

Denton County Master Gardener Association



THE ROOT

Grow With Us 



Beautiful Rose Garden by gee1999, Getty Images, Courtesy of Canva.com



STILL GROWING



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Buds From The Board

BY BONNIE AMBROSE, PRESIDENT

Happy February, DCMGA!

It is hard to believe we are greeting the second month of 2026. February brings hope and happiness for me, particularly when North Texas is spared from severe weather. I dread icy, blocked roads, so I have been hoping that despite the mild January weather, our perennials and trees remain dormant, ensuring a vibrant spring.

February is a month of anticipation, preparation, and planting. I put my dreams into action. It is potato planting month! I find joy in spotting the first bluebonnets of spring, which began growing in my side yard in late November. By late February, I will be able to see how beautiful it will be in April. February always holds for me the promise of spring.

This issue will inspire you for the spring to come. When we have one of our mild February days, take a walk in your own garden and see what you can discover and delight in. Find a spot to refresh. Share a perennial with a neighbor or replant it elsewhere where it can grow and add more beauty.

Where might you try something new? What will it be? This issue, as well as previous issues, will provide you with ideas and know-how. And don't forget to save the dates for our annual Plant Sale (April 25), where Master Gardeners will help you find and pick out the perfect plants for your landscape, and for the annual Garden Tour (May 9), full of inspiration and ideas.

If you have irises, it is time to show them a little love and add a bit of fertilizer. It is also time to start sharpening pruners for late winter pruning, a task I also look forward to after the winter doldrums. Start imagining - spring is on its way!

Happy Gardening,
Bonnie

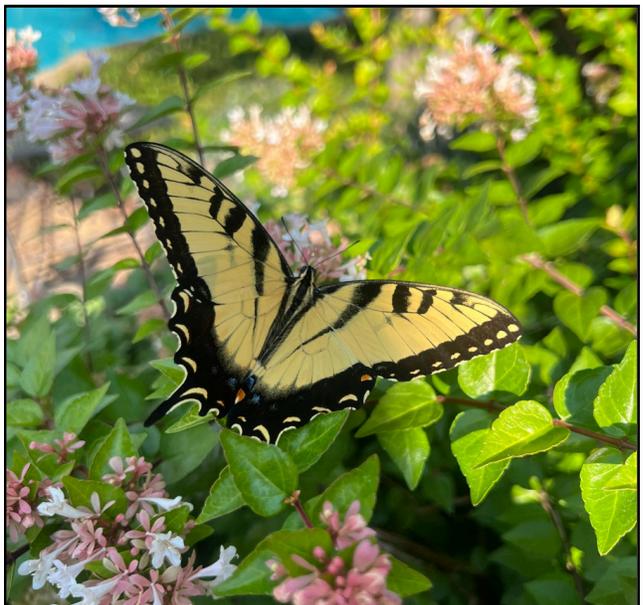


Photo Courtesy of DCMGA Member Lea Watson.



2026 Garden Tour Preview: Rooted Together

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!

Rooted Together is a lovely, nostalgic garden where treasured plants and vintage charm abound. Plants are cherished for their value to pollinators. Plants like Blue Mist Flower, with their lacy foliage, are a favorite plant for butterflies. White Veined Dwarf Dutchman's Pipe is host to pipevine swallowtails and flourishes in this landscape. Plants that provide a sensory experience with fragrance, touch, and taste are part of this garden. Windchimes and a fountain provide the sounds of nature while lamb's ear and herbs provide touch and taste to the experience.

This garden is home to plants with a past. There are cuttings from friends and family, as well as a Southern Wood fern brought from a childhood home. These special plants help provide a feeling of stability and peacefulness. Found and reused objects are woven into the backyard with vintage patio furniture, pots, rocks, and décor that are all layered with memories and personal history.



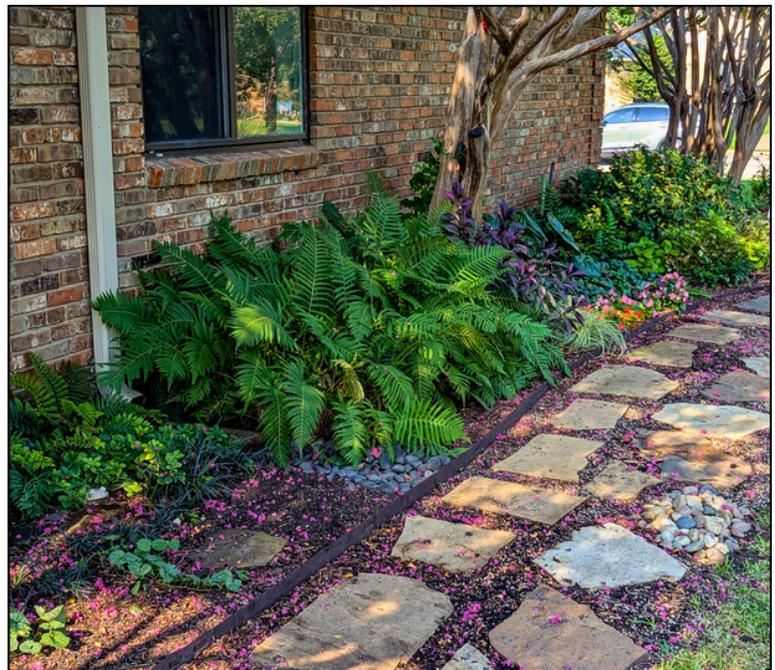
All Photos Courtesy of DCMGA Member ???



2026 Garden Tour Preview Rooted Together (cont.)

In this garden, you will learn the value of “not topping” your trees. There are five lovely crape myrtles in this landscape that have never been topped. Topping of crape myrtles is unfortunately a common practice, and one which damages the natural growth and health of not only these beautiful, flowering trees, but of most trees in our area. The owner of Rooted Together has increased the space around her trees to promote grass growth rather than thinning or topping the trees.

