

Urban Dirt

Fall Vegetable Gardening

Gardening Events and Information for Texans

Wayne and Deb Prep for Fall

Article and photos by Terri Simon, Master Gardener

When the cilantro starts bolting, that's a good time to start thinking about your fall garden. Wayne and Deb are friends of mine and live on a 17-acre farm. Wayne's family has farmed that land off-and-on since 1964. For a while they raised hogs and grew corn. Wayne once told me he doesn't think of himself as a gardener, he's a farmer. He's a dedicated farmer, too. The produce from their



Bolting cilantro



garden reminds me of a beautiful Renaissance painting. Wayne and Deb turn out a lot of vegetables. So much, that relatives, friends and neighbors benefit from it. My co-workers have never met them, but they are now Wayne and Deb fans. This week each person hauled home care packages of veggies I laid out from Wayne and Debbie's bounty. Tomatoes,

Produce packages

cucumbers, squash, green beans and a few onions were available. The plethora of peppers (say that fast 4 times) included jalapenos, serranos, bell, gypsy (my fave), hatch, havasu, Anaheim and lunchbox. Yes, I work with several vegetarians and they left work happy, happy, happy!



Veggie hoop house

As the Texas heat seems to be kicking in early, several of their vegetables are petering out. The cucumbers have given up and the tomatoes are like tired boxers laid against the ropes. Other crops will follow soon. The squash and zucchini had been bombarded by the rain and the heat and then the squash borers joined the party too. The peppers are looking tired but Wayne says he can probably get another crop from them this fall. He already has tomato seedlings starting for his fall garden. Peppers and tomatoes are grown in hoop houses Wayne built on the property. Now is the

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Have Garden Questions? Submit your questions to: <https://hcmga.tamu.edu/ask-a-question/>

UPCOMING EVENTS

JULY 2021

Green Thumb Gardening Series

We have collaborated with the Harris County Public Library and Houston Community College. Join us for one or both!

Fall Vegetable Gardening

July 12, 10:00 - 11:30 a.m. For the HCC program, register in advance to receive the link:

hccs.edu/community-learning-workshops

July 20, 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Simply visit the Harris County Public Library System

No reservation required. Watch on Facebook – facebook.com/harriscountyp/l/live

Educational Programs

Home Grown Lecture Series - This webinar is provided by our Harris County Ag/Natural Resources Department. Registration is required for these free events. Please visit: please visit: homegrown2021Q3.eventbrite.com/

July 1, 10:00 a.m. - *The Latest & Greatest in Bedding Plants for 2022* by Paul Winski, Texas A&M AgriLife County Extension Agent - Horticulture

July 15, 10:00 a.m. - *Garden Hummingbird Safety* by Brandi Keller, Texas A&M AgriLife County Extension Agent - Horticulture

Youth Activities

Growing with Plants & Nature

Please visit us on our Growing with Plants and Nature Virtual Group found at the following link: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/GPNVG/>

July 27, 10:00 a.m. - *From Seed to Seeds* by Master Gardeners Susan Visinsky-Bracken and Linda Persse. For information about upcoming topics, dates, and registration, please email us at ogd.harrishort@gmail.com. Registration is required before each Family Zoom Event.

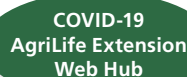
Open Garden Day

July 19, 8:30 - 11:00 a.m., Genoa Friendship Garden, 1210 Genoa Red Bluff Rd., Houston, TX 77034. *Plants for sale in the Greenhouse.*

Please visit us at the social media pages below:

- [Harris County Extension Horticulture Facebook Page](#)
- [Harris County Master Gardeners Facebook Page](#)
- [Harris County Family and Community Health Facebook Page](#)

For more information on COVID-19, please visit the following website:



Texas AgriLife Extension Service Horticulture Program in Harris County

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HERB OF THE MONTH

Fairy Wand (*Chamaelirium luteum*)

by Karen McGowan, Master Gardener

Since there aren't too many herbs native to the United States, to commemorate our country's Declaration of Independence this month, I would like to profile a unique, endangered herb native to North America: Fairy Wand. Also known as angel's fishing rod because of its arching, plume-like spikes of tiny, densely-packed white, purple, or pink flowers, this charming herb is native to moist, acidic soils in shaded areas of meadows, woods and thickets in eastern North America. According to the New York Natural Heritage Program, fairy wand has experienced a steep decline over the previous one hundred years, for reasons not completely understood, although thought to be attributable majorly to both natural succession and canopy closure; the latter under which the plant can survive many years, yet fail to reproduce itself. Just 25 years ago, there were known to be about 50 fairy wand populations throughout the state of New York; today there are just seven.

Fairy wand's genus name comes from the Greek words "chamai" meaning "dwarf" and "lirion" meaning "a lily". Native Americans have historically used this herb to treat menstrual issues and prevent miscarriage. In the early 1900s, fairy wand roots were widely collected and sold for medicinal purposes, and collectors received 30 to 45 cents per pound. One factor in the decline of fairy wand may have been the over-collection of its highly valued root. Fun fact: A nickname of fairy wand is "devil's-bit" and attributable to a legend, which went that the devil was so envious of its curative properties that he bit off most of its rhizome leaving only the short rhizomes seen today.

