root-stock due to its disease resistance and wide range of soil tolerances. A Zone 7-10 vine, Champanel should be planted in the very early spring in a full-sun location. It is very tolerant of soil type, and will grow in soils of 5.5-7.0 pH or even higher. Watering is best by drip irrigation, being sure that the foliage stays dry and that the roots do not get "wet feet"; good drainage is important. If planting more than one vine, Champanel needs a minimum of 6 feet between vines; 8 to 10 feet is best. Regarding fertilizer, grape vines typically do not need much fertilizing, and excess nitrogen can cause vegetative growth at the expense of fruit. Fertilize only if necessary at the beginning of the season, and usually not at all for the first 1-2 years.

Whether you plant one vine or a row, Champanels require a high wire trellis system with up to 3 wires in which the top wire is 4 to 6 feet above the ground. Experts advise that the grower train two cordons to the top wire, one going in each direction. This high position allows for good sun exposure and air circulation for the fruit. My own trellis system has wires at 2, 4, and 6 feet. My cordons go onto the 4-foot level wire, and I train the new canes up to the higher wire, pruning regularly to allow for sunlight and air flow. A large arbor provides more surface area for this type of growth, but requires steady pruning and training of the canes up and over the surface of the structure.

Pests and Diseases

Champanel is resistant to several major fungal diseases. It will, however, succumb to some fungi, most notably anthracnose. This typically occurs later in the season, and can affect the grapes as well as the leaves. Powdery mildew is not common, but I can attest that poor airflow (lack of pruning) and a very wet spring/early summer will lead to some powdery mildew. Mild chlorosis can be an issue in some soils, particularly if drainage is poor and the pH is high.

Pests include the grape leaf folder moth, the grapevine beetle, occasional aphids (particularly on new growth), and while not usually considered "pests", expect to see wasps and ants arrive in abundance as the fruit ripens. The grape leaf folder moth lays its eggs on the leaves where the larvae mature, folding the leaf over themselves for protection and food. They do not harm the vine, and can be controlled if desired with Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*). The grapevine beetle is a bright and bold presence on the leaves if and when it arrives.



Spotted Grapevine Beetle

Champanel Grapes (Cont.)

They will feed on the tissue and skeletonize some of the leaf, but otherwise are harmless. I seem to be on their list of best sites to visit, and I can always expect to see them by mid-June if not earlier. Aphids are a minor annoyance, and can usually be sprayed or pruned away as they prefer the young growth. As the grapes begin to ripen and sweeten, ants and wasps will become regular visitors. To keep them from being directly on the grapes, I cover my clusters with silk bags. It takes time, and it is not foolproof. More than once, a determined animal has yanked the cluster, bag and all, and taken it off to enjoy at a more suitable location! But it does provide a small measure of protection if you're willing to do the work.

Harvesting, Preserving, and After-Harvest Care

The clusters of green grapes on Champanel begin to undergo "veraison", or ripening, sometime in mid to late July. This can take place earlier in the month, and it can continue into August, depending on the amount of sun that the plants get and the weather that particular year. Although the literature states that an individual Champanel grape cluster will all ripen at approximately the same time, my experience is that if even slightly shaded, a cluster can take 1-2 weeks to fully ripen, and some grapes within the cluster may not ever fully ripen. If the cluster is ripening slowly, I generally harvest when the cluster reaches $\frac{2}{3}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$ ripened. After that, the odds of the animals or birds taking the sweet fruit is very high, so I harvest the grapes.

A green Champanel grape is a sour grape; the sugars (average is 14-18%) develop during the ripening process. Nonetheless, a few partially-ripened grapes with the sweet, fully ripened ones is not a problem when making juice, jelly, or jam - just add a little more sugar! There are very few Champanel grape recipes to be found, but cook with them the way you would the northern Concord grape - for which there are many recipes. The flavor is nearly identical and the jam or jelly that this grape makes is totally worthy of any biscuit or PB&J sandwich! I have not yet tried to make a wine from these grapes, but it is on my list of things to try - someday!

After harvesting, I often allow my Champanel grapes to grow a little more freely with less pruning - I let the long canes grow, draping them over the top of the wires. Depending on the season, there may be some disease, but in our dry summers, I usually have very few problems. Like all grape leaves, the fall color is beautiful - reds, oranges and yellows. Leaves will fall with the cold weather and first freeze. Pruning for the following season takes place in January/February then again just before bud break in March if doing a double pruning method, which works well for the vigorous Champanel. There are a number of videos and articles regarding how to prune grape vines online. I have pruned up to 80% of my vines, and watched them regrow with vigor again the following year. It is a hearty, beautiful vine for North Texas - with the gift of a bounty of sweet, delicious fruit.

Champanel Grapes (Cont.)



Pre-Bloom Stage



Bagged Grapes



Cooking Grapes

Resources

Henderson County Master Gardener Association. (2022, May 3). Champanel bunch grapes.

<https://txmg.org/hendersonmg/plant-library/grapes-bunch-champanel/>

Keller, M. (2020). "The science of grapevines." Academic Press.

Scheiner, J. (2021). Champanel Grape Variety Profile. *Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service*.

<https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/13/2020/05/Champanel-EHT-120.pdf>





Plan now for your entries to the

Fruit, Vegetable, Herb, and Flower Show

June 15
9 am-1 pm,
at the
North Texas Fairgrounds
2217 N. Carroll Blvd, Denton

What will you enter? A juicy tomato? An aromatic herb?
A beautiful zinnia? Let's get planting!



In The Veggie Patch: Basil (*Ocimum Basilicum*) - An Herb and A Vegetable

BY IVY SUMMERFIELD

Benefits

BASIL: Beautiful, Aromatic, Savory, an Ingredient Loaded with nutrients. Primarily used in a culinary setting as an Herb, referred to as a spice, used for flavoring a meal. As a Vegetable, basil is used in soups or salads, as garnish, or marinated in olive oil for use in pesto and various pasta dishes. It's vibrant green or purple foliage is stunning in any dish or garden.

Plant Requirements

Basil is an annual. Sowed from seed, it produces fragrant leaves to harvest and seeds to collect all in one season. Basil thrives in heat. Pinch the flowers off to promote a bushy plant, otherwise the Basil plant will go to seed. The West Virginia Extension article in Resources provides additional information.