Visitors to this garden will learn about composting, a beneficial process that can reclaim the nutrients left in your garden and vegetable leftovers while keeping them out of the landfill. Also, learn about the rain barrel setup and see if this might work in your own backyard, providing necessary additional water for our long, hot summers.



This peaceful retreat is lined with lovely shade plants, vintage finds, and a gateway into more unknown spaces, where pollinator plants are attracting bees and butterflies. Such an inviting place. Be sure to visit Rooted Together May 9.



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



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Growing, Caring For and Loving - ROSES!

BY ERIN SMITH (PART I)

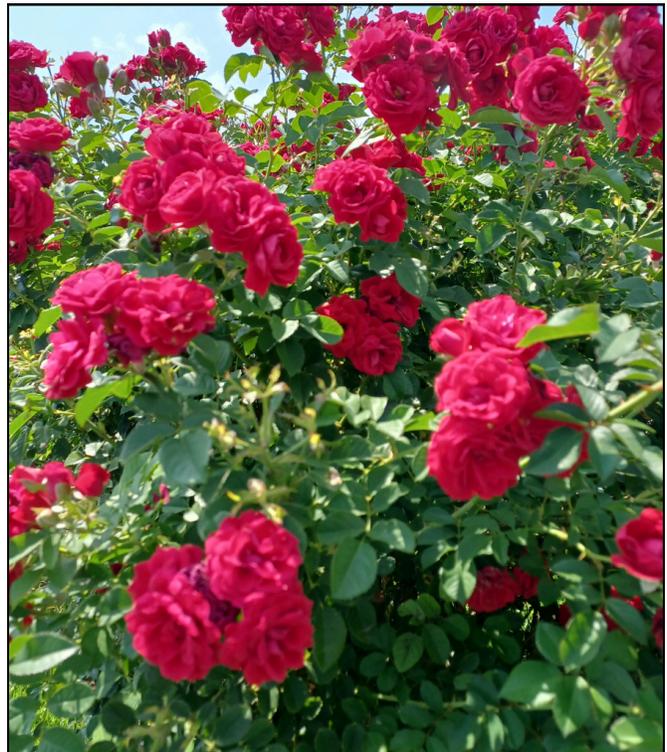
Roses mean many things to many people. William Shakespeare wrote, "A rose by any other name would smell as sweet". Our first President, George Washington, was known as the first American rose hybridizer. The Rose Bowl college football game started in 1902 as an addition to the Tournament of Roses Parade, which began in 1890 in Pasadena, California, to promote the state's ideal weather conditions and abundant local flowers. President Ronald Reagan declared the rose the national floral emblem of the United States in 1986.

In America, we give roses to symbolize love, honor, friendship, and romance. There are over one hundred and fifty rose species and thousands of varieties available worldwide, in almost any shape, size, and color imaginable. Most people recognize a rose when they see one, but caring for them can be a daunting task.

The next few issues of *The Root* will feature a series on roses, which will include such topics as growing tips, pest control, pruning, and selection. North Texas Gardeners often use Valentine's Day (February 14th) as a reminder to prune their rose bushes, so our February article will begin there. Proper pruning techniques clean, shape, and refresh plants so they will produce an impressive bloom in the spring.



'Peace' Hybrid Tea Rose, CC by 2.0



Cherry Rose - Courtesy of Erin Smith, CEA-Hort



Growing, Caring For and Loving - ROSES! (cont.)

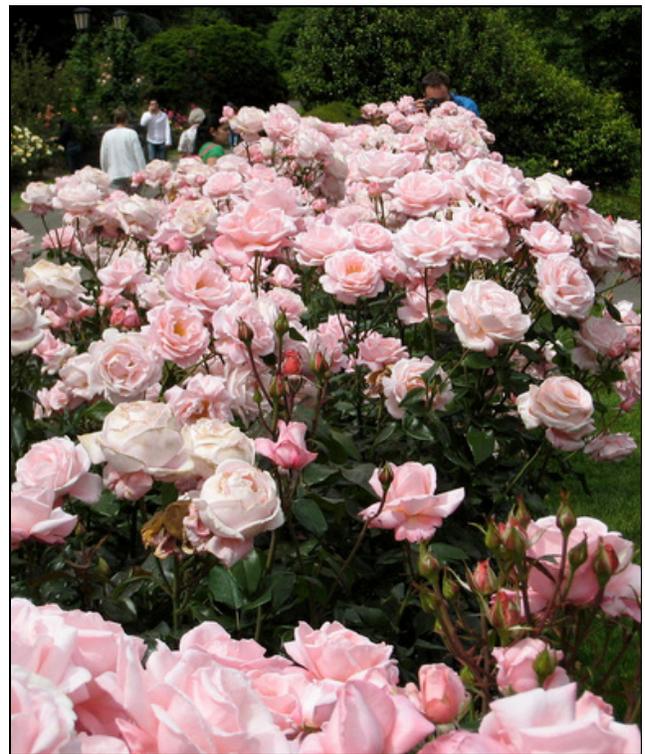
It may be painful to remove the lush new growth that may have developed on your rose bushes by Valentine's Day due to our rollercoaster Texas weather, but it is important to provide the right care for your rose bushes.

Keeping in mind that there are over 150 rose species, we must consider that there is more than one way to prune rose bushes properly. Modern roses used in landscaping fall into two basic categories: (1) shrub roses and (2) Hybrid Tea, Grandiflora, and Floribunda roses. Over the past 25 years, the demand for shrub-type roses has grown. They are typically easy to care for and provide a tremendous number of flowers. This trend began with the release of an outstanding shrub rose known as The Knock Out® Rose in 2000. A future article will cover the history of cultivated roses, specifically The Knock Out® Rose family.