Its Latin name means "dwarf yellow lily" but this description may have come from a shriveled herbarium specimen since the plant is neither dwarf nor yellow. Growing to a mature height between two and four feet and a spread of one to two feet, fairy

wand tolerates a maximum of two hours of sunlight per day along its native North American Eastern Seaboard. It is a dioecious plant, with male plants growing up to two and a half feet tall, and female plants as tall as four feet. Grown in organically rich, moist, acidic, well-drained soils in part shade to full shade, fairy wand prefers good fertility. In cultivation, soils should not be allowed to dry

out. While fairy wand may be grown from seed (with considerable difficulty), the most successful propagation is by division of the rhizome, and in favorable conditions, will naturalize in the garden over time. Fairy wand blooms anywhere from March to June.

Although fairy wand isn't known to be grown west of the Mississippi, if you'd like to try your hand at it locally, there are some good tips offered by those familiar with the plant, which include situating the plant alongside a site where other woodland plants grow, such as Solomon's seal, lady's slipper orchid, or hepatica. If an open field is used for production, shade structures should be erected. Typically, a wood lath or polypropylene shade structure is used. For artificial

shade, make the structure seven feet tall or higher with two ends open to the prevailing breeze. Weed control is very critical the first few years, usually accomplished with mulching and hand-weeding. Currently, there are no herbicides approved for use on this plant. Natural pests can be an issue with fairy wand; snails and slugs can be pests to this species under moist conditions. If they are a problem, several control methods can be tried, including beer traps, diatomaceous earth, and copper strips. Straw mulch can aggravate the problem if slugs and snails are present. Deer have been observed feeding on the flower stalks. Standard deer control methods can be tried, including fencing or providing an alternative food source. These methods may also be needed if armadillos are in the area.

While fairy wand isn't known as a bee or bird attractor, the herb's endangerment and charm might be worth considering to those gardeners who are looking for a garden challenge. Let's all celebrate our wonderful country and freedoms, and give thanks to those who have gone before us and paid the price for them – Happy July 4th, 2021, y'all!



Blazing Star, Fairy wand

Photo courtesy W.D. and Dolphia Bransford,
Lady Bird Johnson Wildlife Center

Citations:

www.missouribotanicalgarden.org
https://plants.ncwildflower.org/plant_galleries/details/chamaelirium-luteum
<https://guides.nynhp.org/fairywand/>
<https://forest-farming.extension.org/false-unicorn-or-fairy-wand-chamaelirium-luteum/>

Wayne and Deb Prep for Fall, *cont'd from pg. 1*

time to start ordering seeds from the suppliers because popular varieties can sell out fast. This fall Wayne and Debbie will grow their usual veggies. Tomatoes, cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, lettuce, cucumbers, collards and okra along with some sugar snap peas. Nearly everything is grown from seed with the exception of their onions. Seeds are grown in their work shop



Fall tomato seedlings

before transplanting outside. Before long everything that is tuckered out will be pulled, the ground tilled and soil amended to get the beds ready for the fall crops. Right now they are losing a battle to varmints. In the past, wild hogs tore up the beds and uprooted everything. This year the squirrels and raccoons are helping themselves to anything they please. The squirrels listen for the sounds of Wayne and Debbie's trucks to leave. They also know when they are back

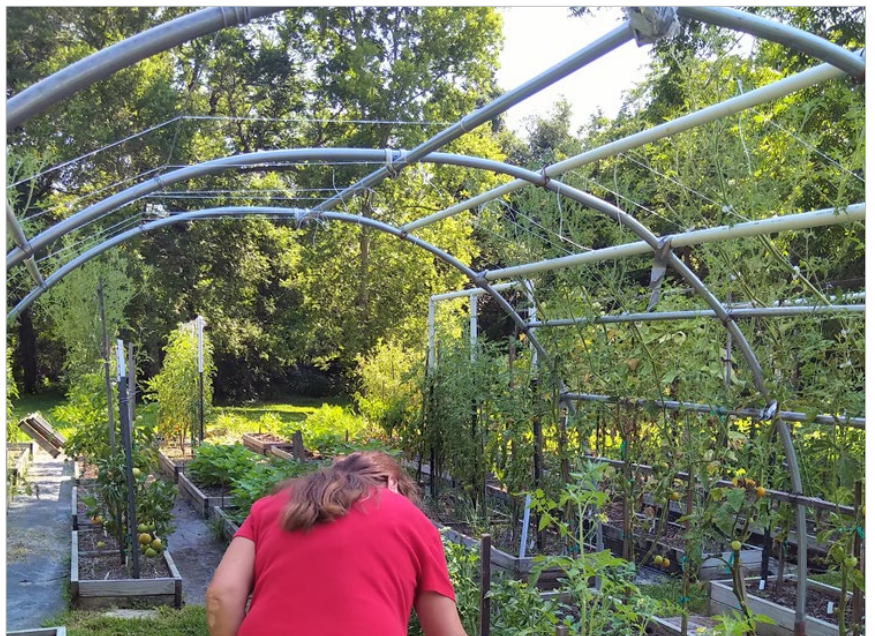
too. Clever, clever. Debbie showed me a tomato with a perfect little mouth imprint in it. There were problems with the indeterminate tomatoes this year. They grew so tall but never produced anything. It may have been a problem with the fertilizer. They use the same type every year, but this year the bag was different so that could have been the problem. In the vegetable world, the struggle is real, but Wayne and Deb are happy.

Wayne and Deb work hard on that farm. They are outside daily inspecting their plants. Wayne has installed a drip irrigation system, but vigilance is still necessary. Cutworms, other pests, birds and critters can quickly wipe out their plants. Next year they want to plant blackberries. Gardening on the scale they do is a full time job.

