

Denton County Master
Gardener Association

THE ROOT

Grow
With
Us



Frozen cabbage in the garden covered with frost by Ulrike Leone, Getty Images, Courtesy of Canva.com



STILL GROWING



- | | |
|---|--|
| 02 <u>Buds From The Board</u> | 11 <u>Earth Kind® Landscape Design Class</u> |
| 03 <u>Gardening Tips for January</u> | 12 <u>Flower Mound Gardening Series</u> |
| 04 <u>2026 Garden Tour Preview: Sage & Serenity</u> | 13 <u>2025 Denton County Commissioner's Court Appreciation Breakfast</u> |
| 06 <u>Wintertime Tool Repair and Maintenance</u> | 14 <u>January Upcoming Events</u> |
| 08 <u>Denton County Hosts Statewide TXMG Training</u> | 15 <u>Member News: Help Wanted & VOF</u> |
| 09 <u>DCMGA's First "Greener Horizons"</u> | 16 <u>DCMGA Contact Info & Mission Statement</u> |

Buds From The Board

BY BONNIE AMBROSE, PRESIDENT

Happy New Year from Denton County Master Gardeners (DCMGA)! I am Bonnie Ambrose, 2026 President of DCMGA. I and other members of the Board of Officers and Directors join with over three hundred certified Master Gardeners to continue the tradition of serving Denton County residents. Our goal is to provide residents real-life answers with the purpose of creating sustainable landscapes. Our gardening practices are, and will always be, scientifically-based horticultural practices.

In ancient Roman culture, Jānus was a god of doorways, beginnings, and the rising and setting of the sun. His name comes from the Latin *jānus*, meaning “doorway, archway, arcade.” Janus is depicted with two heads, each facing the opposite direction looking to past and reflecting on the future.

As a gardener, January is a wonderful time for me to reflect upon what went well in my garden last year, what I might want to change out and what I might want to introduce to enhance. As a board, we also take the time to reflect upon the activities and services offered to Denton County. Our planning is continuous and seamless. While our calendar year starts in January, we begin planning each event as soon as the previous one concludes.

Plans for the 2026 DCMGA events are progressing smoothly. This month we welcome a new class of interns. These individuals began the highly competitive process in the fall. They will receive over 84 hours of instruction and perform over 70 hours of volunteer work to become a Master Gardener during 2026.



DCMGA President Bonnie Ambrose presents a check for \$1000 to Metroport Meals on Wheels Executive Director Mary King. These funds were donated by the DCMGA membership at our annual holiday gathering in early December. Thank you to all who donated!! (Photo Courtesy of DCMGA)



Buds From The Board

BY BONNIE AMBROSE, PRESIDENT

We will host our popular plant sale in April and the garden tour in May. Check our DCMGA website and our Facebook page for updates regarding these events and other activities offered throughout Denton.

Check out your local library for expert gardening presentations, local Denton County festivals and business locations for the Ask A Master Gardener booth. These services provide information regarding gardening tips, soil enhancement, irrigation information, water conservation, and plant recommendations. If your business, HOA, or organization is interested in these services please contact us through our Speakers' Bureau to request a specific topic.

If you have a gardening question, please contact our Help Desk either through our website or by calling us.

Thank you for subscribing to *The Root*. This publication will provide timely tips and advice about gardening in North Texas. We look forward to seeing you this year!