Shrub roses are very resilient compared to other types of roses. They are comparatively easy to propagate and can set new flower buds without any pruning at all, for a time. If you have grown or seen The Knock Out® Rose (the original, five-petaled cherry red rose), you have likely noticed that flower buds will sprout around the old blooms after the petals fall off. This process happens fairly quickly on Knock Out® Rose varieties.



Candella Hybrid Tea, CC0 1.0 Universal



'New Zealand' hybrid tea rose, fuzzyjay, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0



Growing, Caring For and Loving - ROSES! (cont.)

Most shrub roses are capable of producing flower buds throughout their growing season without being trimmed. However, it is still important to control the plant's size and shape with well-timed pruning practices. Hedge shears (manual or motorized) can be used to prune shrub roses. Specialized training is not necessary. Just be sure the blades on your shears are clean and sharp!

It is preferable to trim shrub roses often enough that you are not removing more than one-third of the total foliage each time you prune. On healthy plants, damage should not occur if you occasionally need to prune more off at one time. You do not need to worry about opening the center of shrub roses or removing crossed branches as you would when pruning other varieties. Hybrid Teas, Grandifloras, and Floribundas require a bit more practice when pruning and deadheading. It is important to remove any dead canes or branches that cross or rub one another to prevent damage. When shaping or selecting canes to keep, it is important to cut just above outward-facing nodes so that the center of the rose bush allows air to pass through. This will help to prevent foliar diseases.

Deadheading may sound scary, but it is simply a term used to describe removing spent flowers to allow the plant to use its energy to make another bloom rather than support the rose hip from the previous one. On Hybrid Teas, especially, it is important that you remove the old bloom and hip just above the first leaf with five leaflets. The reason for that exact location is that the next flower bud on the cane is developing in that node. A rose plant has a compound leaf structure. That means it has multiple leaves coming from one leaf stem. When you look at most Hybrid Tea roses, they produce a solitary bloom on a relatively long stem. As your eyes move down the rose cane, you will usually see compound leaves with two, three, five, or up to seven leaflets per leaf stem. That leaf with five leaflets is what you are looking for. You will want to cut at a forty-five-degree angle away from the bud right above the leaf stem.

It is important not to simply snap off spent rose flowers just under the bloom. This can cause a delay in the bloom cycle. Removing spent blooms and soft, vigorous growth will allow the plant to force growth hormones to lower nodes on the rose bush. The result will be a well-branched plant with multiple blooms about six weeks after you prune.

Be sure to wear protective gloves when you are handling rose bushes, as most have thorns or, more scientifically speaking, "prickles." Prickles are the plant's defense against herbivores and are simply an outgrowth from the stem's surface. True thorns are part of a plant's vascular system and are more viscous. No matter what you choose to call them, they can leave painful wounds.



Growing, Caring For and Loving – ROSES! (cont.)

Roses are a wonderful addition to any landscape and are worth the time and effort they need to thrive. What other flower provides a way to say “I respect you,” “I care about you,” and “I love you” all at the same time?

Resources

Pruning Roses – OSU fact sheet describing proper rose bush pruning (McMullen, 2009, rev. 2024), Oregon State University Extension Service Fact Sheets; <https://extension.oregonstate.edu/flowers-shrubs-trees/pruning-roses>

Roses in Oklahoma – OSU fact sheet discussing rose types, rose care and maintenance in Oklahoma (Hillock, Schnelle, 2016, Oct.), Oklahoma State University Extension Service Fact Sheets; <https://extension.okstate.edu/fact-sheets/roses-in-oklahoma.html>

Guide to Growing Roses – article featuring pruning techniques for rose bushes (Bosmans, rev. 2023, June), University of Maryland Extension Service; <https://extension.umd.edu/resource/guide-pruning-roses>

Pruning Guide: Knock Out Roses – pruning guide focused on Knock Out Roses, The Knock Out Rose official website; <https://www.knockoutroses.com/pruning>

Pruning Knock Out Roses – When, Why and How – article featuring Knock Out rose family pruning (Bender, rev. 2025, Feb), Southern Living website; <https://www.southernliving.com/garden/grumpy-gardener/pruning-knock-out-rose-when-why-and-how>



Salvia coccinea, 'Coral Nymph' and 'Scarlet Sage'

BY SHARRIE ELY

Salvias are a great choice for the North Texas garden. But with over 900 varieties of salvia to choose from, it is sometimes difficult to know which varieties will grow well in our area. *Salvia coccinea* is a budget-friendly salvia that grows well in many areas of Texas, and it can be a colorful and long-blooming choice for your garden. *Salvia coccinea* (pronounced SAL-vee-ah kok-SIN-ee-ah) is a readily reseeding annual that adds repeating color throughout the growing season. It attracts hummingbirds in the fall with its pretty, long, tube-like blooms and comes in red, pink, and sometimes white. It grows in well-drained soil.

Origins

Salvia coccinea is a native plant that is from Mexico and Southwest Texas. Its range includes east and southwest Texas, and it grows from South Carolina to Mexico. It comes in different colored blooms of red, pink, coral, and the harder to find, white. It is a member of the Family Lamiaceae, the mint family.

Two notable varieties of *Salvia coccinea* are the red "Scarlet Sage" (also known as Tropical Sage) and "Coral Nymph", which is a coral-pink color. Both of these varieties grow well in North Texas. When looking for plants or seeds, do not rely on common names such as "Scarlet Sage" and "Tropical Sage". Both names are commonly used to describe other varieties of salvia as well. Look specifically for the species name "*Salvia coccinea*" to acquire the correct variety. Additionally, do not be put off by the word "tropical" that is sometimes used to describe this native plant. "Tropical" just refers to its preferred zones where it grows as a perennial. While *Salvia coccinea* is drought and heat-tolerant, it does not typically overwinter in colder climates of the state, such as North Texas. However, and here's the good part, in these same colder areas it can reseed for new blooms for the following year. It is possible that in protected areas of your garden, where there is a gentler micro-climate, the plant may return from the previous year. A mild winter can lead to the plant overwintering in the garden.