If you want to learn more about fall vegetable gardening, the master gardener's *Green Thumb Lecture Series* topic for this month is *Fall Vegetable Gardening*. As the lectures are online, click on this link to find out more: <https://hcmga.tamu.edu/2021-green-thumb-gardening-series/>. For a list of vegetable varieties for this area, the following link will direct you to the Texas A&M website - https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/publications/veg_variety/. Enter the county you live in and it will show recommended vegetable varieties for our area. Another good reference is the *Vegetable Garden Planting Dates for Harris County* that is included in every issue of this HCMGA newsletter, the *Urban Dirt*.



Peppers in the Hoop house



Deb tending plants

PLANT OF THE MONTH

Achillea Millefolium

Article and photos by Don Tyler, Master Gardener

So, as I work in and around the garden, I am always on the lookout for something interesting to write about. On this particular day, I was surprised by how well our *Achillea millefolium* was growing this year. We had just purchased a few more plants from our local nursery and I thought why not. I knew virtually nothing about *Achillea millefolium*, better known as “yarrow”. As I started my research, I was quickly surprised by yarrow’s colorful history.



Pink yarrow

Speaking of color, we have pink and yellow as shown in the pictures but yarrow comes in a wide range of colors. I have never purchased anything from Wayside Gardens (www.waysidegardens.com) but they sell a “Achillea Rainbow Mix”. Might be worth looking into! In any case, here are some rather interesting details about this unique plant.

It is listed as a wildflower in my *Wildseed Farms 2021 Wildflower Reference Guide and Seed Catalog* and is a native North American plant. Not only is it classified as a wildflower, it is also known in history as an herb. Wildflower.org, states, “Yarrow was

formerly used for medicinal purposes: to break a fever by increasing perspiration, to treat hemorrhaging as a poultice for rashes. A tea used by Native Americans to cure stomach disorders was made by steeping the leaves.”

Who knew?!



Yellow yarrow

But the uniqueness of yarrow does not stop there. The website goes on the state yarrow is “*recognized by pollination ecologists as attracting large numbers of native bees.*”

Still not convinced? Yarrow is “*a plant that attracts predatory or parasitoid insects that prey upon pest insects*”. What gardener would not welcome a little natural help with pests!

Did I mention butterflies love it too?

The *Old Farmer’s Almanac*, www.almanac.com/plant/yarrow, further praises this rather unassuming plant as being “*practically care-free, making it perfect for borders, ground covers, and open meadows.*” They go on to give it qualities of “*versatile*” and “*hardy*”.

These are all key features I like for plants in my landscape. It is hard to see in the pictures, but we have most of ours planted around the base of a pine tree and it is spreading nicely and clearly bursting with color. You should find yarrow blooms from late April through July in our area.

There are plenty of good articles regarding the planting recommendations and so I will not go into detail here but a small hint. soil should be well-draining. I am beginning to wonder what plant other than a water lily that does not need well-draining soil!

The Almanac closes their article on yarrow stating, “*Yarrow is thought to symbolize everlasting love.*”

So, if you add a splash of color in your garden landscape. plant some yarrow!

If you want to show your garden landscape a little love. plant some yarrow!

2021 Texas Master Gardener Conference Report

by Linda Saxman, Master Gardener

This year the Texas Master Gardener Conference went virtual rather than the previous on site experience in Bryan/ College Station. As your delegate to the state organization, I “zoomed” in to the conference for both days. What a pleasant experience for several reasons! First, the cost to register was just \$50.00 which made access to the event much more affordable. Secondly, the presentations have been made available online for paid attendees for a period of several months to revisit. There were, like most conferences, too many interesting presentations and tours to choose from, so it is a plus to be able to go back and view the ones that had to be missed due to a schedule overlap. The tours

are sometimes physically challenging in person for some, so that concern becomes moot when they are virtually offered.

I am aware that the response from other participants was very positive. And, like most first time ventures, I feel certain that the few issues that were troublesome will be resolved if there is support for either a hybrid or virtual conference next year. I suspect that the follow-up of those who work option behind the scenes will entertain the virtual format for the future. Meeting face to face does provide opportunities that the virtual conference just never can, but I believe there is a definite void that the virtual conference can fill, so I support the continuation of it if at all feasible.



Home Grown Programs Expands to a Podcast

by Paul Winski, Texas A&M AgriLife County Extension Agent - Horticulture

Welcome to our first two episodes of the Home Grown podcast. If you have been following the Home Grown Lecture Series and/or receive the Home Grown Newsletter, we'd like to welcome you to our next offering, a monthly podcast. In Episode 1 - **Meet the Agents**, we spoke with the Harris County Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Agents: Paul, Brandi and Shannon. Get to

know your agents and learn about their passion for the Home Grown series and extension. In Episode 2 – **A Visit with Bill Barr**, Paul interviews a mentor, friend, and true plant propagator and nurseryman. Bill is now retired, but his knowledge of plant propagation and the nursery industry is all-encompassing.

<https://bit.ly/3w4cUAR>



The Home Grown podcast is presented by the Agriculture & Natural Resources (ANR) Unit of the Harris County Texas A&M AgriLife Extension office. The series provides information on urban agriculture / horticulture / gardening and ag literacy. The program focuses on topics that are relevant to the urban gardener.