Bonnie Ambrose

DCMGA President, 2026



DCMGA Members & Interns

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



2026 Garden Tour Preview: Sage and Serenity

Three Home Gardens and Two Public Gardens

May 9, 2026

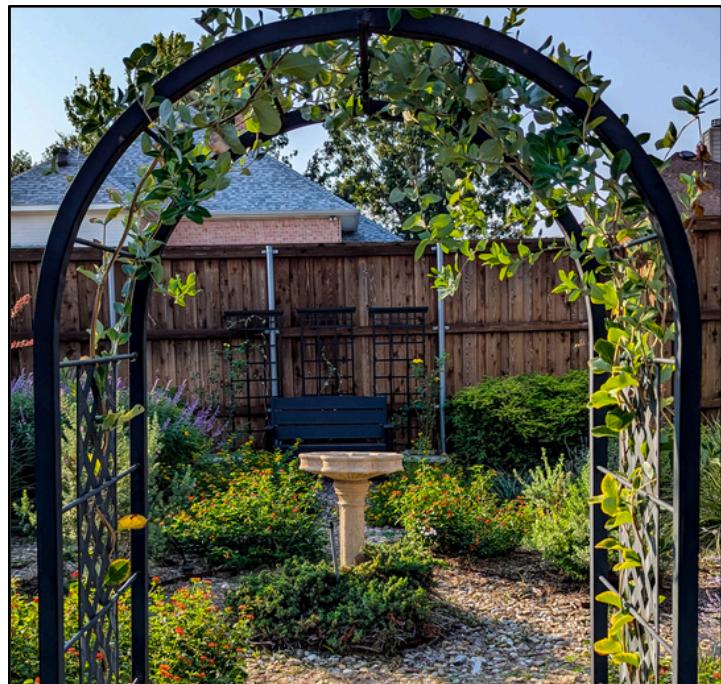
Our 2026 Garden Tour will feature herbs, raised bed vegetable gardening, succulents, Earth Kind® gardening, Texas Superstar plants, and more. Public gardens will have information on raising grapes, pruning fruit trees, water conservation and growing native plants. Watch for ticket information in early February. Join us for a great day of gardening!

Sage and Serenity

Sage and Serenity is a serene and orderly English-style garden filled with native and adapted plants that thrive in the challenging growing conditions of North Texas. Located in Carrollton, Texas, where this year's DCMGA Garden Tour will be centered, this beautiful backyard is a focal point for the property, and is a true labor of love for the home owner and Master Gardener. Mexican Bush Sage, Gulf Penstemon, Cedar Sage, and Lantana thrive in all-day, full sun in this Texas backyard.



All Photos Courtesy of DCMGA Member Lea Watson.



2026 Garden Tour Preview Sage and Serenity (cont.)

Serenity and Sage is also home to several Shantung Maples, whose foliage is a stunning blend of colors throughout the year, and whose size is perfectly suited to smaller yards. The design of this garden follows Earth Kind® landscape design principles for water conservation and “right plant, right place”. The selection of plants provide soft landings for pollinators and native wildlife, particularly native bees, butterflies, and other beneficial insects. The owner is also able to grow some vegetable and herbs using “square foot gardening” techniques. Come visit Sage and Serenity and learn how to master gardening in the Texas sun!



Different varieties of sage and *Salvia* thrive in this beautiful, English-style backyard in the full Texas sun. Full sun also lends itself well to growing vegetables and herbs through square-foot gardening techniques. (All photos courtesy of DCMGA Member Lea Watson)



Wintertime Tool Repair and Maintenance

BY JACY WILLIAMSON

The bare fields and brownish-yellow grasses of January and February signal a time of restoration for our plants – and us! It's also a great time to clean up and repair your garden tools.

DCMGA member Sonny Smith recently taught a class on tool sharpening and maintenance at Shiloh Field Community Gardens in Denton County. Attendees brought tools in need of a makeover while Sonny brought manual and electric sharpening tools to perk them up.

Sonny stressed the proper upkeep of one's tools which will extend their lives – and make your gardening work much easier. He recommends checking them often for sharpness, but a yearly cleaning is the minimum needed. Examples of garden tools that can be sharpened include shovels, hoes, clippers, and knives (and perhaps your new Hori Hori knife?!).

The first step is always to get the dirt off. Brushes of various types will be effective for this step. Then wipe down the last bits with a shop cloth to be sure the tools are clean.



Photo Courtesy of DCMGA Member Jacy Williamson.



Photo Courtesy of DCMGA Member Jacy Williamson.



Whether you sharpen with a metal file or a hand held grinder, the most important step in the sharpening process is to match the angle of the edge you are sharpening as you apply pressure with your tool. Sonny showed examples of tools with a single bevel (just one side of the edge is sharpened) and double bevel (both sides are sharpened). He also mentioned that most shovels are sold with a flat edge these days and therefore you will have to do the initial sharpening yourself.

