

# Henderson County Master Gardeners (HCMG) Newsletter



## Inside Dirt

### President's Message

**Yvonne Sparks, Master Gardener & President**



After extensive research and planning, the Henderson County Master Gardeners announce the start of a new horticulture project at the Henderson County Fair Park. This Fall, ground will be broken on the **HARVEST Garden**. Since his arrival in 2017, Spencer Perkins, Texas AgriLife Extension Agent, has seen a need to demonstrate how vegetables and fruits can be easily grown in the county. Questions about growing fruits and vegetables are the most asked inquiries he receives at his office and in the community.

Spencer consulted with the Master Gardener Executive Board, the HC Fair Park Board and Master Gardeners about starting an edible demonstration/research/education garden. A planning committee was formed and a plan developed. The plan was presented to the HCMGA membership at its August meeting.

As the plan evolved, land at Fair Park was designated, volunteers recruited and grant applications were submitted. Through the Spring and early Summer months plans were finalized along with a draft of the layout of the garden. Assisting Spencer in the process were Lydia Holley, Lynn Stroud and John Maloch.

The HARVEST Garden will have grape vines, with a variety of grapes to make wine, jams and jellies, juice and table varieties, many kinds of vegetables will be grown for both spring and fall gardens, herbs, rain water catchment, several varieties of fruit trees and berries and a hoop house. Each of these designated areas has or will have a MG volunteer responsible for the creation, installation, maintenance and harvesting of produce.

The initial funding for the garden was provided by Sara and Rik Drummond. This grant will provide for fencing, drip irrigation, repairs to the small storage building on the property, soil and lumber for the raised beds, and a shaded pavilion for education purposes. Additional expenses will be covered through donations and general operating funds of the HCMGA as needed.



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## President’s Message (cont.)

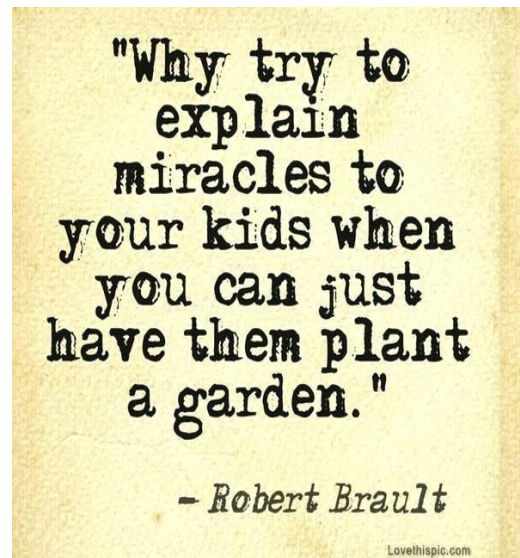
Spencer stated this garden will enhance the MG goals of providing horticultural information to the community. Currently, HCMGA has an ornamental garden, DREAM Garden, at the East Texas Arboretum and manages the Greenhouse on the TVCC campus in Athens. The HARVEST Garden will provide numerous educational opportunities for school children to visit and learn that tomatoes don’t “magically appear at Brookshire’s”. Educational programs will be planned with many hands-on experiences for the participants. Any excess produce will be donated to the Food Bank.

As Lydia Holley stated during the presentation, “give a man a fish and you feed him for a day, but teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.” Updates will be shared as the project is implemented and be on the lookout for program offerings beginning this fall.



Artist rendering of the Harvest Garden





### Calendar of Events

- 9/4-6—Vegetables (MG specialist training) San Antonio, TX
- **9/7—New Master Gardener Intern Class begins**
- **9/18—Library Series— Fall Efforts to Prepare Your Garden for Spring**
- 9/18-20—Texas Superstar (MG specialist training) Tyler, TX
- 9/19— HCMG Monthly Meeting
- **9/29—HCMG booth at Athens Fish Hatchery Fishing Expo (9am-4pm)**
- **10/4— An Evening with Neil Sperry (see page 4)**
- **10/4— HCMG Monthly Gardening Guide on sale**
- **10/13—HCMG booth at East Texas Arboretum Fall Festival (9am-4pm)**
- **10/16—Library Series— TBD**
- 12/5-7—Composter (MG specialist training) Rosenberg, TX
- 4/25-27, 2019— TMGA Conference in Victoria, TX

Events in **bold** are open to the public

Henderson County Master Gardeners monthly meetings (noon) are held at: Richard M. Hart and Johnny Morris Conservation Center 5601 County Road 4812 Athens, TX