Soil: well-draining soil, amend with compost

Light: Full sun, 6-8 hours/day

Temperature: seeds germinate best when soil temperatures are 75-85°

Moisture: Keep soil moist but not soggy.

Container Planting: Rich potting soil that retains moisture. Water evaporation is higher in containers so be mindful to check your soil moisture.



Photo Courtesy DCMGA Member
Ivy Summerfield

Varieties to grow in North Texas

According to Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, Basil is an herb that grows well in Texas. The most common is sweet basil; other varieties are cinnamon, holy, Genovese, lemon, and Thai. There is no shortage of green or purple varieties to choose from. Growing and care are the same for all varieties.

Pests & Diseases

Basil is considered one of the easiest herbs to grow by seed. Pinching flower clusters will help promote a bushy plant. Touch your plant to release the fragrant smell – ENJOY the moment.

Known pests are aphids, flea beetles, grasshoppers, Japanese's beetles, leaf miners, cutworms, loopers, slugs, owlet moths, and underwings, to name a few. Damage can be leaf damage, stem

In The Veggie Patch: Basil (Cont.)

damage, root damage, or, in more extreme cases, killing the entire plant. Check leaves and stems often, particularly leaf backsides. Removal can be as simple as spraying water on the leaves. In rare serious cases, it's best to remove the plant and put in the trash, not the compost bin.

Diseases are another unpleasant possibility. Fungal, including Fusarium wilt, gray mold (*Botrytis cinerea*), root rot, and downy mildew, are in this category. Refer to the Cornell University publication in the Resources section for various disease signs and management practices.

Let me mention what you won't see above ground, Nematodes. If you have sandy soil, these Nematodes will love your plant. To check for nematodes, pull out a plant mid-season and check the roots. If you see a knotted root system, it's nematodes.

Photo Courtesy DCMGA Member Ivy Summerfield

Harvesting & Storage

Plants: Harvest basil when there are multiple leaves on the plant. Pinch tips weekly to promote growth. Cut stems as needed. Be mindful not to cut the woody stem; only cut new growth. For each stem you cut, two more will appear.

Seeds: Once a Basil plant produces flowers, it is on its way to making seeds. Harvest for seeds when the plant turns brown or gray and has dried completely. Store seeds in a dry place.

Plastic Bag: Store unwashed leaves in a plastic bag; wash thoroughly before use

Other Methods: Air dry or oven; powder formed by crushing leaves; freeze or immerse in oil.



**Air Drying Basil
Leaves**



Basil Seeds

In The Veggie Patch: Basil (Cont.)

Resources

Rutgers University School of Environmental and Biological Sciences, US Basil Consortium
“Basil History and Culture”

<https://usbasilconsortium.rutgers.edu/all-about-basil/basil-history-and-culture/>

USDA Agricultural Research Service, FoodData Central, “Basil, fresh”

<https://fdc.nal.usda.gov/fdc-app.html#/food-details/172232/nutrient>

West Virginia Extension, “Herb Gardening for Beginners”

<https://extension.wvu.edu/lawn-gardening-pests/gardening/gardening-101/herb-gardening-for-beginners>

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, “Fall Vegetable Gardening Guide For Texas”

<https://agrillifeextension.tamu.edu/browse/featured-solutions/gardening-landscaping/fall-vegetable-gardening-guide-for-texas/>

Cornell University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, “Basil Diseases: Various pests”

<http://plantclinic.cornell.edu/factsheets/basildiseases.pdf>

Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service, “Growing Herbs”

<https://www.purdue.edu/hla/sites/yardandgarden/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2016/10/HO-28.pdf>

Penn State Extension, “Growing, Harvesting, and Preserving Herbs”

<https://extension.psu.edu/growing-harvesting-and-preserving-herbs>



How To Be A Winner at a Fruit, Vegetable, And Flower Arrangement Show

BY BARBARA BROWN

The tradition of holding competitions for the best locally-grown produce may have begun at the first New York State Fair in 1841 and continues to be a popular event at county fairs across the country. Denton County Master Gardener Association carries on this tradition with its annual Fruit, Vegetable, Herb, and Flower Show that will be held this year at the North Texas Fairgrounds on June 15, 2024, from 9 AM to 1 PM.

What makes a winning entry?

Start with appearance. You want to show off produce that looks like the ideal for that plant. For example, the right look for zucchini is 5 to 7 inches long with an even width from stem to blossom end. So, although you may be proud of that 15-inch zucchini it would not be a winner. Here is AgriLife's "[Suggested Specifications for Certain Vegetables](#)" for more information.

Do your homework. A bit of research can help you learn the right appearance of various flowers. Let's say, you want to show off your beautiful Peace roses. A quick online check tells you that the Peace Rose should have large, cupped flowers that are a combination of pale yellow and crimson edges. The flowers are full, with 40 to 43 petals, and have a sweet and fruity fragrance.

This guide from the University of Nebraska on "[Preparing Cut Flowers](#)" provides excellent guidance on selecting and readying your flowers to shine at the DCMGA Fruit, Vegetable, Herb and Flower Show.

Any fruit, flower, flower arrangement, herb, or vegetable entry should be free of blemishes, spots, or visible damage. Fruit and vegetable entries should be mature but not past their prime (soft or mushy is bad while firm, but not hard, is good.) Herb leaves should give off an appropriate scent when lightly brushed. Arrangements must include only locally grown plant material.



Entries From Previous Shows



How To Be A Winner at a Fruit, Vegetable, And Flower Arrangement Show (Cont.)

Preparing your entry

For most entries, select a few examples—usually 3 or 5—depending on size. An odd number of specimens are somewhat more visually appealing than an even number. Do not worry about finding a pretty container for your fruit, flower, or vegetable as DCMGA will provide identical plates and vases for all entries. A contestant should choose their arrangement container to complement their entry.