Before you sharpen, notice if your filing item (file, rasp, grinder) has a single plane of teeth designed to cut in one direction or a diamond shaped double plane. This will let you decide if you need to use a push stroke only (most files and rasps) or push-pull strokes (if it has double teeth).

There are a variety of sizes of files to use; small ones work great up near the joint in clippers. There are also a variety of grits, but an 80 grit or 120 grit will work fine for most needs. Always wear gloves when sharpening tools and use eye protection especially when using electric sharpening devices.

And lastly, don't forget to lubricate your tool's moving parts. Sonny prefers 3 in 1 oil as it is not too sticky. Apply it liberally, working the joint multiple times to work it in. You can put silicon oil on all of the metal surfaces to winterize them. Some people even use cooking oil or linseed oil. However, be careful when using linseed oil as it is possible for linseed oil-soaked towels to combust if left in a high temperature location after using.

Keeping your tools clean and sharpening them regularly means replacing them less often and helps make your gardening chores a breeze.

*Do You Still Need to Renew Your
DCMGA Membership?*

Contact Brenda Martin at mal@dcmga.com



Denton County Hosts Statewide TXMG Training

BY ERIN SMITH, CEA-HORT



Photo Courtesy of DCMGA Member Lea Watason.

November proved to be a milestone month for Denton County AgriLife Extension and the Denton County Master Gardener Association. We hosted our first statewide Texas Master Gardener Advanced Training workshop. We were able to provide training for forty-nine master volunteers representing 27 of the best counties in Texas!

This particular advanced training focused on home vegetable gardening and we were delighted to enlist the help of the most knowledgeable and talented speakers working for the Texas A&M Extension Service as possible. These speakers are normally booked up to six months in advance so our planning began in February for this event. Speakers included Dr. Kevin Ong, Associate Department head of Plant Pathology and Microbiology at Texas A&M University; Dr. Joe Masabni, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Vegetable Specialist; Dr. Jenna Anding, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Specialist of Nutrition, and Dr. Greg Grant, Texas horticulturist, author, and Smith County Horticulture Extension Agent and more fine AgriLife educators. The purpose of advanced training for Texas Master Gardeners is to empower Extension master volunteers to return to their home county and provide subject matter public education in their county, thus extending their county horticulture program's reach.

In addition to our fantastic facility (the 2020 Room of the courthouse), this Denton County event provided some extraordinary experiences for the participants that attended the 3-day program, including participation in an evening educational program held inside the Greater Denton Arts Council building, an enchanting evening "Mocktail Party" held on the balcony of the third floor of the Denton County Administrative Courthouse and a guided tour of Shiloh Farms, the largest community garden in the United States, right here in Denton!

As the horticulture agent, I would like to say how proud I am of the Denton County Master Garden volunteers and my Denton County administrative specialist III, Sandra Erp. I am honored to serve the residents of Denton County as part of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service.



DCMGA's First "Greener Horizons"

BY ERIN SMITH, CEA-HORT

Denton County Master Gardeners are known all over Texas as an innovative group of passionate volunteers. They constantly seek research-based education in the field of horticulture and environmental stewardship. A large part of the mission of the Texas Master Gardener Association, the umbrella organization over DCMGA, is the pursuit and distribution of gardening knowledge.

In answer to that quest, Denton County AgriLife, along with the Denton County Master Gardener Association (DCMGA), created a new master class series known as Greener Horizons. It is a series of learning events directed at certified Master volunteers which sparks their passion in various topics and will, at times, be open to the public as well.

For our first program, we invited two well-known and highly knowledgeable speakers from the Texas A&M AgriLife family. Dr. Jenna Anding, Professor and Extension Specialist in the department of nutrition at Texas A&M University, presented "Preserving Your Vegetable Harvest". With more than twenty-five years of experience in developing and evaluating programs including food safety, preservation, and human nutrition, Dr. Anding provided an insightful presentation centered around preserving the harvest from home vegetable gardens in Texas. Her most recent collaborations have been with the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences focusing on increasing access to healthy foods in Texas communities. During the Greener Horizons event, Dr. Anding shared the best methods of preservation determined by the pH of each vegetable. She referenced research-based recipes that ensure food safety such as blanching vegetables prior to freezing.