## Henderson County Master Gardeners Fall Conference 2018



### Facts and Fantasies of Texas Gardening, An Evening with Neil Sperry

**Thursday, October 4, 2018**

**Athens Country Club**

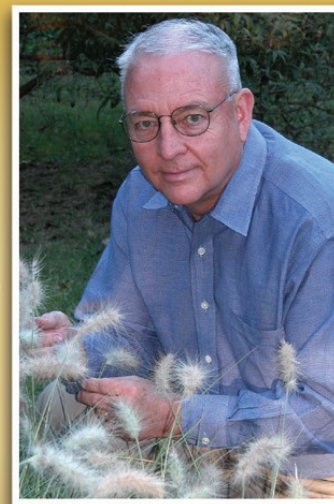
**Reception and Silent Auction: 6:00 p.m.**

**Dinner: 7:00 p.m. Tickets \$50 each**

**Tickets go on sale July 1, 2018**

**To purchase tickets visit our website:**

<https://hendersonmg.ejoinme.org/fallconference>



Limited Tickets Available

## *Facts and Fantasies of Texas Gardening, An Evening with Neil Sperry* October 4, 2018

Paula Winter, Master Gardener

Your local Master Gardener Association, HCMGA, is thrilled to host Mr. Neil Sperry for their fall conference this year. “Facts and Fantasies of Texas Gardening, An Evening with Neil Sperry” will be held Thursday, October 4, 2018 at the Athens Country Club, from 6 – 8 pm. Tickets are \$50 each, including dinner, and went on sale **July 1st**. A table can be reserved with the purchase of eight tickets. A limited number of tickets are available and they are expected to sell out soon. The tickets will be sold only online at a safe and secure website: <https://hendersonmg.ejoinme.org/fallconference>, and assistance is available from a Master Gardener, if needed, for online ticket purchases. A receipt will be emailed immediately after purchase.

Neil Sperry attended Texas A&M University and earned B.S and M.S degrees in horticulture from The Ohio State University. He hosted a radio program on KRLD 1080 AM for over 30 years. He now hosts a show on WBAP 820 AM radio. Additionally, he broadcasts to more than 50 stations statewide with his daily Plant Talk Texas and weekend Texas Lawn and Garden Hour.

Two of Sperry's books have become favorites of Texas gardeners. His *Complete Guide to Texas Gardening* (published 1982 with a second edition in 1991), has been popularly known as the "boot book," in reference to its cover art. It remained a primary reference for Texas gardeners until the publication of *Neil Sperry's Lone Star Gardening* in 2014. This 344-page book contains comprehensive plant listings and more than 800 photographs taken by Sperry, an avid photographer.

Sponsorships are also available for this event. There will be an event booklet and slide show on October 4 that will have ads from each one of our sponsors from Gold to Emerald (for more information on sponsorships, see the contact information at the end of this article). Recognition for all sponsors will appear as well on the HCMGA website: [txmg.org/Hendersonmg](http://txmg.org/Hendersonmg); Facebook - @HCmastergardener and in our newsletter, “Inside Dirt”. Any donation will be accepted and a tax exempt receipt will be issued. All ads need to be submitted by September 7, 2018.

For those who like to shop, the event will also include a silent auction, with wonderful items donated by local businesses. If you are a business interested in donating an item, please see the contact information at the end of this article.

This event is a fundraising event held each year to support the activities of HCMGA:

- DREAM Garden at East Texas Arboretum – HCMGA volunteer;
- Children’s Garden – Consultants available for schools and non-profit community gardens;
- Speakers Bureau – Available to non-profit groups at no charge;
- Greenhouse at Trinity Valley Community College – HCMGA volunteer and grow plants;
- Library Series – Monthly series of free lectures on horticulture topics;
- Summer Series – Free to the public; guest speakers from all across the state;
- Booths at community events where information is handed out and questions answered;
- Provide weekly articles for local newspapers and publish a newsletter 6 times a year.

All of these activities are held free of charge for the community. In 2018, HCMGA was recognized by the Texas A & M Agrilife Extension Service for First Place, Outstanding Organization; First Place, Learn at the Library Series; and Second Place, Outstanding Individual – Jeanne Brown.

Please consider supporting HCMGA by purchasing a ticket to our event, buying a silent auction item(s) and/or purchasing a sponsorship.