AgriLife recommends the following show preparation techniques for vegetables, “Show vegetables must be scrupulously clean without having a scrubbed appearance. Leafy vegetables (lettuce, cabbage, and spinach) should be briefly soaked and gently sprayed with water, then stored in a cool, damp place until show time. Fruiting vegetables (tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, and beans) should be rubbed lightly with a soft cloth as they are rinsed under a gentle stream of water, then carefully dried and stored in a dry, cool place until show time. Root crops should be soaked for several minutes immediately after harvest, and then rubbed gently with a soft cloth under running water to remove soil. Never scrub or brush vegetables intended for a show.”

[Flowers can be tricky to get ready for showing](#) them off. Michigan State University Extension recommends that you:

- Cut your flowers in the early morning or evening but not during the heat of the day
- Select blooms that are nearly fully open (except asters, marigolds, zinnias, and mums which should be fully open).
- Use a sharp cutting utensil that won't damage the stem and cut at a 45° angle.
- Remove lower leaves on the stem that might be sitting in water.
- Store in a cool, dark place until show time. Do not put them in the refrigerator.



The [Denton County Master Gardener's contest](#) will be held on June 15, 2024. Bring your entry to the Fairgrounds by 9:00 a.m. for check-in.

When it is show time—Enjoy the experience! And, you do not want to miss a special presentation by Steve Chamblee, a horticulturist, writer, and popular public speaker. Active in horticulture for more than forty years, Steven uses humor and heart to bring hard science home and inspire gardeners across Texas.



Herbal Branch Field Trip to the Botanical Research Institute of Texas (BRIT)

BY LEE ANN YATES

Texas residents recognize Fort Worth as a cultural treasure, but some folks are unaware that it houses two botanical treasures as well. I got to visit one of them last March with several other Master Gardeners!

Sherri Ursini, head of DCMGA's Herbal Branch, arranged a field trip to the Botanical Research Institute of Texas (BRIT) offering a remarkable educational opportunity for Master Gardeners. BRIT shares 120 acres with the Ft. Worth Botanic Garden, and is one of the largest centers for botanical research in the United States. We went primarily to see the Herbarium, which has approximately 1.8 million specimens in their collection, but learned so much more! Plants that become a part

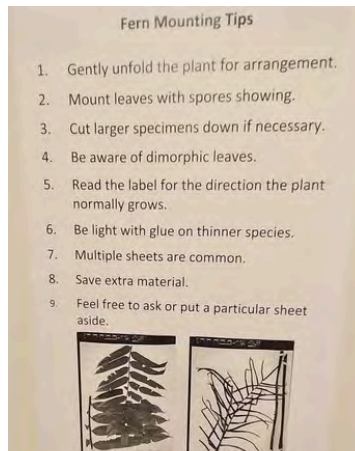
of the Herbarium are chosen not only as being representative of a species, but are also included if they are found in a place and/or time period that is unusual for the species. Our group was divided into three, matched with guides (my group's guide was Curt, a delightful marathon-runner), and away we went on a fascinating adventure!

Some background information to begin with. BRIT began as a nonprofit organization that began overseeing the Southern Methodist University herbarium in 1987. When SMU donated the collection to BRIT, a new facility was needed. Initially funded by the philanthropic Bass family, construction began in 2009 on the site of the former public health building, and was completed in 2011. The existing building is Platinum LEED-certified with a living roof, sustainable above and below ground rainwater-catchment cisterns, permeable paving and bioswales throughout campus, and a large retention pond, home to a very particular frog species. Our guide, Curt, pointed out that the lobby walls are made from century old cypress found at the bottom of a lake, the ceiling is bamboo, and the floor is terrazzo, created from concrete and crushed marble statues from the old public health building that were destined for the landfill. The heating and cooling are powered by a geothermal system, with unique solar panels and white reflective coating on the roof.



BRIT Field Trip (Cont.)

The Institute serves as a think tank, forming global interdisciplinary research collaborations. This work is exemplified by the many types of collections housed there, some of which we were able to see on our tour. These include not only the huge herbarium collection and resources but also the largest children's botany library in the United States (that is just a FUN place to be), a research library containing 125,000 books (some of the rare books date from the 16th century!), to multiple art collections and gallery spaces. When we walked through the research library, many of us commented, "Oooh! I could stay in here for the rest of the day!" Various topics, multiple languages, and so many avenues for exploration! Can we say, "Return trip!"?



Photos Courtesy DCMGA Members Lee Ann Yates & Sherri Ursini

While in the Herbarium's workroom, we visited with volunteers who were mounting fern specimens from Columbia. These are a new addition to the collection. They had to be unpacked, cleaned, mounted, catalogued, and properly labeled. One of the ladies said seeing the wrappings for the plants, mostly local newspapers, was just as interesting as examining the plant specimens themselves. Working with the dried plants is meticulous, precise, careful work and these ladies were masters at it!

Guide Curt related that BRIT is also a partner in the international Global Genome Initiative for Gardens. BRIT extracts DNA from the plants in their collection, which is then sequenced at laboratories at SMU and the University of Texas at Arlington. Their efforts are part of an international plan to sequence the DNA of all plants on Earth. We did not see this area of the Institute, but that is another reason for a return visit!

Curt told us about BRIT's collaboration with the Texas Department of Transportation where they notify researchers at the Institute when a new road is going to be built. Scientists and researchers from BRIT visit the area and check for endangered or unusual species and collect seeds and samples. They save the seed in their Conservation Seed Bank for research. Then areas can be repopulated with native seeds and rare Texas plants can be restored. BRIT and TXDOT have committed to working toward plant diversity in Texas and around the world.

BRIT Field Trip (Cont.)

A highlight for me (a bit of a geology geek) was to learn more about the “green” roof visible from the main entrance to the building. Green roofs are not rare, but are still unusual, especially in Texas. This one is unique. First of all, it is tilted specifically so it can be seen from ground level as you walk up to the building – and it helps with drainage, rainwater collection, and mitigating storm surge water during big rain events. The REALLY interesting thing about this roof is that it is designed to mimic the natural geology and landscape the Ft. Worth area had pre-Western migration. It is one of the only living roofs in Texas that is modeled after a true native ecosystem – in this case, a prairie with extremely shallow, limestone soils and very low water requirements. Unfortunately, there is no public access to the roof, but there is a mockup of its layered construction inside the building – twelve layers of various materials for drainage, insulation, and strength, as well as very coarse, rocky soil. From the air, I imagine the view would simulate what the land looked like originally. The roof reduces heat island effects outside and aids in insulating the building inside in both hot and cold temperatures.