The podcast can also be found at the following site: www.listennotes.com/podcasts/home-grown-podcast-paul-OM7PKqityX/



HOME GROWN LECTURE SERIES

JULY - AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 2021

THE LATEST & GREATEST IN BEDDING PLANTS FOR 2022

Paul Winski - Texas A&M AgriLife County Extension Agent-Horticulture

July 1, 2021 - 10:00 a.m.

GARDEN HUMMINGBIRD SAFETY

Brandi Keller - Texas A&M AgriLife County Extension Agent-Horticulture

July 15, 2021 - 10:00 a.m.

COOKING SAFELY OUTDOORS

Shannon Dietz - Texas A&M AgriLife County Extension Agent-Agriculture & Natural Resources

August 5, 2021 - 10:00 a.m.

FALL VEGETABLE GARDENING

Paul Winski - Texas A&M AgriLife County Extension Agent-Horticulture

August 19, 2021 - 10:00 a.m.

ENHANCING YOUR DISHES WITH FLAVORED BUTTERS

Shannon Dietz - Texas A&M AgriLife County Extension Agent-Agriculture & Natural Resources

September 2, 2021 - 10:00 a.m.

GROWING MICROGREENS AT THE WINDOWSILL

Brandi Keller - Texas A&M AgriLife County Extension Agent-Horticulture

September 16, 2021 - 10:00 a.m.

TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION

TO REGISTER FOR THIS FREE ONLINE SERIES,
PLEASE VISIT
[HTTPS://HOMEGROWN2021Q3.EVENTBRITE.COM](https://homegrown2021q3.eventbrite.com)

THE MEMBERS OF TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE WILL PROVIDE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IN PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES, EDUCATION, AND EMPLOYMENT TO ALL PERSONS REGARDLESS OF RACE, COLOR, SEX, RELIGION, NATIONAL ORIGIN, AGE, DISABILITY, GENETIC INFORMATION, VETERAN STATUS, SEXUAL ORIENTATION OR GENDER IDENTITY AND WILL STRIVE TO ACHIEVE FULL AND EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY THROUGHOUT TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE.

Growing with Plants and Nature

Growing with Plants and Nature offers children and their families opportunities for learning about gardening and nature.

Our Facebook Group is found at <http://www.facebook.com/groups/GPNVG>. It is filled with educational and fun information, games, puzzles and crafts. We also present a Family Zoom Event on a different topic each month. For more information about upcoming topics and dates, check out our Facebook Group.

Please register for our Family Zoom Events at ogd.harrishort@gmail.com. Use this email address for any questions, information or comments about all of our Growing with Plants and Nature activities.

Our June 8th program on Wildflowers was presented by Master Gardeners Celeste Germany and Jeanie Trippie. We learned that Texas has six state flowers, how to plant wildflowers and much more. Master Gardner, Jo Ann Stevenson, presented crafts, including how to use pressed flowers including how to make bookmarks and note cards.

We also learned:

- How many species of wildflowers in Texss
- Why Texas Wildflowers were important to Lady Bird Johnson



Our July 27th Family Zoom Event will be "From Seed to Seeds", presented by Susan Visinsky-Bracken and Linda Persse. They will describe the growth of a plant that begins when an incredible seed first absorbs the moisture that signals its enzymes to begin to grow a new plant. Roots, stems, leaves, blossoms and fruit follow. The final step is the production of more seeds that makes possible the repetition of the plants' life cycle.



- Seeds are vital for growing the plants we eat and the food grown for animals that are a part of our food supply.
- Leaves provide food for the plant through photosynthesis and are food for people and other creatures.
- The structure of leaves can provide clues for plant identification.
- Flowers provide food for pollinators and allow a plant to reproduce and create new seeds through pollination and fertilization.



Genoa Friendship Gardens Open Garden Days

Open the 3rd Monday of every month, 8:30 a.m. until 11:00 a.m., March thru October. Admission to the Exhibit Gardens is Free.

- Tour the variety of exhibits including vegetable, perennial, rose, tropical, desert/xeriscape, native, EarthKind and plant trial gardens.
- Meet and talk with a Master Gardener about our plantings, and they are happy to answer questions you may have.
- Contemplate the serenity of our gardens and catch a view of the water garden.
- Don't leave GFG until you have shopped the Greenhouse where a variety of plants are available for bargain prices until September.



HCMGA
1210 Genoa Red Bluff Road
Houston, TX 77034



Getting Down to Earth

Article and photos by Pam Longley, Master Gardener

News from Genoa Friendship Gardens

The GFG spotlight has landed on **Dianne Lawrence**, a team member with a great sense of humor and a positive, laid-back attitude about life. She lifts us all up!