Henderson County Master Gardeners Association  
Henderson County Courthouse, 100 E. Tyler Street, Suite 300, Athens, TX 75751  
903-675-6130 Email: [cdurham0224@gmail.com](mailto:cdurham0224@gmail.com) or [emurphy8@msn.com](mailto:emurphy8@msn.com)

## Facts and Fantasies of Texas Gardening, An Evening with Neil Sperry October 4, 2018



### 2018 Sponsorship Levels



**\$1,000**

#### **Emerald**

Four reserved tickets to event October 4, 2018 and two autographed books  
Recognition/ad space in event booklet (Inside front/back cover or other premium location)  
Recognition during event, HCMGA Facebook, website, newsletters  
Opportunity to distribute business coupons/gifts



**\$500**

#### **Diamond**

Two reserved tickets to event October 4, 2018 and one autographed book  
Recognition/ad space in event booklet – Full page ad  
Recognition during event, HCMGA Facebook, website, newsletters  
Opportunity to distribute business coupons/gifts



**\$250**

#### **Platinum**

Recognition/ad space in event booklet – 2/3 page ad  
Recognition during event, HCMGA Facebook, website, newsletters



**\$100**

#### **Gold**

Recognition/ad space in event booklet – 1/3 page ad  
Recognition during event, on HCMGA Facebook, website, newsletters



**\$ 50**

#### **Silver**

Recognition during event, on HCMGA Facebook, website, newsletters

### **Donations to Silent Auction**

Recognition during event, HCGA Facebook, website, newsletters



For more

Claudia Durham, [cdurham0224@gmail.com](mailto:cdurham0224@gmail.com) or call 214-507-8583

Elizabeth Murphy, [emurphy8@msn.com](mailto:emurphy8@msn.com) or call 719-649-2320

Paula Winter, [jpwinter@embarqmail.com](mailto:jpwinter@embarqmail.com) or call 817-988-2038

information, please contact:

Henderson County Master Gardeners Association is a 501(c) (3) organization  
You can sign up to be a sponsor or purchase tickets online!

<https://hendersonmq.ejoinme.org/fallconference>



## HCMG Monthly Gardening Guide

The HCMG intern class of 2018 has created the **HCMGA Monthly Gardening Guide**. This guide is filled with information about what you need to do in your garden month by month, with pages for notes so you can personalize the guidebook to your own garden.

The guide is over 80 pages packed with information and pictures. The spiral bound book is divided into months and is approx. 5" x 8". Heavy glossy card stock front and back covers with clear plastic covers over the card stock create a guide that will last for years.

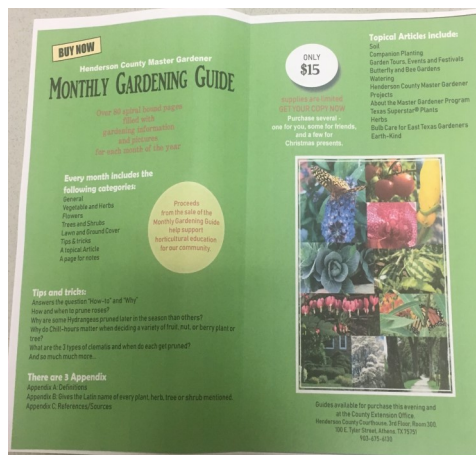
We will be selling these guide books to Master Gardeners and as educational sources to the public. Priced at only \$15, you are sure to find the guidebook will become an invaluable source for you to refer to year after year.

### Every month of the guide is divided into the following categories:

- General
- Vegetable and Herbs
- Flowers
- Trees and Shrubs
- Lawn and Ground Cover
- Tips & tricks
- A topical Article
- Page for notes

### Topical Articles include:

- Soil
- Companion Planting
- Garden Tours, Events and Festivals
- Butterfly and Bee Gardens
- Watering
- Henderson County Master Gardener Projects
- About the Master Gardener Program
- Texas Superstar® Plants



- Herbs
- Bulb Care for East Texas Gardeners
- Earth-Kind
- Texas Wildflowers

### Tips and tricks: Answers the question "How-to" and "Why"

- Want to know how and when to prune roses?
- Why are some Hydrangeas pruned later in the season than others?
- Why do Chill-hours matter when deciding a variety of fruit, nut, or berry plant or tree?
- What are the 3 types of clematis and when do each get pruned?
- And so much more...

### Appendix includes:

- Appendix A: Definitions
- Appendix B: Latin name of every plant, herb, tree or shrub mentioned in the guide

We hope you enjoy our book as much as our intern class has had putting it together! The guide can be purchased at the Fall Conference (see page 3 for details)

## HCMG Projects

**DREAM Garden-** The Henderson County Master Gardener Association (HCMGA) maintains a garden at the East Texas Arboretum.

**Children's Garden-** The HCMGA began a program to help educate the children at South Athens Elementary school about gardening and growing delicious and nutritious food.