One more reason to make a return trip would be to see the digital imaging lab. All of the specimens in the Herbarium are being imaged digitally at a very high resolution so that researchers across the world can view them – get this! – down to the cellular level! It is a work in progress, of course, but is just one more example of how the Botanical Research Institute of Texas is reaching across boundaries to the rest of the botanical, scientific, and art world.

BRIT is definitely on my “must visit again soon” list! I encourage you to go and walk around, talk with the docents, and plan a tour – it is a fascinating place that is involved in vital botanical work on the local and global stage. It is also possible to volunteer in the Herbarium or with other projects! That is exciting! Take a gander at their website and do a little dive into their multi-faceted world – it’s a gem!

<https://fwbg.org/explore-the-campus/brit-collections-labs-library-exhibitions/>

At a time when climate change, uneducated human intervention, rampant resource pollution, and urban sprawl are impacting plant diversity and land use, BRIT is a center of information and insight for the public and research scientists.

All I can say is GO! Oh, and save some time for the Ft. Worth Botanic Garden just a few steps away. But that’s another story for another time!

BOTANICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF TEXAS

1700 University Drive

Fort Worth, Texas 76107-3400

(817) 332-4441



Gardening Grandma Says...

BY BARBARA BROWN

Humans transitioned from hunting and gathering to growing their food about 12,000 years ago. Over the millennia they found some tricks to increase their harvest. What they learned they passed down to their children. Today, some of us are fortunate to have a grandmother, aunt, or neighbor who continues the tradition of sharing old-fashioned gardening wisdom. Much of that shared knowledge is helpful but sometimes it was just a superstition with a long history. The Gardening Grandma series of articles puts these tips and tricks to the test of modern science by answering the question, “Does it really work?” Or, is it a myth?

“You have to remove suckers from your tomato plants. Suckers steal the plant’s energy and you get fewer tomatoes.”

Truth or myth? Let’s find out.

What is a tomato sucker, anyway?

Tomato suckers are small shoots of leaves that grow on a new stem between two larger stems at a 45-degree angle. So, what is wrong with having suckers? Nothing is essentially bad about suckers but they do take water and nutrients from the plant and usually do not produce any tomatoes themselves.



Artwork: aberry89 on DeviantArt

Texas A&M University recommends removing tomato suckers, or side shoots, while they are small to help produce larger fruits. “Removing suckers helps direct the plant's energy towards producing fruit rather than foliage. You should remove suckers at least once a week, and the sooner the better.” https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/12/2011/03/E-517_tomatoes.pdf

Are there benefits to removing the suckers? Yes. You will have better air circulation through the plant allowing the leaves to dry faster making them less susceptible to diseases like wilt and fungal leaf spots. With less dense foliage, it is easier to spot pests like the hungry tomato hornworms.

Cornell University Extension recommends, “When pinching out suckers, the earlier they are removed, the better. Once the suckers are thicker than a pencil, they will leave a large wound behind when removed. Check at least twice a week during the initial growing period to catch the suckers when small.”

Gardening Grandma Says... (Cont.)



Photos Courtesy DCMGA Member Barbara Brown

From those gardeners who do not recommend removing suckers, they report that they get more tomatoes, but acknowledge that the fruit is smaller on the plants with suckers left intact. Some authoritative sources also suggest removing early suckers from the bottom but leaving the rest on the plant to shade the fruit from sunscald.

<https://extension.unh.edu/resource/pruning-tomato-plants-fact-sheet>

The Master Gardeners of the University of California Extension suggest that determinate tomatoes do not need to have the suckers pruned, but they recommend it for indeterminate tomato varieties.

<https://ucanr.edu/blogs/blogcore/postdetail.cfm?postnum=16937>

For North Texas gardeners there is a potential benefit of removing at least some of those suckers. The suckers can be rooted and planted later for a fall tomato harvest. Plan on trying to root several suckers because individual cuttings will not always establish roots. Be sure to dip the end of the cutting into a rooting hormone to encourage root development



Look for Native & Pollinator Plants at the
2024 DCMGA Plant Sale!
May 4, 2024

Janet Laminack Extension Personnel Award

BY KATHRYN WELLS, DCMGA PAST PRESIDENT, TMGA 1ST VICE PRESIDENT

The Texas Master Gardener Association (TMGA) has established a [new award in memory of Janet Laminack](#). Janet served as our Denton County Extension Agent - Horticulture and our DCMGA advisor from 2008 until her death in June 2023.

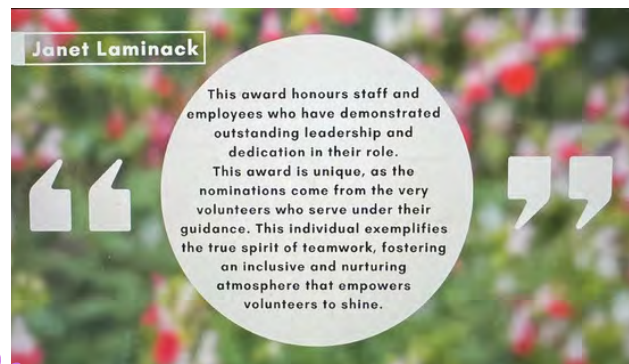
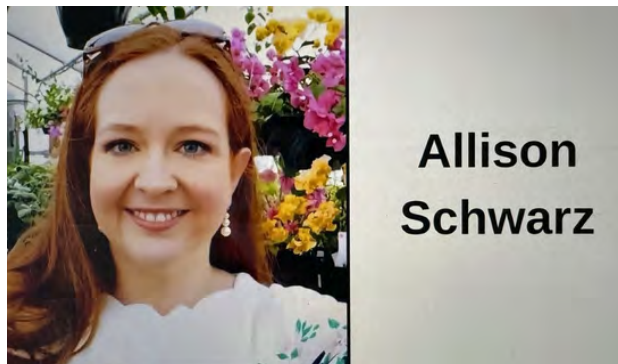
This new annual award honors AgriLife staff members and employees who have demonstrated outstanding leadership and dedication; the recognition is unique as nominations are submitted from the very volunteers who serve with their respective nominees.