Spike of red 2-lipped flowers. *Salvia coccinea*
Danny Barron CC BY-NC-ND 2.0



Spike of pink and white flowers. *Salvia coccinea*
'Coral Nymph' Tatiana Gerus CC BY 2.0



Salvia coccinea, 'Coral Nymph' and 'Scarlet Sage' (cont.)

Growing and Maintaining *Salvia coccinea*

To grow *Salvia coccinea*, begin with small plant starts (transplants) in the spring, or start from seed. You can begin from seed indoors 4-6 weeks before the last freeze date for Denton County. This is historically February 16. If you prefer, you can sow directly outdoors between now and late February for the seeds to sprout, and you may have blooms throughout the season. *S. coccinea* is drought and heat-tolerant and can grow in dappled shade, part shade, or full sun.

The plants may need supplemental watering when the temperatures reach over 100 degrees. That said, too much water or fertilizer may lead to legginess. These plants benefit from some pruning and deadheading during the growing season (see "Varieties" below). The plant's average height ranges from 1-3 feet tall and .5 – 1 foot in width.

Varieties

The "Coral Nymph" variety can grow quickly and reward you with a flush of pretty, coral-colored blooms. "Coral Nymph" is more compact and earlier blooming than the red variety of *Salvia coccinea*. It has nectar-rich, tubular blossoms in a pretty shade of coral pink and blooms filled with small white stamens. It is best planted in dappled shade, shade, or sun. Further, being an annual in our area, this variety does well in containers. Attentive deadheading will allow the plant to continue blooming all summer long and into fall.



Photo courtesy of txmg.org, hendersonmg.blogspot.com
Coral-Nymph-3



Flower spike with bright red flowers. *Salvia coccinea* Scott Zona CC BY-NC 2.0



Salvia coccinea, 'Coral Nymph' and 'Scarlet Sage' (cont.)

The variety "Scarlet Sage" tends to seed more prolifically and is also hardy in partial or dappled shade or sun. This red salvia can grow quite shrubby but will bloom more readily if it is deadheaded or pruned. Use hedge clippers to keep it at a reduced height but stop pruning after the first week of August. It will need time to gather energy to make the blooms appear in time for the fall for migrating hummingbirds.

In [Native Texas Plants; Landscaping Region by Region](#), Wasowski and Wasowski discuss the maintenance of growing salvia in one's landscape. These authors state that when growing the red variety of *Salvia coccinea* near or in the lawn, it can be mowed with the mower at its highest setting during the summer for maintenance. In August, it is best to discontinue mowing the salvia and allow it to grow so that it will bloom throughout the fall.

Resources

Henderson County Master Gardener Association. (2023, March 25). *Salvia* 'Coral Nymph.' HCMGA. <https://www.txmg.org/hendersonmg/plant-library/salvia-coral-nymph/>

Native Plant Society of Texas. (2025, November 29). *Salvia coccinea* - Native Plant Society of Texas. <https://www.npsot.org/posts/native-plant/salvia-coccinea/>

Native Texas plants: landscaping region by region. Wasowski & Wasowski, 2003. Taylor Trade Publishing.

Salvia coccinea (Bloody Sage, Indian Fire, Red Sage, Scarlet Sage) | North Carolina Extension Gardener Plant Toolbox. (n.d.). <https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/salvia-coccinea/>

Scarlet sage, *Salvia coccinea*. (n.d.). Wisconsin Horticulture. <https://hort.extension.wisc.edu/articles/scarlet-sage-salvia-coccinea/>

The National Gardening Association Plants Database. Salvias, Hummingbird Sage, *Salvia coccinea*, Coral Nymph. (n.d.). <https://garden.org/plants/view/92512/Hummingbird-Sage-Salvia-coccinea-Coral-Nymph/>

Welcome Salvias into Your Garden. (2025, March 31). UC Agriculture and Natural Resources. <https://ucanr.edu/blog/real-dirt/article/welcome-salvias-your-garden>



In The Veggie Patch: Radishes

BY IVY SUMMERFIELD

How do you enjoy radishes (*Raphanus sativus*): raw, roasted, pickled, or in salads? They grow from seed to harvest in 27 to 30 days, packing their roots and leaves with nutrients and minerals. Their short growth period limits soil contact and environmental exposure, reducing the maintenance required to grow them.

Origin & Benefits

Uncultivated (wild)-type radishes found in Southeast Asia may be the original radishes. Merchants and immigrants carried them to new lands throughout history. Ancient Egyptians grew and ate radishes. Ancient Greeks created golden replicas to offer to Apollo. Many kinds of radishes have developed and are now found on six continents. (1)

Radishes provide several essential nutrients and minerals, including folate, calcium, potassium, Vitamin C, and sodium. (2) Radish leaves are high in calcium and contain 4 times as many flavonoids as the roots. (3)

Plant Requirements

Radishes are cool-season vegetables that fare best with spring and fall plantings. (4) They require little room in a home garden. They need loose, well-drained soil so their roots can expand. (5) Soil pH should be 6.5 or higher. (6) Climate conditions range from full sun to shade.

Planting

Directly sow seeds into loose, well-drained soil, spacing them about 1 inch apart. Plant short variety seeds 0.25-0.5" deep and larger varieties up to one inch deep.



All Photos Courtesy of DCMGA Member Ivy Summerfield



Radishes (cont.)