Dr. Jenna Anding, presenting "Preserving the Vegetable Harvest" at Greener Horizons. Photo Courtesy of DCMGA.



Dr. Greg Grant, Erin Smith, and Kathryn Wells at DCMGA Greener Horizons . Photos Courtesy of DCMGA.

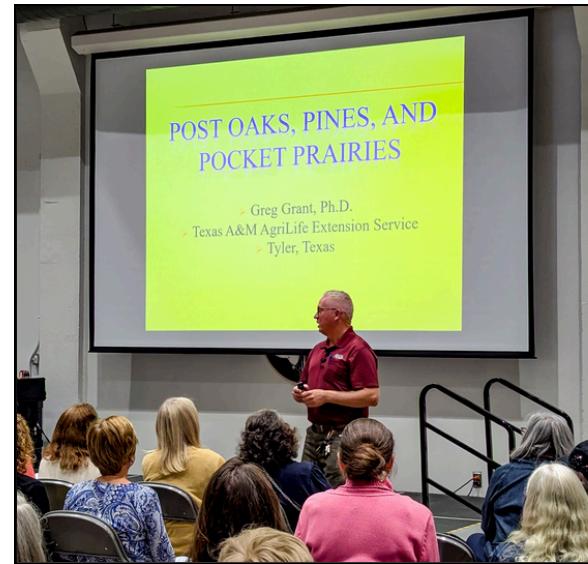


DCMGA's First "Greener Horizons" (cont.)

BY ERIN SMITH, CEA-HORT

The second part of the evening was centered on environmental and conservation education.

"Saving Nature One Pocket Prairie At A Time" was presented by Dr. Greg Grant, well-known Texas speaker, author, and Smith County Extension Agent. Dr. Grant has a lifelong love of nature and has spent years learning and teaching others about land stewardship and preserving nature around us. Dr. Grant showed examples of the pocket prairies he has maintained for years on his own property in East Texas. His love of nature and humor is always conveyed to his audience and his following is substantial. If you do not learn from Dr. Grant, you are just not listening.



Dr. Greg Grant, speaking on Pocket Prairies at DCMGA's first "Greener Horizons". Photo Courtesy of DCMGA.

Dr. Grant discussed how urban landowners and municipalities can create pocket prairies in unused locations to help support native plants, animals, and pollinators in the DFW area. Josey Ranch Pocket Prairie at Josey Ranch Library in Carrollton is a great example of such a place. Lela Khan and Lisa Burt are the outstanding DCMGA project managers for that project and they engage volunteers and the public alike in so many creative ways.

We had a nice crowd for our very first Greener Horizons event and the venue could not have been better. The Greater Denton Arts Council building was outstanding and the parking was managed like none other! The hospitality team managed by Pam Long was tremendous! Everyone had a snack to tide them over during the break and all of the volunteers did an amazing job of planning, preparation, and execution under the guidance of Ellen Gaunt, 2025 DCMGA Director of Education. I am so proud of the Denton County Master Gardener volunteers and I am honored to be able to work with them.

We are looking forward to our next Greener Horizons event. We will be planning soon and considering the topic, venue, date, and event time that will offer the greatest opportunity to allow the best participation. Feel free to share topics you would be interested in learning about with any member of the 2026 DCMGA board of directors and keep an eye out for more information on our DCMGA website and upcoming issues of *THE ROOT*!





Earth-Kind® Landscape Design Course

January 16 -17, 2026
in Flower Mound 8:30-4:30 both days

PLUS

a Personal Design Consultation
on January 24th

Learn sustainable design and installation techniques
for creating or renewing your home landscape!

Pre-registration required and available at
DCMGA.com or use the QR Code



Follow us on social media
at DentonCountyMGA
for more information



Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service is an equal opportunity employer and program provider.