For our first award cycle, the TMGA Executive Committee received three nominations, which were considered and ranked via a weighted scoring system. The recipient, announced at the April 23rd TMGA Search for Excellence Awards celebration, is Allison Watkins Schwarz, Tom Green County Extension Agent.

Allison is so deserving, and I think Janet would be delighted that she's the inaugural recipient. And, I'm delighted that TMGA is remembering Janet's contributions to our Association and our community in such a special and perennial way.

More information about the [award established in Janet's memory](#) is available on the [TMGA website](#).



Growing Excellence: DCMGA Blooms with Four First-Place Wins!

BY CHERYL HUCKABEE, DCMGA PRESIDENT

We're thrilled to announce that DCMGA clinched four first-place wins in the Texas Master Gardener Association Search for Excellence Awards! Competing in the Live Oak category with 200+ member associations, our dedicated volunteers have truly shone. From educating on sustainable gardening to beautifying public spaces, DCMGA's commitment to excellence is unmatched. We're incredibly proud of our volunteers for making Denton County greener and more vibrant. Thank you to the DCMGA Awards Committee for their stellar work crafting the winning submissions. With gratitude to our community and partners, let's keep growing for a brighter future together!

Award Category - Workshop-Presentation: *This category honors educational initiatives led by Master Gardeners, whether in-person or digital, providing horticultural knowledge to the community through workshops, presentations, interactive engagements, or tours.*

DCMGA Nominee: Educational Component of the 2023 Garden Tour

Our Garden Tour was a success! Volunteers received thorough training on site-specific practices, while guests enjoyed interactive booths and guided tours on sustainable gardening. Partnering with AgriLife and others, we offered activities for all ages. Our outreach efforts engaged 1,500 residents through various channels, and guests praised our sites and docents. Educational booths were a hit, especially with youth. With the results surpassing expectations and valuable feedback collected, we're ready to make 2024 even better!

Award Category—Written-Recorded: *This category acknowledges educational materials crafted by Master Gardeners, whether in print or digital format, that aim to disseminate horticultural knowledge.*

DMGA Nominee: 2023 Educational Outreach using Social Media Platforms

In this project, we spread Denton County's research-based info by answering questions on social media and in our newsletter. We trained Master Gardener writers to craft engaging posts and created a Q&A library for our Help Desk. With 37 Q&As posted, our impact was huge! Facebook engagement soared, and Tarrant and Dallas County MGAs shared our posts. Comments praised our advice, and our social media presence attracted new interns. Our Help Desk team found the Q&As invaluable. It was a fantastic team effort!

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Using community media to share the answers to frequently asked gardening questions



Help Desk Volunteers

Suggest questions

Example Question:
We just moved to North Texas the February and were surprised to see a lot of different flowers already. I am anxious to get started so I am looking for ways to grow perennials. Suggestions?

Example Question:
There are many cracks in my driveway because of the "frosting" caused by heavy frost. What remedies are best to use?

The writing team selects a citizen-submitted question or topic to expand and generalize for a broader audience.

The writing team conducts research, creates a detailed response providing actionable information and selects a representative photo.

The Q&A is posted to DCMGA's social media and other DCMGA communication outlets.



<https://dcmga.com>

Growing Excellence: DCMGA Blooms with Four First-Place Wins! (Cont.)

Award Category - Research: *This award acknowledges projects conducted by Master Gardeners, supervised by a Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service employee, utilizing applied scientific methodology.*

DCMGA Nominee: An End-of-Season Comparative Study of Five Short-Day Onion Varieties

Our project aimed to grow better onions, educate our members, and share gardening tips with others. Planning was crucial, from selecting the perfect spot to choosing the best onion varieties. Then came the fun part – planting, tending, and watching our onions thrive! With 'Yellow GranX' and 'Red Southern Bell' leading the way, we had a bumper crop. Our research and AgriLife's methods boosted onion yield and size, benefiting the food pantry we support. Educating our volunteers improved garden management. Sharing our findings through newsletters and social media spreads knowledge far and wide. It was a win-win for everyone!

Award Category - Outstanding Association: *This award recognizes a Master Gardener Association that contributed programs and projects of significant educational value to the community.*

DCMGA earned the 1st place Outstanding Association Award for its unwavering commitment to cultivating a healthier, greener Denton County. With 345 dedicated volunteers, our mission, rooted in research-based horticulture, educates and inspires residents to create eco-friendly gardens and enduring landscapes. In 2023, volunteers contributed 33,921 service hours across 44 projects, responding to 683 help desk queries and educating over 1,600 adults and 3,200 youth. Hosting major events and producing *The Root e-Magazine*, DCMGA remains dedicated to continuous learning and community enrichment.



Blue Ribbon Scholarship 2024 Recipients

BY LYNDA HARVEY

Hardworking 4H and FFA students and their families enjoyed a gala dinner at the Denton County Cowboy Church on March 25, 2024 for the 19th Annual Blue Ribbon Club Scholarship celebration. The Denton Master Gardeners gave six scholarships with Grant funds based on employee volunteer hours done by Lynda Harvey as the Denton Youth Fair Horticulture Superintendent.

The Janet Laminack Memorial scholarship for \$2000 was awarded to the top 4H student, Skylar James. Skylar is a senior at Byron Nelson High School. She has been in 4H for 14 years, starting as a Clover. Skylar competed in Horticulture at the Denton Youth Fair for many years in addition to her passion for breeding and showing goats. She plans to attend Oklahoma State University in the Fall to major in Ag Education, and Farm & Ranch Management.

Five \$500 scholarships were awarded to 3 graduating seniors and 2 college students: Nate Davis is a senior at Braswell High School where he is a member of Junior ROTC. Nate will attend West Texas A&M for Agriculture studies.

Jaxson Marchant is a National Technical Honor Society student at Northwest High School. He showed hogs and breeding gilts at the Youth Fair this year. He plans to study Agriculture at Tarleton University.



Lexi Gravely (for her sister, Kennedy), Jaxson Marchant, Joshua Hayes, and Nate Davis. Not pictured, Aaron Strittmatter.