**Library Series-** Educational presentations are hosted by the HCMGA on the third Tuesday of each month. These programs are open to the public in Athens at the Clint W. Murchison Memorial Library.

**Harvest Garden** – We are excited about our vision for a new harvest garden. More to come soon regarding the ground breaking!

**Greenhouse**– The HCMGA maintains a greenhouse located at Trinity Valley Community College. This greenhouse allows us to educate others and grow plants that are sold at our annual spring plant sale.

**Plant Sale**— The HCMGA hosts an annual plant sale in the spring which is open to the public. Master Gardeners propagate and grow different varieties of plants and trees. This event is a major fundraiser for the organization.

**Summer Series**—Workshops are provided in the summer months in an effort to share expertise and educate the public on various gardening topics.

**Fall Conference**— The largest fundraiser for the HCMGA, this conference includes guest speakers, a raffle/silent auction and a dinner

## Dividing Your Perennial Plants

David Bickerstaff, Master Gardener

Discover one way to keep your perennial garden in tiptop shape—by dividing plants. The vast majority of perennials need dividing roughly every three to five years to maintain plant vigor. When dividing perennials, timing and technique are important. Perennial plants are healthiest and most productive when they are young and have room to spread.

### When do I divide a plant?

My rule of thumb is when it looks its best, divide it at the end of that year. Watch for the early signs of trouble: when the center of the plant has smaller leaves, fewer flowers, and weaker blooming stalks than the outer edges, or when the plant runs out of growing room on its edges and has nowhere to go but into neighboring plants.

I prefer to divide in the fall rather than in the spring because the plants have more time to set new roots before growing up into the heat. At the end of this article is a list of several perennials and whether to divide in the spring or summer.

### How do I divide my perennial plants?

In the fall you can cut the plant back before dividing. Start digging at the drip line to minimize damage. The roots will generally extend that far, so digging there lets you lift the plant with most of its roots intact. Dig a trench around the clump, cleanly severing any roots, then cut at an angle down and under the clump from various points around the outer edge until you can lever the plant out of the hole. For large, heavy plants, you may have to first dig the trench, then slice straight down through the center of the plant as if it was a pie, halving or quartering the clump before under-cutting and lifting it.

Keep the roots cool and moist until you replant. If you remove a wheelbarrow full of perennials, then you should put a wheelbarrow full of compost back into that site before replanting to renew the soil, stay ahead of pest problems, and maintain fertility. Without additions, the plants will not have the advantage of renewed, fertile soil and the bed will settle after planting, putting the plants at a disadvantage in terms of drainage and air circulation.

After dividing, replant pieces that are, at most, 20 to 25 percent of the original clump. Smaller sections grow more vigorously and tend to produce stronger, longer-lasting blooms. Dividing a hosta, for example, into pieces with about seven growing points will yield the best results. Perennials multiply exponentially—one stem is likely to triple or quadruple itself each year. So if all you do is halve an overgrown clump this year, it will more than double in a season and need dividing again the next year.

Place a division into a hole that is at least as wide as its roots when spread out. Don't turn a root tip up rather than down or curl it back around on itself to fit it into an undersize hole, because you'll defeat the plant's natural regrowth mechanisms. Root tip growth is regulated in part by chemicals flowing down from the tips of leafy stems to the roots. As in all flows, gravity is involved, so if you plant a root tip up when it was down, the normal flow is interrupted. At least temporarily, that root tip will not grow as vigorously as it could.

When you dig up a perennial, you will see that it fits into one of **five basic root types**: roots that form clumps or offsets, surface roots, underground running roots, taproots, or woody roots. How you proceed on dividing the plant depends on the plant's root type. See the following for a guide by root type.





## Dividing Your Perennial Plants (cont.)

### Offset Roots

To divide a plant whose roots form offsets (small plants growing at the base of a larger one), snap the connection between any of the sections to obtain a piece with ample roots and three or more growing points (or “eyes”). Some denser clumps may have to be cut apart. Plants that form offsets include asters, coneflowers, hostas, tickseeds.

### Surface Roots

Some perennials have roots that run on or just below the surface of the soil. They form new crowns and roots when they reach open spaces or make contact with the soil. If you cut between any of the stems as you would cut a piece of sod from a lawn, you will have a division with its own stems and roots. Plants with surface roots include bee balms, black-eyed Susans, creeping sedums, and creeping speedwells.

### Taproots

Plants that have taproots can be divided by using a sharp knife to slice down the length of the root. Every piece that has at least one eye, some of the taproot, and a few side roots is a viable division. Plants that have taproots include balloon flowers, butterfly weeds, cushion sparges, and Oriental poppies.