Maintenance and Care

Keep the soil uniformly moist; avoid over-saturating. When radish plants reach 2 inches tall, thin them. Leave 1 to 2 inches between spring- and summer-type plants and 2 to 6 inches between winter-type plants. Apply a layer of mulch to reduce water loss and weed competition. (8)

Varieties for North Texas

Radishes may be spherical or carrot-shaped. Common radish colors are green, white, pink, red, purple, and yellow. (9) Their crunchy, crisp texture ranges from mild to peppery or spicy depending on the variety. Recommended red varieties for North Texas are Cherry Belle, Crunchy Red, Fuego, Early Scarlet Globe, Red Baron, and Red Devil. Two recommended white varieties are Icicle and Round White. (10)

Harvesting and Storage

Radish leaves can be harvested 3-5 weeks after planting. Leaves become more bitter over time. When radish roots are ready to harvest, the tops of their pink, swollen stems often emerge from the soil. Harvest them whenever they reach the desired size. Smaller radishes are typically more tender and have a stronger flavor. Radishes left in the ground too long become pithy. (11) Store radishes in the refrigerator and use within two weeks of harvest. (12)

Resources

1. Radishes: Fruit & Vegetable Farm to School: Highlighting local fruits & vegetables. (n.d.). In *VT FEED and VT Agency of Education* [Report]. <https://vtfeed.org/sites/default/files/imce/uploads/Radishes.pdf>
2. Radishes - Food Technology & Processing Food Technology & Processing. <https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/food-technology/nutrition/radishes/>.
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8. Washington State University Extension. (n.d.). Vegetables: Growing radishes in home gardens. In *Washington State University Extension Fact Sheet*. <https://s3.wp.wsu.edu/uploads/sites/2071/2014/04/Radishes-FS127E.pdf>
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12. *Radishes - Food Technology & Processing Food Technology & Processing*. (n.d.). <https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/food-technology/nutrition/radishes/>



Creature Corner: Cabbage Loopers

BY JANICE YODER-SMITH

The Cabbage Looper Moth, *Trichoplusia ni*, finds cole crops (*Brassicacae*), including vegetables like cabbage, kale, and broccoli, irresistible. These moths help pollinate flowers by feeding on nectar, but allowing their larvae to overpopulate can destroy cole crops. Let's learn how to recognize them, use preventive measures to limit damage, and control the larvae if damage is excessive.

Looper moths are mottled brownish-gray with wing spans around 1.5" (3.8 cm). Females lay pinhead-sized, slightly yellow to greenish domed eggs on the undersides of cole crop leaves. Larvae emerge within three to six days. Near their anterior ends, larvae have three pairs of true legs. There is a gap between the true legs and the two pairs of prolegs on segments 5-6 of their abdomens, and they have a pair of anal prolegs. Since there are no legs on the middle segments, those are pushed up as the prolegs move forward when the caterpillar walks. When the loop cannot go any higher, the true legs move forward again. The cycle repeats until the caterpillar stops to eat.

As larvae mature, they move among plant leaves, feeding by chewing irregularly shaped holes into them from the undersides. The youngest larvae may only chew away a thin layer of the leaf, producing a "window pane" appearance instead of a hole. Larval color transitions from off-white to dark green as they mature into pupae that gradually turn dark brown. Pupae adhere to host leaves by means of a translucent cocoon during the warmer months—their color shifts from light green to brown or black over about two weeks.



Cabbage Looper Moth Álvaro San José Elizundia
CC-BY-NC



Cabbage Looper Larva by Alyssac23, CC-BY-NC



Creature Corner (cont.)

During colder months, larvae may drop to the ground and pupate in the soil until the weather warms. Air temperature affects the duration of this creature's life cycle. Active Cabbage Loopers are typically observed from spring to fall in North Central Texas, producing three to five generations per year.

What can be done to reduce Cabbage Looper moth crop damage? Start by planning crop location carefully. Rotate where cole crops are grown each year.



Cabbage Looper Damage by John C. French, CC-BY-NC

Especially with early crops, moving mulch away from stems helps limit access of soil-pupated larvae to the plants. Follow recommended spacing guidelines and interplant with seasonally adapted annuals and herbs. Use sweet alyssum and nasturtiums in cooler months and shift to basil, dill, and marigolds as the temperature rises. Many sources recommend using a floating row cover with its edges sealed to the ground to prevent moths from laying eggs on the plants. Inspect plants for the presence of eggs or larvae at least weekly. Remove plant leaves bearing eggs. Pick off larvae and drop them in soapy water to kill them. Spraying cole crops with *Bacillus thuringiensis* subspecies *aizawai*, commonly marketed as Bt_a, according to package directions, coats the plant leaves with a bacterium that infects and kills feeding Cabbage Looper larvae. Each gardener must decide how much crop damage is acceptable before taking additional measures against these loopers. The resources provided in this article offer further guidance.

Resources

Cabbage Looper. (n.d.). University of Georgia Cooperative Extension. Retrieved December 26, 2025, from <https://ipm.uga.edu/files/2021/04/Cabbage-Looper.pdf>

Cabbage Looper, No. 26 | Mississippi State University Extension Service. (n.d.). <https://extension.msstate.edu/newsletters/bugs-eye-view/2015/cabbage-looper-no-26>

Cole Crops Easy Gardening Texas AgriLife Extension. (2014 B.C.E., June). Texas AgriLife Extension. Retrieved December 26, 2025, <https://agrilifelearn.tamu.edu/s/product/from-setup/01t4x000004Ofj9>

Utah State University Extension. (2023, July 14). Cabbage Looper Management [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lzprkSVBkBU>



2025 Graduation and Awards Banquet

On Wednesday, January 14th, members of the Denton County Master Gardener Association gathered together at the Greater Denton Arts Council and celebrated! We celebrated our members, our partners, special members of the community who make us even better, the accomplishments of 2025, and, of course, we celebrated the graduation of our interns-now-members. Welcome Class of 2025!