Joshua Hayes is graduating from Krum High School. Joshua plans to major in Wildlife Biology at Texas State University.

Kennedy Gravely is currently a sophomore attending the University of Oklahoma studying Nursing. She is also a prior year recipient of a Master Gardener scholarship.

Aaron Strittmatter is studying Animal Science with a Master's program in Finance at Texas A&M. Aaron is a college sophomore with a 4.0 grade average.



DCMGA Members Liz and Pat Moyer with Skylar James (center), the Janet Laminack Memorial Scholarship recipient



2024 DCMGA Scholarship Recipients

BY JERRY ALEXANDER

On February 29, 2024, the Blue Ribbon Scholarship Committee met to select scholarship recipients for the 2024 upcoming school year. Denton County Master Gardeners Association (DCMGA) has been fortunate to financially assist two deserving students this year. The scholarships totaled \$1,500, with a portion of this amount being donated by the Canyon Oaks Garden Club.

The first recipient is Payton Loudamy, who resides in Denton with her father and siblings. She attends Guyer High School and plans to graduate in May with a 4.2 GPA. She has been active in FFA for four years and has held three officer positions; Sentinel, Parliamentarian, and President. Payton has also participated in the Denton County Youth Fair for four years.

Payton plans to attend Blinn College in Brenham, Texas, or Tarleton State University in Stephenville, Texas, for her basics. She will then transfer to Texas A&M to earn a Bachelor's Degree in Entomology. She will receive a \$1,000 scholarship.

Our next recipient is Macey Punches. She is a graduating senior at Sanger High School with a 3.08 GPA. Macey has volunteered with several Civic Organizations; Angel Tree and Lions Club Flag Program, to name a couple. She also participated in the Denton County Youth Fair. Finally, Macey was the recipient of the Lone Star FFA, which is the highest degree awarded to a FFA member at the state level.

Macey plans to begin her college studies at Western Texas College, where they offer courses in Plant Nursery Operations and Management. She ultimately wants to earn a degree in Horticulture with a Business Minor. She aspires to make a successful career in the Floral Industry. She will be awarded a \$500 scholarship.

On March 27, 2024, the Scholar Banquet was held at the Cowboy Church in Ponder, Texas. The scholarships were presented by Peggy Fox, Master Gardener, and Ellen Gauntt, Master Gardener and DCMGA Education Director.

We are proud to award these scholarships to help provide a promising future to bright, goal-minded students. Please join us as we congratulate both of these scholarship recipients.



From The Archives – May 2005

BY JERRY AND GLORIA ALEXANDER

As we prepare to celebrate the 35th Anniversary of DCMGA, we thought it only fitting to bring you some highlights from *The Roto-Teller*, DCMGA's first newsletter. For members, *The Roto-Teller* is archived on the Member section of the DCMGA website under Member Resources. Take some time this year and go see what YOUR organization was doing way back when!

May 2005, Volume 10, Issue 5
For the Love of Gardening

In this edition of the *Rototeller*, there is a wonderful article stemming from the Annual Master Gardener's Conference in College Station, many years ago. It was in the fall of 2003, when a lecturer by the name of Greg Grant, along with Doctor Welch, PhD., did a presentation on Landscape Design that was focused on the Southern Heirloom Garden. You can feel the excitement and enthusiasm that two Master Gardeners experienced while attending the conference.

DCMGA was approved by the Master Gardener State Board of Directors to host the 2005 Conference. There were more than 500 Master Gardeners from Texas and Oklahoma, who were welcomed by DCMGA. The seminars and conference were held at the Doral Tesoro Hotel and Golf Club.

Updates

- Fall Plant Sale reminder
- No May General Meeting due to the State Conference being hosted by DCMGA. Members had an opportunity to earn twelve hours of advanced training during the conference.
- DCMGA received an invitation to attend Collin County's Master Gardener Monthly Meeting, which was held at the Heard Museum in McKinney, Texas.
- The Crepe Myrtle Conference was held on June 25, 2005, at Collin County Community College in McKinney, Texas.
- Master Gardeners had an opportunity to complete volunteer hours at the BSH, Children's Garden, and Highland Village Elementary School Outdoor Classroom.

April Board Meeting Minutes

President Carolyn Tinner called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. General business was discussed. Board members presented their reports and the meeting was adjourned at 10:40 a.m.



Spring Blooms at the Denton Youth Fair

BY LYNDA HARVEY

A small army of Master Gardener volunteers worked bravely and quickly making the Horticulture Show at the Denton Youth Fair a reality for the 4H and FFA kids. The results were an educational opportunity with sensational awe for all of the visitors over the four-day event, March 27 – 30, 2024.



The plants and floral arrangements that arrived early in the morning were marked as received, shuffled, admired, and placed by category on display tables. Plants are featured in twelve different classes including Foliage, Flowering, Herbs, and the new category for Texas Native Plants. The entries are divided by age groups: Juniors for grades 3–8 and Seniors for grades 9–12.

The Floral Arrangement sub-team tenderly placed over 70 projects in six classes including Vase, Container, Holiday, Mono-color, Wearables, and Bouquets.

Eight judges thoughtfully evaluated each entry marking a scorecard to provide constructive feedback and give tips for future projects.

Meanwhile, the diligent MG volunteers checked the score cards for completeness and tallied the numbers. Two volunteers entered the individual totals into spreadsheets used to summarize results and identify Best in Class and the Champions!



Photos Courtesy DCMGA Member Lynda Harvey

At the finish, the crew gathered behind the trophy table to rejoice.

Spring Blooms at Denton Youth Fair (Cont.)

The Horticulture Show opened for the next two days for everyone to admire and learn from the efforts of the contestants.

Lynda Harvey, MG Horticulture Superintendent, was proud to stand with the Horticulture Grand Champion, Brady Fleitman from Denton High School FFA and Reserve Champion Ryleigh Murray from Byron Nelson FFA at the Livestock Auction on the final day of the Youth Fair. Brady and Ryleigh “made sale” to walk in the arena with over 1500 people in attendance. Six additional winning students sold their plant and floral projects in the Silent Auction.