Dianne was in the 2014 MG class and became the assistant to the lead at the Bear Creek Cylinder Garden, then Treasurer of the HCMGA for

two years and is now serving as a Board Director. A Virginia native, Dianne attained a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology from the University of Texas at Austin and a Master's Degree

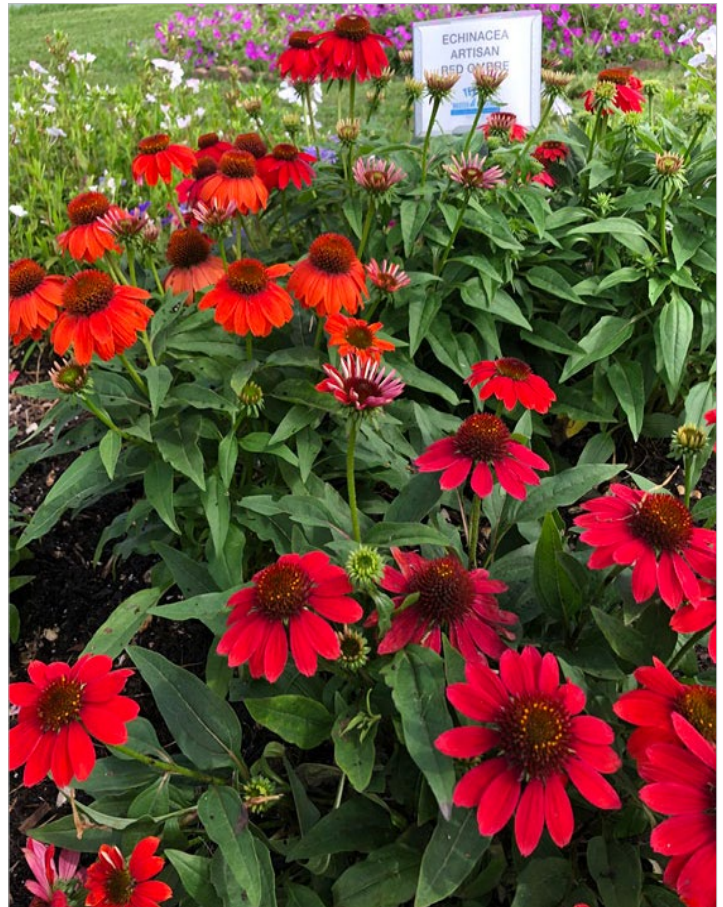


Dianne Lawrence

in Social Work from the University of Houston. She spent most of her career working with abused children in both the public and private sectors including Child Protective Services, Child Advocates and the emergency center at Texas Children's Hospital. She had a private psychotherapy practice for a number of years and worked in drug rehab with patients hospitalized in detox. Dianne is also on the beautification committee for Timbergrove Manor and helps choose the Yard of the Month. She has a pack of women friends whom she considers her extended family. She has played bridge and traveled with them for over 45 years.

Dianne says she loves working the HCMGA Plant Sales and talking to folks about plants and gardening. She recalls our pre-pandemic weekly trips to Luby's, Chili's or Olive Garden on I-45 South for lunch after working for hours at GFG and how we were never turned away even in our dirty, sweaty clothes. This was a real stretch for me, personally! We were such regulars at Luby's that we all knew which one of the faucets was always out of order in the ladies' restroom. Good times!

In other GFG news, **Rick Castagno** and **Doug McLeod** are hard at work in the vegetable production gardens. So far this year, 219 lbs of kale, chard, tomatoes, cucumbers, squash and peppers have been donated to the Heights Interfaith Ministry Food Pantry.



Spectacular Artisan Red Ombré Echinacea in one of the trial beds



Corpse plant



Evidence of Bark Lice - Beneficial insects dating back over 200 million years to the Permian Period

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Getting Down to Earth, *cont'd from pg. 10*

Christ the Good Shepherd Garden

Article and photos by Dale Hudson, Master Gardener

After the second wettest May on record (number of consecutive rainy days) for the Houston area the gardeners at CGS welcomed with some trepidation a drier June, what with the heat, humidity, and mosquitoes that accompany it. Never mind, June is prime harvest season for our veggie garden and the rewards are bountiful.

Readers last month may remember that we were winning the war against squash vine borers, but like many wars, victory in one battle does not win the war. Unfortunately, results in June favor the vine borers, but we had an impressive harvest while it lasted.

Same story with our onions. This month we wrap up another big year for both our red and white onion yield. Those beds were cleared, prepped, and 500 sweet potato slips are installed and looking good already.

Tomatoes are the biggest story for June. All six beds and all six varieties are producing now, and with the exception of a few questions around our Romas this year, the yield and quality has met all expectations.



Cindy Lestage takes a break from filling another bin with tomatoes.

And not forgetting the TXAgriLife trials in progress, the Seychelles green bean trial gave results equaling the reliable Kentucky Wonder garden standard. The Green Light cucumber trial gave excellent yields and production continues, so final results will be known next month. The nine pepper varieties have performed as expected and these peppers will continue to produce thru the coming hot days.



Mitzi and Anna Maria collect this week's bounty of trial peppers.

We harvest peppers once a week and record weight and count for each variety. The Candle Fire okra trial is underway. We've had good germination but first production is still weeks away. More on that next month.

This month and next will focus on completing our spring harvest, replenishing our compost inventory, tending our okra and pepper trials, and keeping the deer out of our sweet potato beds.



Brenda Fabian, Mike Chidalek, and Cindy Lestage work as a team to get 500 sweet potato slips in the ground.

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Getting Down to Earth, *cont'd from pg. 11*

Centennial Gardens

Article and photos by Becky Larkin and Nancy Graml, Master Gardeners

The plant giveaway at McGovern Centennial Gardens' Family Garden on May 22 was a great success. Guests were thrilled to have their own versions of both the common and exotic plants they see in McGovern Centennial Gardens: Henry Duelberg salvia, firespike; Asian basil, kadi patta, echinacea, hoja santa to name a few. Many times in the Family Garden we have to cut back overgrown plants and/or we take cuttings for future use. In fact, we were able to replace many plants we had lost in the freeze with those from the greenhouse; however, we still had plenty of leftovers to share. Jim Rath made labels out of old venetian blinds, and Judith Brocklehurst and Nancy Graml spent the workday labeling over 100 plants.