Our thanks to the Celebrations Team and all of the members who made the day possible. Special shout-out to our master of ceremonies, Brenda Martin, for her hard work and for keeping us moving! Thank you to Ricky Wilkins for the A/V support, Molly Stingley for a beautiful cake, and everyone who helped clean up afterwards! Also a big thank you to the Greater Denton Arts Council for once again allowing us to enjoy their space for our gatherings.

Read on below and on the following pages to see the award winners, milestone-makers, and graduates. Members will also have access to more photos through Facebook and an upcoming email in VMS.

All photos courtesy of DCMGA members. Special thanks to member and photographer Lea Watson.

**Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service
Everbright Award**
Jeff Hardgrave

DCMGA Honorary Master Gardener Award
Alton Bowman

DCMGA Community Partner Award
Highland Village



2025 Graduation and Awards Banquet

Member Milestones

5 Years

Judy Allen
Brad Allison
Amal Ashmawi
Cathy Berg
Kelli Bixler
Nancy Blakney
Randy Condit
Beckey Cortines
Lee Greer
Edsel Harrell
Sandy LaQuey
Lindsey Larned
Linda Lunger
Tabitha Mason
Melissa Migis

10 Years

Gloria Alexander
Jerry Alexander
Jack Alldredge
Linda Alldredge
David Carpenter
Linda Gonzales
Angie Lindsey
Pat Peters
David Petty
Cynthia Polson
Tricia Rowen
Joann Szopinski
Joyce Yarnall-Smith

15 Years

Carol Arment
Barbara Brown
Susan Cosio
Kathi Efflandt
Mavis Sauer

Noble Oaks (20-24 Years)

Jill Peak
Carolyn Richard

Texas Emeriti Master Gardener

Ann Hillman
Raeline Nobles



2025 Graduation and Awards Banquet

DCMGA Annual Awards

John Cooper Educator
Carol Arment

Educator Award
Deb Williams
Carol Noble
Kim Wootton

Project Manager/Leadership Award
Donna Hull
Steve and Joanne Spurgin

Janet Laminack
Distinguished Service Award
Lynda Harvey

Book of Knowledge Awards
Suzie Cook
Kathi Efflandt
Janet Gershenfeld
Ann McMahon
Janice Yoder Smith

Special Merit Award
Marion Arndt
Patty Barry
Nancy Blakney
Barbara Brown
Becky Cameron
Sheila Daniel
Sue Hudiburgh

Award of Excellence
Steve Spurgin

Intern Award- Educator
Pamela Peterson

Intern Award - Leadership
LeeAnne Burk

Intern Award - Special Merit
Denise Catalano
Eloise Clayton
Kathy Dieringer
Andi Fitzgerald



2025 Graduation and Awards Banquet

2025 Denton County Master Gardener Graduates

Susan Abler
 Adrienne Barnes
 Candice Bly
 LeeAnne Burk
 Denise Catalano
 Eloise Clayton
 Caitlin Crawford
 Andrea DeSimone
 Kathy Dieringer
 Andi Fitzgerald
 Jennifer Flynn
 Laura Franklin
 Maria Gilbert
 Rena Goodwin
 Theresa Hassell
 Susan Heintzman
 Gina Hicks
 Michelle Higginbotham
 Pamela Hollingsworth
 Nicole Huber
 Paula Hussey
 Amy Isaacs
 Julie Kasner

Donna Kellogg
 Kamron Keyes
 Delia Kleehammer
 Melanie Kuyoth
 Faye Lipham
 Mary Beth Logsdon
 Hayden Lohse
 Jim Meek
 Angie Moran
 Jill O'Connell
 Pamela Peterson
 Debbie Pitcher
 Cheryl Poland
 Leah Robinson
 Rajan Shepherd
 Samantha Smith
 Susan Davis Smith
 Christina Sosa
 Tracy Southers Parker
 Jenny Steward
 Nancy Wilkerson
 Kristina Wilson



Congratulations and Welcome, Class of 2025!!!



Gardening Grandma

BY BARBARA BROWN

Gardening Grandma says, “Don’t plant seeds until you can sit on the ground with your trousers down.”

However, my gardening neighbor says it is okay to plant when the outdoor temperature is 70°F or higher.



Who is right? Let’s find out.

If North Texas temperatures warmed gradually and predictably each spring, using air temperature as a planting guide might work. But anyone who has lived in North Texas very long knows our winter and early spring temperatures are anything but predictable. For example, during the week of Christmas 2025, the daytime high temperatures were 79, 81, 81, 82, and 44, followed by a freeze.

Because soil warms more slowly than the air, using air temperature as a planting guide can be misleading. So, Gardening Grandma is on the right track by recommending that you use soil temperature to determine when it is safe to plant seeds or seedlings. And, as amusing as the thought of someone sitting in their garden without trousers to check soil warmth might be, there are better and more accurate ways to assess soil temperatures at planting depth.

Why should a gardener care about soil temperature?

According to Linda Scoggin, Smith County Master Gardener, “planting too early, before the soil has had time to warm up, can lead to seed rot, slowed germination, poor growth, and disease.” A poor start in cold soil can affect a plant’s growth and productivity for the rest of the season.

How to use a soil temperature thermometer.

Insert the probe into the soil to your desired planting depth. While collecting temperature measurements, keep the probe face out of direct sunlight. Wait a few minutes for the reading to stabilize, and then read the temperature. Get readings for 4-5 days in a row to ensure a stable temperature before planting. "Test the top one or two inches for planting seeds, and test four to six inches (deep) for vegetable (and herb) transplants." <https://williamson.agrilife.org/2024/03/27/soil-temperatures/>



Gardening Grandma (cont.)