Flower Mound Public Library and
Denton County Master Gardeners
Present:

SPRING GARDEN SERIES 2026 GARDEN TO TABLE

You are invited to the free educational events on how to grow and enjoy your own vegetables. Hands-on activities and/or door prizes are included!

Monday, February 2 Starting from Seed

Discover how smart seeds are. Kathi Eflandt (MG 2010, Propagation Specialist) will explain why seeds germinate and how to pre-start plants at home. Make and take your own started seeds.



Monday, February 9 Really Cool Veggies

Carol Noble (MG 2016) reveals vegetables and herbs that can be started or grown in your Texas yard in the cool weather of February. Take home seeds for your adventures.



Monday, February 16 Pots to Plots

Find room for veggies in containers, on patios, in beds, or anywhere in the yard. Lynda Harvey (MG 2006, Vegetable Specialist) will help you plan your plantings.



Monday, February 23 Soil as an Ecosystem

Jane Duke, certified Soil Food Web Analyst, describes the interaction of organisms in the soil. Learn why soil biology is important to growing healthy vegetables and how to restore your ground.



**Location: Flower Mound Public Library
3030 Broadmoor Ln, Flower Mound, TX 75022
All Programs Start at 7:00pm**



Registration required at:
flowermound.gov/libraryevents

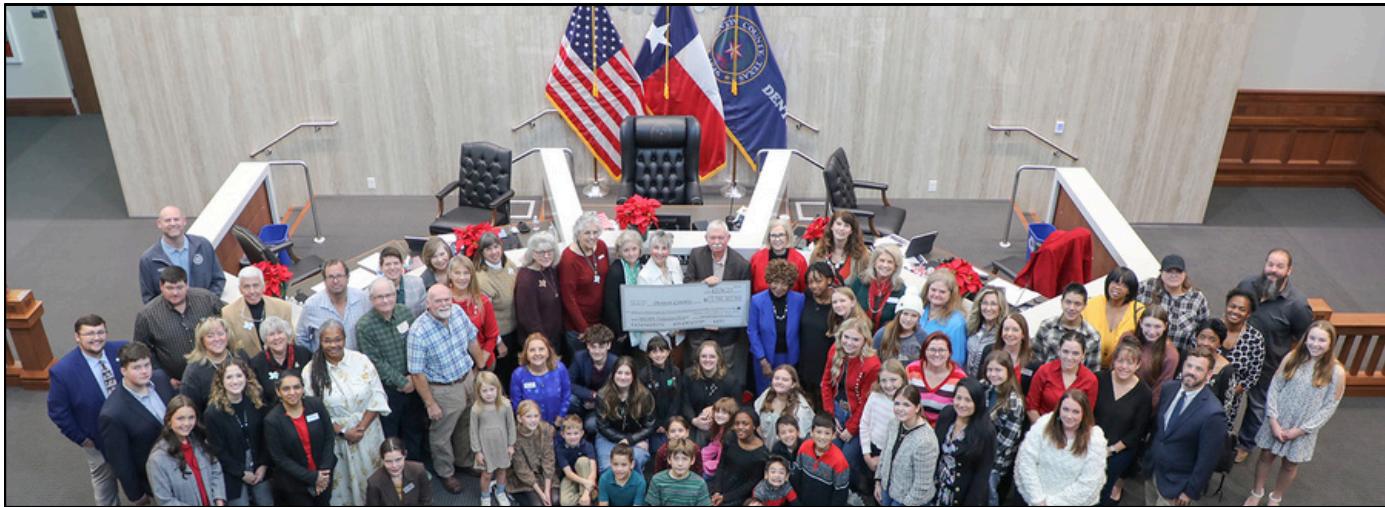


Or Scan the QR code

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service is an equal opportunity employer and program provider.



2025 Denton County Commissioners Court Appreciation Breakfast



Photos Courtesy of Carrie Carson, Denton County.