A very special Learning Tuesday on June 1 was well attended by Family Garden volunteers and McGovern Centennial Gardens staff gardeners to see landscape architect Charles Sadler of King Garden demonstrate how to prune our fruit tree espaliers.



Charles Sadler demonstrating espalier tree pruning



Charles Sadler, Judith Brocklehurst and Will Isbell working on the apple tree

Mr. Sadler consults in garden design across the country and specializes in espalier. The art of espalier, training shrubs and trees against a wall or trellis, brings delight to any landscape, although its original purpose was very practical as a space-saving technique for small gardens. Mr. Sadler also recommended Asian pear, persimmon, and fig trees as good choices for espaliers in our climate.



Will Isbell explaining types of plants to garden guests

The initial training of the plant is only the start of an espalier; the ongoing training as the plant grows is just as vital for success. Mr. Sadler explained espalier as a process of assessing the plant's growth: recognizing gaps and overgrowth. He insisted the health of the plant always comes first in this process. Since we were pruning apples and pears, it was also important to identify the fruit-bearing branches or spurs, so we can manage the fruit production and avoid pruning off all the fruit-bearing tips. We reduced the limbs growing out into the pathways and secured others to fill in gaps on the trellis with heavy duty landscape tape that can stretch as the trees grow. The Family Garden MG's, have been negligent about the ongoing pruning process and have several larger limbs that still need be cut back. Mr. Sadler recommended waiting to do larger limbs in December and January (dormancy period) to avoid stressing the trees further or attracting summer pests.

An espalier properly pruned is a stunning feature in any sunny garden, and Mr. Sadler brought our apple and pear trees back into beautiful espaliered designs.



Before the pear tree was pruned



After the pear tree was pruned

Green Thumb 2021 Gardening Series

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and the Harris County Master Gardeners are pleased to offer the FREE *Green Thumb Gardening Series of Lectures* now provided virtually twice a month. We have collaborated with the Harris County Public Library and Houston Community College. Join us for one or both!

Got questions? Go to hcmga.tamu.edu/ask-a-question/

Second Monday, 10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M. Houston Community College

Register in advance to receive the link: hccs.edu/community-learning-workshops
Second Monday of each month

January 11 – *Pruning Basics*

February 8 – *Spring Vegetable Gardening*

March 8 – *Composting*

April 12 – *Butterfly Gardens*

May 10 – *Integrated Pest Management*

June 14 – *Intro to Plumeria*

July 12 – *Fall Vegetable Gardening*

August 9 – *Gardening for Beginners*

September 13 – *Permaculture*

October 11 – *Plant Propagation*

Third Tuesday, 11:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M. Harris County Public Library Facebook Live

No reservation required. Watch on Facebook – facebook.com/harriscountyppl/live
Third Tuesday of each month

January 19 – *Pruning Basics*

February 16 – *Spring Vegetable Gardening*

March 16 – *Composting*

April 20 – *Butterfly Gardens*

May 18 – *Integrated Pest Management*

June 15 – *Intro to Plumeria*

July 20 – *Fall Vegetable Gardening*

August 17 – *Gardening for Beginners*

September 21 – *Permaculture*

October 19 – *Plant Propagation*



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. Individuals with disabilities, who require an auxiliary aid, service or accommodation in order to participate in any Extension activities, are encouraged to contact the Harris County Extension Office at 713-274-0950 for assistance five working days prior to the activity.



Ask a Master Gardener – Resuming Select In-Person Activities!

by Valerie Depew, Master Gardener

After a hiatus of over fifteen months due to the COVID pandemic, the Ask a Master Gardener program is back! We have resumed our Farmer's Market table hosting activities. These events are in compliance with COVID protocols, such as wearing masks and social distancing. However, with most of our volunteers now vaccinated, and with these

activities occurring outside, we are ready to take those first steps to get back out there and educate the public.

For Harris County MGs that are interested in volunteering for these events, the SignUp is available at: <https://signup.com/go/wBSYeQe>

The full AAMG schedule for July

- Sat., July 3** **Urban Harvest**, 3401 Westheimer, Houston, Texas – 7:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.
Garden Oaks Farmer's Market, 949 Wakefield, Houston, Texas – 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Mercer Arboretum, 22306 Aldine Westfield Rd, Humble, Texas 77338 – 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.
- Sat., July 10** **Tomball Farmer's Market**, 205 West Main St., Tomball, Texas – 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- Thurs., July 15** **Westchase Farmer's Market**, 10503 Westheimer Rd., Houston, Texas – 3 to 7 p.m.
- Sat., July 17** **Towne Lake Farmer's Market**, 9955 Barker Cypress Rd., Cypress, Texas 77433 – 12 to 3:30 p.m.
Mercer Arboretum, 22306 Aldine Westfield Rd, Humble, Texas 77338 – 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- Sat., July 24** **Memorial Villages Farmer's Market**, 10840 Beinhorn Rd., Houston, Texas – 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

*Visit the Harris County Master Gardeners
Facebook page for event details!*

www.facebook.com/HarrisCountyMasterGardeners



Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

in partnership with

Hermann Park Conservancy

are pleased to present

Master Gardeners in the City at McGovern Centennial Gardens

The Harris County Master Gardeners maintain the vegetable, herb, berry, and citrus beds in the Family Garden on Tuesday and Thursday mornings, so if you see one of us working there, feel free to say hi. We will resume educational activities in September.