Resources & Education Opportunities
for Master Gardeners and the Community we serve
can be found on the Calendar at
Upcoming Events.

For non-DCMGA events, Continuing Education Opportunities.

DCMGA Members & Interns

Plan Your Week (PYW) has the most current VS/CE Opportunities
and is sent via VMS every Friday.

**BY HELP DESK TEAM**

Q: I am new to vegetable gardening and I am so excited that my plants have started to put on tomatoes. How do I protect them so I get a good harvest?

A: Congratulations! Seeing the results of your hard work is rewarding. Did you know that tomatoes are the most popular home garden crop in Texas? Although there can be some challenges to getting from seedling to harvest, it is worth the effort. So, what bad things can happen and how should you protect your plants?

Common diseases that affect tomato plants:

The list of potential diseases that can impact your tomato plants may seem daunting, but for most problems, there are preventive or treatment options. Plant diseases are usually divided into categories based on the causal agent—fungal, bacterial or viral:

Fungal problems often begin with too much moisture creating an environment that fungi exploit. These include early blight, late blight, gray leaf spot, anthracnose, wilt, leaf mold, and buckeye rot as examples.

Spots on the leaves are often the first sign of a fungus attacking your plant and are most likely to occur when water remains on the leaves for an extended period or the humidity is high. To protect your plants from fungal infections, you can take some preventive actions:

- Clip off any lower leaves that are touching the ground.
- Make sure your plants are spaced far enough apart to allow good airflow that will help to remove moisture from the leaves.
- Put about 3 inches of mulch around, but not touching, your plants so that water moves down into the soil while the mulch, with its larger particles, can dry quickly.
- Water plants in the early morning so that there is plenty of time for sun drying.
- Always sterilize your tools and gardening gloves after using them.
- You may choose to practice preventive control with an organic or chemical fungicide.



Bacterial problems for tomatoes include bacterial spot and bacterial canker. These problems can be difficult to control once they attack your plants so it is a best practice to buy disease-free seeds and seedlings. <https://ipm.cahn.uconn.edu/bacterial-diseases-of-tomato/#:~:text=Bacterial%20spot%20and%20speck%20can,margins%20and%20lesions%20on%20fruit>

Virus culprits include tobacco mosaic, double streak, spotted wilt, and curly top. Bacterial spot can cause moderate to severe defoliation, blossom blight, and lesions on developing fruit. Bacterial canker causes wilt, vascular discoloration, scorching of leaf margins, and lesions on fruit. Curly top virus (CTV) is a plant disease that affects tomato plants, causing leaves to become dwarfed, crinkled, and rolled inward. Because these virus infections are often caused when the plant is touched by contaminated hands or tools, you can limit the exposure of your plants by washing your hands before touching plants and making sure your tools are cleaned after use. Tomato plants exhibiting symptoms of a virus infection should be removed to protect nearby plants. <https://extension.okstate.edu/programs/digital-diagnostics/plant-diseases/curly-top-disease-of-tomato.html>

For detailed descriptive information on tomato plant disease problems and treatment, refer to the Texas Plant Disease Handbook list on tomatoes.

<https://plantdiseasehandbook.tamu.edu/food-crops/vegetable-crops/tomato/>

TOMATO DISEASES & DISORDERS from Clemson University:

<https://hgic.clemson.edu/factsheet/tomato-diseases-disorders/>

Dealing with insect pests:

Your North Texas tomato plants are desired food sources for caterpillars, whiteflies, hornworms, aphids, and leaf-footed bugs to name a few. “In a home garden, handpicking and destroying many pests is an effective control measure. In addition, beneficial insects are very helpful in controlling insects such as aphids, leafminers, and hornworms. To avoid killing these beneficials, use insecticides only when necessary.” (Clemson University Home and Garden Information Center)

Insecticides effectively control stink bugs, leaf-footed bugs, aphids, fruitworms, and hornworms. *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) is an organic product that controls caterpillars and Bt products, such as Dipel (dust) and Thuricide (liquid concentrate), are effective in the control of hornworms and tomato fruitworms. Other organic pesticides include: Spinosad to control caterpillars and thrips, Pyrethrin for aphids and Neem oil for whiteflies.

Caution: Pollinating insects, such as honey bees and bumblebees, can be adversely affected by pesticides. Always spray late in the evening to reduce the direct impact on pollinating insects.

More information on tomato insect pests:

<https://hgic.clemson.edu/factsheet/tomato-insect-pests/>

This presentation from the University of Connecticut provides pictures and damage descriptions to help you identify tomato diseases and pests in your garden:

<https://homegarden.cahnr.uconn.edu/factsheets/tomatoes>

Other tomato thieves: Birds, rodents, and other critters find your tomatoes to be an excellent food source. Often pecking holes in several or just taking a bite out of one and then moving on to take a bite out of another.

To deter birds and small animals, you can place netting over your plants, which makes it difficult for birds, squirrels, and rats to get to your tomatoes. It also makes it more difficult for you to harvest them, though. A good perimeter fence can help keep out larger animals. There are also repellents that can be sprayed on plants or spread around them. These repellents are species specific. The University of Massachusetts offers this helpful information: “[Excluding and Repelling Problem Wildlife from the Garden](#)”.

Here’s a secret solution for dealing with tomato thieves: Pick your tomatoes early! When a tomato reaches its mature size and begins to lighten in color (about half green and half pink), it is okay to pick it. This is called the breaker stage. Allow the tomato to complete the ripening process off the vine. It does not need to be in a sunny window to ripen as the fruit has all that it needs to complete the transition from raw to fully ripe and ready to eat with no loss of flavor.



*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.