### Underground Running Roots

Underground running roots can develop suckers as they grow beyond the shade of the mother clump. These suckers can be cut away from the main plant, or you can dig up the main plant and cut away any piece with an eye or sucker already forming. Plants with underground running roots include hardy geraniums, Japanese anemones, ostrich fern, and plume poppies.

### Woody Roots

Woody perennials often form roots when stems rest on the ground or are buried by gradually accumulating mulch. Make a new plant by simply cutting between the rooted stem and the mother plant. Plants that have woody roots include candytufts, euonymus, lavenders, and sages.

### Timing is Important

When dividing perennials, timing and technique are important. And while many perennials can be divided in either early spring or early fall, some are very picky. The optimal time to divide specific perennials is denoted by (S) for spring and (F) for early fall. A single asterisk indicates that division should take place after the plant flowers. Two asterisks mean that protective gloves should be worn when dividing the plant, since its sap may irritate skin. The following pages offer a guide regarding the timing of dividing your perennials.



## Dividing Your Perennial Plants (cont.)

### Divide these plants by hand

Blanket flowers (*Gaillardia* spp.) S/F  
 Bleeding hearts (*Dicentra* spp.) S\*  
 Bugleweed (*Ajuga reptans*) S/F  
 Columbines (*Aquilegia* spp.) S/F  
 Coral bells (*Heuchera* spp.) S/F  
 Cranesbills (*Geranium* spp.) S/F  
 Creeping Jenny (*Lysimachia nummularia*) S/F  
 Deadnettle (*Lamium maculatum*) S/F  
 Epimediums (*Epimedium* spp.) S\*/F  
 Foam flower (*Tiarella cordifolia*) S/F  
 Forget-me-not (*Myosotis sylvatica*) S\*/F  
 Hellebores (*Helleborus* spp.) S\*/F  
 Jacob's ladder (*Polemonium caeruleum*) S/F  
 Lady's mantle (*Alchemilla mollis*) S/F

Lamb's ears (*Stachys byzantina*) S/F  
 Moss pink (*Phlox subulata*) F  
 Primroses (*Primula* spp.) S\*  
 Pulmonarias (*Pulmonaria* spp.) S\*/F  
 Pussytoes (*Antennaria dioica*) S/F  
 Sea thrift (*Armeria maritima*) S/F  
 Speedwell (*Veronica spicata*) S/F  
 Spurge (*Euphorbia myrsinites*) S/F\*\*  
 Stonecrop (*Sedum spectabile*) S/F  
 Sweet woodruff (*Galium odoratum*) F  
 Violets, pansies (*Viola* spp.) S/F  
 Wormwood (*Artemisia ludoviciana*) S/F  
 Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*) S/F

### Divide these plants with a spade or pitchfork

African lilies (*Agapanthus* cvs.) S/F  
 Anemone (*Anemone* × *hybrida*) S  
 Asters (*Aster* spp.) S  
 Bee balm (*Monarda didyma*) S/F  
 Bellflowers (*Campanula* spp.) S/F  
 Big bluestem grass (*Andropogon gerardii*) S/F  
 Black-eyed Susans (*Rudbeckia* spp.) S/F  
 Blood grass (*Imperata cylindrica*) S/F  
 Cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*) S/F  
 Catmint (*Nepeta* × *faassenii*) S/F  
 Coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*) S/F  
 Daisy (*Leucanthemum* × *superbum*) S/F  
 Daylilies (*Hemerocallis* spp.) S/F  
 Forest grass (*Habenochloa macra*) S/F  
 Fountain grass (*Pennisetum alopecuroides*) S/F  
 Garden phlox (*Phlox paniculata*) S/F  
 Gaura (*Gaura lindheimeri*) S/F  
 Goldenrods (*Solidago* spp.) S/F  
 Gunnera (*Gunnera manicata*) S/F  
 Hostas (*Hosta* spp.) S/F  
 Japanese painted fern (*Athyrium nipocum* 'Pictum')  
 S/F  
 Jerusalem sage (*Phlomis russeliana*) S/F