McGovern Centennial Gardens at Hermann Park

1500 Hermann Drive

Houston, Texas 77004

When events resume: free tours and children's activity. "Adult workshop at 10:30 a.m.

No registration required.

These educational programs are FREE and OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.

Extension programs serve people of all ages regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, religion, disability or national origin.

The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas cooperating.

MG of the Month - *Lisa Rawl*

by Karen Breneman, Master Gardener

Congratulations to **Linda Rawl!**

Lisa grew up in Houston with a love of plants, encouraged by her family. Lisa's paternal grandfather was a South Carolina Extension agent and consultant to South Carolina peach growers; he gave her seeds to try from his garden every year. Lisa's parents were always willing to help her plant different



That's Lisa Rawl in that bucket! She thoroughly enjoyed inspecting and taking pictures of her neighborhood palm trees after the February freeze. Of course, she followed all the appropriate safety precautions.

flowers, herbs, fruits, and vegetables in the back yard, and didn't mind her filling her bedroom windowsill with an excessive number of houseplants. Lisa graduated from Texas A&M with a marketing degree, while making sure her schedule also included a variety of horticulture electives.

After college, Lisa worked in banking, went back to school graduating from the University of Houston Law Center, and practiced law for a few years. She met John Kane and it was love at first sight...they married eight months later and then started moving for John's career.

Lisa wanted to join HCMGA in the 1980s, but never had the opportunity to take the training course. So, when Lisa and John landed

in San Antonio, she immediately applied for Bexar County's Master Gardener training program and became certified in 1998. With BCMGA's emphasis on water-saving landscapes, Lisa developed a passion for native plants. She was a member of Bexar County's host committee for the 1999 International Master Gardener Conference, chaired BCMGA's tent committee for the annual San Antonio Livestock Show and Rodeo, and planned a city-wide plant exchange at San Antonio's first Festival of Flowers. Lisa also served as Interim Horticultural Associate and Executive Director of the BCMGA for nine months while the program was between horticulture agents.

Lisa and John next moved to New Jersey, where she completed the Hunterdon-Somerset County Master Gardener training program. Lisa loved the opportunity to exchange volunteer ideas introducing Hunterdon and Somerset Master Gardeners to the Ask A Master Gardener booth concept and in turn, they taught her the joys of a good Gardening Tag Sale.

Lisa, John, and their canine family moved back home to Houston in 2002 and she immediately joined HCMGA. She also became a Gulf Coast Master Naturalist for several years. Lisa organized her neighborhood's landscape committee 16 years ago and works with their professional landscape companies and certified arborists to manage the neighborhood's 125 acres of common areas. She also regularly answers her neighbors' gardening and nature questions.

As a Harris County Master Gardener, Lisa has completed specialist training in entomology and trees, and has volunteered in a variety of areas, including Extension research studies, the spring gardening tag sales and seed giveaways, and Green Thumb and Open Garden Day classes. Last summer, Lisa joined the newly formed Ask A Master Gardener Online Committee and has greatly enjoyed the online format and the opportunity to work with a terrific group of committee members.

Thank you for all your hard work, Lisa!

Nominate a Master Gardener of the Month

We want to recognize the people who are working hard to keep our organization functioning.

To let the Membership committee know about the volunteers deserving of the award, contact

Karen Breneman at kbreneman2017@gmail.com or phone at 281-463-2110 or 832-923-1712.

Thank you in advance for your nomination.

For Harris County Master Gardeners Only!

July 10th & 24th GFG Garden Workday!

8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

1210 Genoa Red Bluff Road, Houston TX



Appropriate Covid-19 protocols will be observed. As a reminder, please remain socially distanced at least six feet apart, wash your hands and use hand sanitizer. If working closer than six feet, a mask is required.

Genoa Friendship Garden Workdays are an opportunity for Interns and Master Gardeners to meet with other gardeners, and to learn by working in a variety of gardens. Test your practical gardening skills and learn from other gardeners' knowledge. Explore the various options of working in a collection of gardens with perennials, proven Earth-Kind winners, the fruit tree orchard, native plants, composting, and greenhouse activities.

Come and enjoy a few hours working in the garden with fellow Gardeners while gaining your required membership service hours. Work tasks will be outlined, and available to gardeners to seek their interest. Garden leads will be on hand to guide you through the tasks.



For some of you that have considered this a distance you couldn't commit to on a regular basis, it is *always* available if you want to be surrounded by old or new friends.

GFG also offers Mon./Wed. workdays (8:45 a.m. – Noon) for MGs who can attend during the week.

Please join us at our GFG Garden Workdays!

Evan J. Hopkins,
Master Gardener



Have Garden Questions?



We have developed a new form located at <https://hcmga.tamu.edu/ask-a-question/>

You can submit your question and up to three photos. Be sure your photos are focused and clear.



Please subscribe to our Harris County Horticulture YouTube page for access to recorded videos.

Thank you for your support.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel>



Master Gardeners and Interns who celebrate a birthday during *July* include the following. Wish them a **HAPPY BIRTHDAY** when you see them!

Nancy Ayres, Judith Brocklehurst, Terri Simon, Kenneth Couch, Susan Delcambre, Danny Dunn, Jennie Dunning, Alan Fisherman, Ralph Gingell, Earl Goodson, Georgia Lau, John Little, Milton Lonnee, Peter Martin, Katie Means, Judy Thomas and Diane Walker

If your name is missing, please check that your online profile is complete.