Upcoming Events

Denton County Master Gardener Association



Flower Mound First Baptist Work days

MAY 2 Learn and grow veggies to help the community. Wear comfortable shoes, hat, and sunscreen. Bring water. Multiple Dates. May 2, 9, 16, 23, 30.
1901 Timber Creek, Flower Mound 9AM-11AM

The Colony Arbor Day Celebration

MAY 4 Trees are the single most valuable plant in your landscape. Let Carol Rowley, Denton County Master Gardener, help you with everything from selection through planting and pruning to keep your trees healthy and growing.
3700 Sparks Road, The Colony 10A-11AM

Annual Plant Sale

MAY 4 Annual DCMGA Plant Sale - open to the public Shop early for the best selections. Consider bringing your own cart/wagon. We open at 9 and close at 2pm or until sold out. COME EARLY! Trinity Methodist 633 Hobson Denton. 9AM-2PM

Denton County Master Gardener Monthly Meeting & Program

MAY 8 Explore the fascinating journey of Monarchs as they overwinter in central Mexico. Discover how they thrive in Mexico's oyamel fir forests. Cool temperatures, shelter, and water - vital for their winter survival. Join us for an eye-opening presentation by Denton County Master Gardener Pam Carroll! The one-hour program begins at 10 am and is followed by our general meeting. Global Spheres Center 10AM-12PM

Ask A Master Gardener Booth

MAY 9 We'll have Master Gardeners on hand to answer your questions at this fun Ladies Night event. Bring your list!
Justin Ace Hardware 1429 c W. 1st St. 6PM-8PM

Pest Management

MAY 10 We all love wildlife, but not so much when they damage our landscape! Learn the methods to control animal and bird pests with Denton County Master Gardener Lynda Harvey.
Denton SR. Center, 509 N. Bell Denton 9AM-10AM

Annual Garden Tour

MAY 11 Tickets are now available for the 2024 Garden Tour on Saturday, May 11! Explore four stunning Master Gardener home gardens and a community garden in Flower Mound and Double Oak. Get inspired and learn about sustainable gardening practices, from keyhole gardening to native plant ecosystems, during self-guided tours of the gardens. Master Gardeners will be on hand to answer your question. Check out this link for more information and to purchase tickets!!
<https://www.dcmga.com/connect/annual-garden-tour/>.
Tour is from 9AM -4PM.

Photographing Texas Prairies

MAY 23 Good photography can change hearts and minds. Join professional photographer Sean Fitzgerald for a presentation on how to photograph prairies for maximum impact, with a particular focus on often overlooked Texas prairie ecosystems. Learn valuable tips to take better photos using a variety of techniques to help you tell the stories you want to tell.
Sponsored by the Trinity Forks Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas,
In person at Ann Stuart Science Complex, TWU, Denton, Or via zoom
Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83237641371?pwd=dzhGUlptdnowQk1XQ29ibY9LbFYydz09>
Meeting ID: 832 3764 1371 Passcode: 107836
One tap mobile +13462487799,,83237641371#,,,,*107836# US (Houston)
+17193594580,,83237641371#,,,,*107836# US

Community Strong Farm Work Day

MAY 25 Growing Vegetables for Linda Tutt High School Student Run Grocery & First Refuge Food Bank. All tasks from soil prep to harvesting as the season dictates. We will give short education on the tasks of the day
1350 Milam Road Sanger 9AM-11PM

CHECK OUR WEBSITE FOR UPDATED CALENDAR EVENTS
[HTTPS://WWW.DCMGA.COM/EVENTS/PHOTO/PAGE/7/](https://www.dcmga.com/events/photo/page/7/)

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

DENTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION's

Plant Sale

May 4, 2024
9:00 A.M.- 2:00 P.M. or *Until sellout,*
RAIN or SHINE!!!

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
- ✿ Herbs
- ✿ Heat tolerant and drought resistant plants
- ✿ 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

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"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

2024 Garden Tour

SATURDAY, MAY 11
9 AM TO 4 PM



TICKETS AVAILABLE NOW!

**Advanced purchase \$15 Tour day \$20.
Children 12 and under are FREE.**

Inspiration abounds with self-guided tours of five unique properties in Flower Mound/Double Oak including the FMFBC Garden.
Learn about native perennials and trees, erosion control, wildflowers, mycology, herbs and more!
Make plans to visit gardening vendors along the way.

HIDDEN GEM
FLOWER MOUND TX



CENTURY OAK
DOUBLE OAK, TX



SHADES OF EDEN AND ART
FLOWER MOUND, TX



POSSUM CREEK
FLOWER MOUND, TX



**SCAN TO BUY TICKETS
OR ON DCMGA.COM .**





Flower Mound First Baptist Community Garden
1901TIMBER CREEK, TX 75028

A Christian Community Action truck will be onsite to collect non -
perishable items such as applesauce, canned beans, canned chicken.
No charge to tour the public garden

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SAVE THE DATE

June 15, 2024 9 am – 1 pm

DENTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER
ASSOCIATION

FRUIT, VEGETABLE, HERB & FLOWER SHOW

North Texas Fair Grounds
2217 North Carroll Blvd.
Denton, Texas 76201

Public Welcome!
WE WANT YOU to Enter!
Enter your prize Fruit,
Vegetable, Herb or Flower

Keynote Speaker: Steven Chamblee
former Executive Director Longview
Arboretum and Nature Center



- FREE Event
- Entries open to all Denton County residents
- Show off your successful harvest
 - Vegetable, Fruit, Herb and Flower Categories
 - Up to 10 entries per person
- Divisions for;
 - Adults (19 years and older)
 - Master Gardeners
 - Youth (18 and under)
- See dcmga.com for details or register using QR Code



Texas A&M Agrilife Extension is an equal opportunity employer and program provider.
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Persons with disabilities needing accommodations for effective participation in the program should
Contact the County Extension Office at least one week prior to the program or event to request mobility, hearing, visual or other assistance.



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.

2024 Board of Directors

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Vice-President	Kelli Bixler
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Social Media

Facebook:

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

Instagram:

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

X (formerly Twitter):

<https://twitter.com/DentonCountyMGA>

Pinterest:

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

YouTube:

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

Save the Date

- May 4 DCMGA Plant Sale
- May 8 DCMGA Monthly Meeting & Program, "Monarchs in the Mountains," DCMGA Pam Carroll
- May 11 DCMGA Garden Tour

Contact Information

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Communications:

dcmga.communications@gmail.com

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<https://dcmga.com>

Content

The Submission deadline for the June edition of *The Root* is Wednesday, May 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 Judy Allen at jupiterjudyjudy@gmail.com.

Unless otherwise attributed, all photos are courtesy of Denton County MGA.