Lemon balm (*Melissa officinalis*)  
 Ligularia (*Ligularia dentata*) S/F  
 Masterwort (*Astrantia major*) S/F  
 Monkshood (*Aconitum napellus*) S  
 Penstemons (*Penstemon* spp.) S/F  
 Perennial sage (*Salvia* × *superba*) S\*/F  
 Pinks (*Dianthus plumarius*) S/F  
 Poppies (*Papaver* spp.) F  
 Red hot pokers (*Knifophia* spp.) S/F  
 Sedge (*Carex morrowii*) S/F  
 Siberian iris (*Iris sibirica*) F  
 Silver grasses (*Miscanthus* spp.) S/F  
 Snakeroot (*Cimicifuga racemosa*) S/F  
 Switch grass (*Panicum virgatum*) S/F  
 Tickseed (*Coreopsis verticillata*) S/F  
 Turtlehead (*Chelone glabra*) S/F  
 Yarrow (*Achillea filipendulina*) S/F

## Dividing Your Perennial Plants (cont.)

### Slice apart woody crowns with a handsaw

- Amsonias (*Amsonia* spp.) S/F
- Astilbes (*Astilbe* spp.) S/F
- Bear’s breeches (*Acanthus spinosus*) S/F
- Doll’s eyes (*Actaea pachypoda*) S
- Foxtail lilies (*Eremurus* spp.) F
- Gayfeather (*Liatris spicata*) S/F
- Goatsbeard (*Aruncus dioicus*) S/F
- Joe Pye weed (*Eupatorium maculatum*) S/F
- Lilyturf (*Liriope spicata*) S/F
- Male fern (*Dryopteris filix-mas*) S/F
- Meadowsweets (*Filipendula* spp.) S/F
- Peonies (*Paeonia* cvs.) F
- Solomon’s seal (*Polygonatum odoratum*) S/F
- Wild indigo (*Baptisia australis*) S\*/F



### Cut up rhizomes and tubers with a knife

- Arum (*Arum italicum*) F
- Bergenia (*Bergenia cordifolia*) S/F
- Caladiums (*Caladium* spp.) S
- Calla lily (*Zantedeschia aethiopica*) S
- Cannas (*Canna* spp.) S
- Corydalis (*Corydalis lutea*) S/F
- Dahlias (*Dahlia* cvs.) S
- Elephant ears (*Alocasia* spp.) S
- Irises (*Iris* spp.) F
- Lady fern (*Athyrium filix-femina*) S/F
- Lily-of-the-valley (*Convallaria majalis*) S/F
- Rhubarb (*Rheum palmatum*) S
- Rodgersia (*Rodgersia pinnata*) S/F
- Spurge (*Euphorbia griffithii*) S/F\*\*
- Wild ginger (*Asarum europaeum*) S



### These perennials are best not divided

- Alyssums (*Alyssum* spp.)
- Candytuft (*Iberis sempervirens*)
- Carnation (*Dianthus caryophyllus*)
- Delphinium (*Delphinium* × *elatum*)
- Euphorbia (*Euphorbia characias* ssp. *wulfenii*)
- Foxgloves (*Digitalis* spp.)
- Garden sage (*Salvia officinalis*)
- Geraniums (*Pelargonium* spp.)
- Lavender cotton (*Santolina chamaecyparissus*)
- Lavenders (*Lavandula* spp.)
- Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*)
- Russian sage (*Perovskia atriplicifolia*)
- Sea hollies (*Eryngium* spp.)
- Silvermound (*Artemisia schmidtiana*)
- Sweet pea (*Lathyrus latifolius*)





## Selected Gardening Tips

### September

- ◆ Folks will want to pay attention to lawn care this month. The hot, dry weather could encourage chinch bugs which can turn St. Augustine into what looks like a drought-stricken lawn.
- ◆ September is also the time to apply lawn fertilizer to keep the grass healthy and growing up to first frost. Fall fertilized lawns are better equipped to make it through the winter and resume growth next spring than lawns that receive no fertilizer.
- ◆ Lawns that suffered dieback from drought, chinch bugs or disease can be safely sodded in September. It's too late to try to establish Bermuda or Centipede from seed, but ryegrass and tall fescue can be sown toward the end of the month.
- ◆ Fall is also a good time to test your soil, especially to determine the pH which tells you the acidity of the soil. Strongly acidic soils are corrected with an application of lime. Keep in mind that it takes a few months for the lime to react with your soil, and that you may need to reapply lime every few years.
- ◆ Sow spring wildflower (like bluebonnets) seed now. For more reliable, uniform seed germination of our State flower, purchase acid-treated bluebonnet seed. This treatment pits the seed coat, allowing nearly 100% germination in one to two weeks.
- ◆ Purchase spring blooming bulbs as soon as they become available in the garden centers, or mail order special varieties .
- ◆ Plant beets, broccoli (plants), Brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower (plants), Swiss chard, collards, kale, garlic, lettuce, mustard, parsley, English peas, radish, spinach and turnips this month. Soak seed furrows with water before sowing seed, and mulch lightly. Water the rows daily in hot weather to promote germination and growth of young seedlings. Treat cabbage, broccoli, and cauliflower with Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) as needed to prevent damage from cabbage loopers.