It's that time of year!

As you all know, we are in hurricane season until November 30th. Hopefully, storms will bypass our area this year. But, to make sure you and your families are prepared for an event, check out <https://www.nhc.noaa.gov/prepare/ready.php>.

Gardening Tools

This chart is a handy guide for knowing the best times to plant in Harris County.

|  Vegetable Garden Planting Dates for Harris County | Texas AgriLIFE Extension Service | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|-----|-----------|------------------------|-----|-----|-----|------|-------------|-------|-----|-----|
| | Harris County Office 713-274-0950 https://harris.agrilife.org/hort/ | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Planting times are for seeds unless otherwise noted | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sept | Oct | Nov | Dec |
| | Ideal Planting Time | | | Marginal Planting Time | | | | | | | | |
| Artichoke | Dormant Crowns | | | | | | | | Transplants | | | |
| Asparagus (dormant crowns) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Beans - Snap & Lima (Butterbean) | | | Snap&Lima | | | | | Snap | | | | |
| Beets | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Broccoli (transplants) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Brussels Sprouts (transplants) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cabbage (transplants) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cabbage - Chinese (transplants) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Carrots | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cauliflower (transplants) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Chard, Swiss | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Collards (transplants) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Corn | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cucumbers | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Eggplant (transplants) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Garlic | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Kale (transplants) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Kohlrabi (transplants) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Leeks | Transplants | | | | | | | | Seeds | | | |
| Lettuce - also Arugula, Mache, Sorrel | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Melon - Cantaloupe, Honeydew | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Mustard | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Okra | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Onion - bulbing | Transplants | | | | | | | | | Seeds | | |
| Onion - multiplying/bunching | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Peas - English & Snap | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Peas - Southern | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Pepper (transplants) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Potato - Irish (cut pieces) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Potato - Sweet (slips) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Pumpkin | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Radish | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Spinach | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Squash - Summer | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Squash - Winter | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Tomato | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Turnips | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Summer Greens - Malabar, Amaranth | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Watermelon | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Average Last Freeze Dates (Hobby 2/8, Bush 3/1) ↑ ↑ Average First Freeze Dates (Bush 11/30, Hobby 12/20) ↑ ↑
 Plants grown over winter may require protection during freezing weather. Seeds and transplants started in the heat of summer will benefit from shading during establishment.

Download the
Vegetable Garden
Planting Guide here!

TEXAS A&M AGRI LIFE EXTENSION

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE

EXTENSION SERVICE

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HOUSTON, TX 77040

713-274-0950

harris.agrilife.org/program-areas/hort/

hcmga.tamu.edu

Follow Us On Facebook, Twitter & Instagram

The Harris County Master Gardeners as well as Texas A&M AgriLife Extension - Harris County Horticulture are actively participating on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram offering tips, lists, news and plant advice almost daily. The best part, instead of locating planting guides or insect documents, and sale dates for individuals, you can add the HCMG site to your account and easily share information with others. This is a definitely a timesaver for these busy garden days and helps promote our organization. Reach us via these links:



www.facebook.com/HarrisCountyMasterGardeners

www.facebook.com/HarrisCountyHorticulture



<https://twitter.com/pharrishort>



<https://www.youtube.com/channel>



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

MG In-person Volunteer Gardening Opportunities

Learning Tuesdays at Centennial Gardens

As a reminder, every Tuesday, we will have a 30-minute lesson on a component of the garden for MGs and Interns. So you can get in an hour and a half of volunteer work and 30 minutes (sometimes more!) of continuing education. The workday begins at 9 a.m. We'll take a break mid-morning for a rest and the 30 minute class, then should finish up by 11 a.m. Email Becky Larkin directly, if you are interested in attending at rebeccalarkin117@gmail.com

Genoa Friendship Garden

1210 Genoa Red Bluff Road, Houston 77034

Weekday Workdays 8:30am - 12pm

Every Monday and Wednesday we are working in the gardens. Feel free to drop in to get service hours!

Weekend Workdays 8:00am - 12:00pm

Please join us every 2nd and 4th Saturday at our Weekend Workdays. These are opportunities for Interns and MGs to meet with other gardeners to learn and work in a variety of gardens while observing safe physical distancing.

Gardening on the North side at Christ the Good Shepherd Church (CGS)

Monday, Thursday and Saturday - 8:00 - 10:00 a.m.
CGS garden is located between TX 249 and I-45 just north of FM 1960 at 18511 Klein Church Rd, Spring, TX 77379.

All work tools and equipment are provided, including gloves, water, sunscreen, and bug spray. We welcome new faces to join our group. Contact **Dale Hudson** by phone or text at 832-659-7799, or email at UTVOL66@gmail.com.

The garden has 28 raised beds for vegetables and two uniquely designed raised beds for herbs. There is a heated greenhouse where veggies and herbs are started from seed. And, there is a specifically designed composting area where all of the compost and mulch requirements for the garden are met on site. Gardeners with special skills or interests can focus on a particular area and lead or learn in the setting they enjoy.

CGS garden is approved as a Texas AgriLife research site, and as such we conduct plant trials throughout the year.

Would you like to contribute to the Urban Dirt?

Send all questions and/or submissions to: UrbanDirt.harrishort@gmail.com