Desired soil temperatures for planting seeds

Plant experts divide soil temperature recommendations for planting seeds into 4 categories: minimum temperature, optimum temperature range, maximum temperature, and ideal temperature. Here are plant-specific recommendations for seed planting from Alabama and Auburn Universities Extension service, "Soil Temperature Conditions for Vegetable Seed Germination": <https://www.aces.edu/blog/topics/lawn-garden/soil-temperature-conditions-for-vegetable-seed-germination/>.

Desired soil temperatures for planting transplants

"For warm-season vegetable transplants in Texas, aim for soil temperatures of 60-65°F for tomatoes, beans, and cucumbers, while peppers, squash, melons, okra, and sweet potatoes prefer it warmer, around 70-75°F or higher for optimal growth.":

<https://www.crosstimbersgazette.com/2019/03/08/spring-into-vegetable-gardening/>.

Resources

"Soil Temperatures Determine Planting Time":
(<https://bygl.osu.edu/node/1043>)

"Soil Temperature Conditions for Seed Germination":
<https://ucanr.edu/sites/default/files/2017-11/164220.pdf>

[Soil Temp Planting_V2docx \(wisc.edu\)](#)

Spring vegetable planting guide: <https://agrilifeextension.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/VegetableGardenPlantingGuide-Jan2025-English.pdf>

Denton County Master Gardener YouTube Channel

Click on "Videos" and check out our new presentations!

And don't forget to subscribe to @DentonCountyGardenerAsso

<https://www.youtube.com/@DentonCountyMasterGardenerAsso>



LATE WINTER PREP FOR YOUR
SPRING TURF

TIME TO APPLY PRE-EMERGENT TO YOUR NORTH TEXAS LAWN

LATE-FEBRUARY THROUGH EARLY MARCH

THERE'S A SPECIFIC TIME-FRAME TO APPLY



Apply Late-Winter pre-emergents before the soil temperature has warmed to 55 degrees F. For weeds that tend to sprout throughout the summer, a second application may be required in June or July.

STOP THE GROWTH OF SUMMER WEEDS

PREVENT CRABGRASS AND SANDBURS WITH A PRE-EMERGENT APPLICATION AT THE CORRECT TIME.

A pre-emergent application will inhibit the seeds before they can "emerge" or germinate. Applications of Team, Halts, Balan, and Dimension may be used to prevent crabgrass and sandburs. Remember to carefully follow ALL directions on any herbicide you use.



REMEMBER, TIMING IS KEY

DON'T MISS THE BRIEF WINDOW FOR TREATMENT

For summer weeds such as sandburs and crabgrass you can apply pre-emergents 2 to 3 weeks before the average killing freeze date in your area. Check your local forecast. In North Texas this can be from the end of February to the middle of March. If you miss this timeframe for treatment, you will have to wait until next year to apply pre-emergent. Timing is key!



WHAT NOT TO APPLY

AVOID WEED AND FEED APPLICATIONS AS IT IS TOO EARLY TO APPLY FERTILIZERS TO YOUR LAWN

Over fertilizing and over watering can lead to more weeds and disease in your turf.

Annual and Broadleaf weeds can be treated after they emerge.
HerbPublicationSC5200713.indd (tamu.edu)
Turfgrass Weeds | AggieTurf (tamu.edu)



MORE INFO FROM TEXAS A&M

To learn more about weed identification and treatment for cool and warm season weeds, be sure to visit

http://publications.tamu.edu/TURF_LANDSCAPE/PUB_turf_Herbicides%20for%20Weed%20Control%20in%20Turfgrass.pdf

Refer to <http://AggieTurf.tamu.edu> for more information on turfgrasses and identification tools for common turfgrass weeds and insects.



Denton County Master Gardener Association

Questions? Contact our Help Desk

email: master.gardener@dentoncounty.com

PHONE: 940-349-2892



Pass-Along Marking

BY LIZ MOYER

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

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

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

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



Photo Courtesy DCMGA Member Liz Moyer
Knife Marker



DCMGA Invites You To
Save The Date
For Our
**SPRING
EVENTS**

The DCMGA Plant Sale

Saturday April 25th
9 AM- 2 PM
(or until we sell out)
North Texas Fairgrounds

The 2026 Garden Tour

Saturday May 9th
9 AM- 4 PM
Carrollton & Coppell



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



Denton County Master Gardener Association

Upcoming Events

Upcoming Events

Community Strong Farm Work Days
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 have a short education on the tasks of the day.
1350 Milam Road E., Sanger Meet Mondays 9AM-11AM

LLELA Nature Preserve Workday
Lake Lewisville Environmental Learning Area
201 E Jones St. Lewisville Meet Wednesdays 9AM-12P

The Grove and Gazebo Work Days
The Grove at Sandy Jacobs Government Center
1029 W. Rosemeade Pkwy. Carrollton Meet monthly on 2nd and 4th Fridays 9AM-11:30AM

Flower Mound Library Spring Series
Feb 2nd Starting From Seed. Learn all about starting plants from seeds
Feb. 9 Really Cool Veges. Learn what vegetables can be started in February
Feb 16th From Pots to Plots. Learn where to plant those vegetables
Feb. 23rd Soils as an Eco System Learn to improve and maintain soil biology
Flower Mound Library 3030 Broadmoor Lane, Flower Mound 7PM-8:30PM
See attached flyer for more information on each class

Gardening Techniques-Late winter-Spring Pruning
Feb 9th Join Carol Rowley, Denton County Master Gardener for tips and techniques on what plants to prune, and how and when to prune your winter garden.
Sponsored by the Twilight Garden Club.
First Baptist Church of Ponder. 101 S TX 156. Ponder. 9:30AM-10:30AM

Propagation Team-Aubrey Library Series

Feb 10th Seeds The Smart Start

This session covers everything from choosing the right seeds and soil mix to creating the ideal environment for germinating. Participants will have hands-on practice and take-home samples.