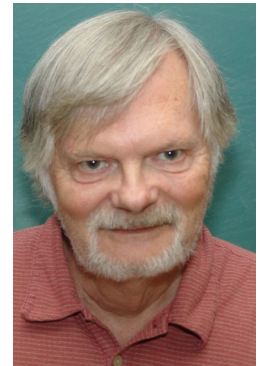
### October

- ◆ October is bulb buying month. They are in fresh supply, and provide welcome late winter and early spring color for the yard. Bulbs which can be planted right after purchasing include daffodils and the smaller flowered jonquils, species tulips and grape hyacinths. The larger showy tulips and hyacinths need to be refrigerated at least 45 to 60 days to provide enough chilling to bloom properly next year. Plant them in late November or early December.
- ◆ The most popular of the cool season flowering annuals to be set out now are pansies.
- ◆ Besides pansies, other bedding plants that can be planted now include pinks, dianthus, flowering cabbage and kale, snapdragons, violas, and calendulas.
- ◆ October is also a great month to divide and plant spring-blooming perennials like native columbines, daylilies, phlox, Louisiana and bearded irises, dianthus, coreopsis, coneflowers and daisies. If you have extras after dividing, give to or trade with a gardening friend or neighbor.
- ◆ The fall season is also a perfect time to establish new trees and shrubs. Plants set out now undergo less stress, and their roots have months to grow and become established before spring growth begins and summer heat and drought arrive next year.
- ◆ Vegetables that can be transplanted or seeded in early October include beets, Brussels sprouts (plants), Swiss chard, collards, kale, lettuce, mustard, radish, spinach and turnips.

Visit [easttexasgardening.tamu.edu](http://easttexasgardening.tamu.edu) for a more complete list of monthly tips.

## A Little Math Can Go A Long Way

**Bob Erickson, Master Gardener**



Although I can hear people cringe at the title of this article, the truth is a little basic high school math can be very beneficial in the garden. It isn't rocket science by any means but knowing a couple of numbers about your garden can improve results and possibly save money.

**Area:** How big is your garden? This is a primary number that is applicable for everything from planning, planting, watering, and fertilizing. Simply stated, it is the measure of the size of your garden plot usually stated in square feet (area is always stated as square something: feet, yards, miles, or whatever units you measure it in). In a square or rectangular garden, it is simply the length times the width. If you have a round or an odd shaped garden, an estimate using the length times width is still probably accurate enough. But to be specific, the area of a circle or an almost circle is  $\pi r^2$ . Assume pi is 3.14 and the r is the radius of the circle. For most uses, getting a close number is more than adequate. It makes little difference if it is 32 square feet or 32.5 square feet.

Where is this important? First, your soil test will recommend nutrients based on 1000 square feet. If you have a 200 square foot garden, divide the recommended nutrient number by 5. If it is 100 square feet, divide the number by 10. In addition, when you are planning or planting your garden, if you know the area, you can lay out what plants to place in various locations. A tomato, lettuce, or cabbage usually required 1 square foot of area. Onions, garlic, and others require less space and you can plan accordingly. Knowing the area of your garden is a basic fact that you need to be aware of.

**Volume:** Volume is a little more complicated but is critical for those using raised beds or when adding additional material to your garden. It is also critical when planning the watering schedule for your plants. Volume is simply the area times the depth you are working with. Gardening directly in the ground doesn't require understanding soil volume. However, if you want to add two inches of compost or mulch, then volume becomes important. A 4 X 8-foot bed is 32 square feet. If you want to add 2 inches of compost, you multiply 32 times  $\frac{1}{6}$ . This tells you that you need just over 5 cubic feet of compost or mulch. This is one of the issues to remember, in area and volume, you always multiply the same units of measure; feet times feet, inches times inches, and so forth. When you add a different measure (like inches), you have to convert it to the other dimensions. In this case, 2 inches is  $\frac{1}{6}$  of a foot (12 inches). This is most important for raised beds when you buy your initial fill material or add to it.

Understanding volume is also very important in planning watering but there is another element involved. If you decide that you want to water 1-inch per watering, the calculation used about is the same. 32 square feet times  $\frac{1}{12}$  foot. The answer is 2.67 cubic feet. But how much water is 2.67 cubic feet of water? The conversion factor for this is 7.48 gallons/cu ft for water. Therefore, you need to put 19.97 gallons of water or 20 gallons. Like I said, the difference in the numbers is not really significant. You can always err slightly on the over side to be safe.