Congratulations to Denton County Master Gardeners, Master Naturalists and 4-H volunteers for their outstanding service in 2025! Tommy Calvert, Denton County Farm Bureau President, presented the Denton County Commissioners Court with a "check" totaling \$3,586,361.94—the value of our collective AgriLife volunteer service hours, reaching a remarkable 103,086 hours this year. The Denton County Master Gardener Association contributed 43.6% of these hours (44,975 hours for a value of \$1,563,331), marking a significant increase with 11,054 additional volunteer hours compared to 2024. Your dedication shines brightly—thank you for your incredible commitment!



Denton County Master Gardener Association

Upcoming Events

Earth Kind Landscape Design Course

Course participants will learn sustainable design and installation techniques for creating or renewing home landscapes. This course is open to the public and held two times per year at various locations in Denton County. It involves 16 hours of design education, active demonstrations, sample materials and design sketching for participant-selected home landscape projects. The course duration is two consecutive days with a 60-minute, individualized, design consultation scheduled one week later.

Pre-registration is required for single or companion registrations and includes a registration fee covering course materials and meals. Registration required at:

flowermound.gov/libraryevents

January 16, 17, 24 from 8:30AM-4:30PM

Denton County Southwest Courthouse

6900 Canyon Falls Drive, Flower Mound, 76226

Flower Mound Library Spring Series – Starting From Seed

Discover how smart seeds are. Kathi Eflandt (MG 2010, Propagation Specialist) will explain why seeds germinate and how to pre-start plants at home. Make and take your own started seeds. February 2nd, 7PM-8:30PM

Flower Mound Public Library. 3030 Broadmoor Lane

Flower Mound, TX 75022

SAVE THESE DATES!

Our Annual Plant Sale (April 25th 9AM-till sell out)

Featuring over 8,000 plants for sale. Don't miss this epic event.

Garden Tour May 9th 9AM-4PM

Tour three lovely home gardens and two Community Gardens

The Grove

Josey Ranch Pocket Prairie



Master Gardeners – Mark your calendars

for the Volunteer Opportunity Fair

February 11th



Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service is an equal opportunity employer and program provider.

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>

News for DCMGA Members Only

Do You Love to Design???

Do You Want to Volunteer but Need Flexibility????

***Become a Layout Designer
for The Root!***

Join TEAM ROOT and be a part of our shared effort to make the monthly issue of *The Root* a success!

To join this opportunity, you will need:

- Basic Canva skills
- 8-10 hours per month
- Availability between the 5th and 20th of the month
- WE WILL PROVIDE TRAINING (beyond Canva basics - template, photo use, etc.)



Interested?! Contact communications@dcmga.com

Save The Date!

DCMGA Annual Volunteer Fair

(for members only)

**will be held
February 11, 2026, 9:30-11:30am**

Location TBA

We Look forward to Seeing you There!



As Master Gardeners, our mission is to educate and inspire Denton County residents through research-based horticulture, to promote eco-friendly gardens and enduring landscapes that enrich our 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.

2025 Board of Directors

President	Bonnie Ambrose
Vice-President	Jeff Hardgrave
Secretary	Jill Olhausen
Treasurer	Harry Gornick
Communications	Donna Hull
Education	Barbara Smith
Outreach	Treva McFadden
Member-at-Large	Brenda Martin
CEA-Horticulture	Erin Smith

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

Jan. 14 DCMGA Annual Graduation and Awards Ceremony (Members Only)

Jan. 16 & 17 Earth Kind Landscape Design Class - Open to the Public with registration; see information page 11.

Contact Information

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension
Hulcher Services Building
611 Kimberly Drive
Bldg. B
Denton TX 76201-9026
Office: 940.349.2883

Help Desk:
940.349.2892

master.gardener@dentoncounty.gov

Webmaster:
webmaster@dcmga.com

Communications:
communications@dcmga.com

Website:
<https://dcmga.com>

Contact Us:
info@dcmga.com

Content

The submission deadline for the February edition of *The Root* is January 5. Submissions may be revised at the discretion of the editor.

Ideas, photos, and articles are welcome and may be submitted to Communications Director Donna Hull at communications@dcmga.com

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