Feb 17th Introduction To Stem Cuttings

Discover how to grow new plants from existing ones through the simple and effective method of stem cutting propagation. Participants will have hands-on practice and take-home samples.

Feb 23rd Multiply By Division

Who doesn't love free plants? Learn how to expand your plant collection and rejuvenate your garden by dividing plants to promote healthier growth and abundant blooms. Plants to take home.

Aubrey Area Library 226 Countryside Dr. Aubrey 12PM-1:30PM

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 and Josey Ranch Pocket Prairie)



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TREE SEEDLING SALE

*Denton County Soil and Water
Conservation District*

Plant a conservation tree!

The Denton County Soil & Water Conservation District is offering tree seedlings for sale. Seven species are available for purchase. Plant a conservation tree and add beauty, shade, and many other benefits to your property. Trees provide oxygen, windbreaks, soil protection, and wildlife habitat to benefit the landscape.

Mail or submit orders to the Denton County SWCD at 525 S Loop 288 Suite C-1, Denton, TX 76205. If you have any questions, please call 940-383-2691 x3 or visit the USDA Service Center in Denton. Orders are reserved upon payment and quantities are limited, so please order soon.



Bar Oak



Mexican White Oak



Shumard Oak



Vitex



Mexican Plum



Live Oak



Desert Willow

(order form on back)



2026 TREE ORDER FORM
DENTON COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
 Phone: (940) 383-2691 Ext. 3
LIMITED QUANTITIES - ORDER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

NAME: _____ DATE: _____
 ADDRESS: _____ STATE: _____
 CITY: _____ ZIP: _____
 E-MAIL: _____ PHONE: _____

POTTED: \$12 per tree (1-4 foot top, one gallon)

	Quantity	x	\$12.00	=	Cost
Bur Oak	_____				_____
Live Oak	_____				_____
Mexican White Oak	_____				_____
Shumard Oak	_____				_____
Desert Willow	_____				_____
Mexican Plum	_____				_____
Vitex	_____				_____

Total No. of Trees **SUBTOTAL:** _____
8.25% TAX: _____
TOTAL DUE: _____
 Cash [] Check [] # _____

PAYMENT DUE AT TIME OF ORDER

Comments:

Make checks payable to Denton County SWCD. Mail or submit orders to Denton County SWCD, 525 South Loop 288 Suite C-1, Denton, Texas 76205. Orders are filled on a first come first serve basis, so place your order early! **Trees must be picked up on Friday, February 27, 2026 at the North Texas Fairgrounds in Denton from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.**



Aubrey Plant Propagation Series

In Cooperation with the City of Aubrey, the Denton County Master Gardeners present the following propagation presentation at:

Aubrey Area Library Community Room

226 Countryside Dr

Aubrey, TX

Time – 12:00 to 1:30 PM

Tues Feb. 10 - Plant Propagation: Seeds the Smart Start

Discover the art and science of starting plants from seeds. This session covers everything from choosing the right seeds and soil mix to creating the ideal environment for germination. Participants will have hands-on practice and take-home samples.

Tues Feb. 17 - Plant Propagation: Introduction to Stem Cuttings

Discover how to grow new plants from existing ones through the simple and effective method of stem cutting propagation. Participants will learn the different types of cuttings, the importance of nodes, root stimulators, and keys to success will be discussed. Participants will have hands-on practice and take-home samples.

Tues. Feb 23 - Plant Propagation: Multiply by Division

Who doesn't love free plants? Learn how to expand your plant collection and rejuvenate your garden by dividing plants to promote healthier growth and more abundant blooms. Plus, plants to take home.



"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"



News for DCMGA Members Only

Save The Date!

DCMGA Annual Volunteer Fair
(for members only)

will be held
February 11, 2026, 9:00 am - 12:00 pm
Location: Denton Civic Center

We Look forward to Seeing you There!

Would you like to have the DCMGA logo added to your favorite hat or shirt, but aren't sure how to get it done? Great news! We've made the process easier than ever.

In addition to **Eileen Shearer, Letter Jackets and Patches**, (text to make an appointment at 469-585-2523), you can now order embroidery or screen-printing directly from:

On the Cuff
1007 Shady Oaks Dr #101, Denton, TX 76205
(940) 566-3326

Embroidery King
1297 FM 407, Lewisville, TX 75077
(972) 317-1686

Simply **ask for the Master Gardener file**. Both shops offer logo versions suitable for both dark- and light-colored fabrics, and they also offer screen printing. Bring your own item or purchase from the shop. On the Cuff has a small inventory of hats, shirts, t-shirts, etc.

 *Questions? Contact Brenda Martin
DCMGA, Member-at-Large* 

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





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 Service 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.

2026 Board of Directors

Table with 2 columns: Position and Name. Includes President (Bonnie Ambrose), Vice-President (Jeff Hardgrave), Secretary (Jill Olhausen), Treasurer (Harry Gornick), Technology (Ricky Wilkins), Communications (Donna Hull), Education (Barbara Smith), Outreach (Treva McFadden), Member-at-Large (Brenda Martin), and CEA-Horticulture (Erin Smith).

Social Media

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

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

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@DentonCountyMasterGardenerAsso>

Save the Date

- Feb. 2, 9 16, 23 Flower Mound Public Library Spring Garden Series 2026 (see p. 5 for more info)
- Feb. 11 Members Only - Volunteer Fair, 9:00am - 12:00pm, Denton Civic Center

Contact Information

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webmaster@dcmga.com

Communications:
communications@dcmga.com

Website:
<https://dcmga.com>

Contact Us:
info@dcmga.com

Content

The submission deadline for the March edition of *The Root* is February 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.