## A Little Math Can Go A Long Way (cont.)

One of the most confusing things for most gardeners is that fertilizer companies use a wide variety of recommendations for applying their products. Some do it by a certain amount row, some suggest a measure like tablespoons of gallons, or pounds. Simply adjusting their suggestions based on your actual area and volume will get you where you need to get. Watering takes a little more guess work. The safest way is to put a water meter on your hose or line but that can be expensive. If you use a sprinkler, put several tuna cans around the garden. When they fill up, you have put down about an inch of water. Drip irrigation can be estimated by counting your emitters and knowing their flow. If you put out ten 1-gallon emitters in your garden, they will put out ten gallons in an hour. So, you need to have it one for two hours to achieve your watering goal.

There are other math issues involved but these are the main ones. The same applies to larger gardens like acreages but the arithmetic process is the same; the numbers are just larger. The only other thing to be concerned about is that different plants and soil types may require different frequency and volumes of nutrients and water. Do your research on your plants and give them what they need.





## Honey and Bees— Facts and Fiction

**David Bickerstaff, Master Gardener**

My interests in gardening extended to bees for several reasons (1) the bee population is declining, (2) pollination by the bees will increase production of fruits and vegetables and (3) they are amazing creatures! The sweet results of their hard labor is wonderful honey. Below I have attempted to provide some interesting facts about bees and honey.

### **How do bees make honey?**

Bees start making honey, which is their food, by visiting flowers. They collect a sugary juice called nectar from the blossom by sucking it out with their tongues. They store it in what's called their honey stomach, which is different from their food stomach. When they have a full load, they fly back to the hive. There, they pass it on through their mouths to other worker bees who chew it for about half an hour. It's passed from bee to bee, until it gradually turns into honey. Then the bees store it in honeycomb cells, which are like tiny jars made of wax. The honey is still a bit wet, so they fan it with their wings to make it dry out and become more sticky. When it's ready, they seal the cell with a wax lid to keep it clean. Bees visit 2 million flowers to produce approx. a pound of honey.

### **Is honey sweeter than sugar?**

Honey is sweeter than table sugar. Even so, Honey is all natural. Whereas, table sugar is refined and processed from sugar beets or sugar cane. A teaspoon of honey has 21 calories, compared to 16 for sugar.

### **Will honey help my allergies?**

Honey contains pollen and because of that, some people eat local honey for relief from hay fever and other allergies. The idea is similar to how an allergy shot works. The problem is that the type of pollen in honey are rarely the types of pollen that make people sneeze.

### **How long have people used honey?**

Rock art in Spain from 6000 B.C. shows people harvesting honey. Beeswax from around 8000 B.C. was found in cooking pots in Turkey.

### **Can honey help me heal?**

The use of honey to treat wounds and burns has been part of traditional medicine for centuries. It has natural compounds that fight bacteria, promote healing, prevent infections and ease swelling. To be safe, buy medical grade honey from a drugstore and consult your doctor.

### **How long does honey last?**

Honey has an amazing shelf life. Scientists found pots of honey in Egyptian tombs that were thousands of years old— and still safe to eat. It's low moisture, strong acids, and antibacterial compounds make it almost impossible to spoil as long as it is tightly sealed.

## Honey and Bees– Facts and Fiction (cont.)

### Why is the honey found in the grocery store clear as compared to most honey purchased locally?

The types of honey purchased in stores have been processed at a factory and are normally blended honeys. During the process the honey is heated and filtered. Local honey is typically unfiltered and based on the flowers in the area. The taste and color of honey will change slightly based on the flowers:

- Sweet clover, clover and alfalfa will produce a light, mild honey
- Citrus trees, wild sage, basswood will produce a darker, stronger honey
- Buckwheat will produce some of the darkest honey

### Do bees communicate?

Honey bee workers perform a series of movements, often referred to as the “waggle dance”, to teach other workers the location of food source more than 150 yards from the hive.

### How many bees are in a hive?

There can be between 20,000 and 60,000 bees in a typical hive. Nurse bees care for the young, while the queen’s attendant workers bathe and feed her. Guard bees stand watch at the entrance. Construction workers build the beeswax foundation in which the queen lays eggs and the workers store the honey. Undertakers carry the dead from the hive. Foragers must bring back enough pollen and nectar to feed the entire community.



## I Love Piet Oudolf



**Lydia Holley, Master Gardener**

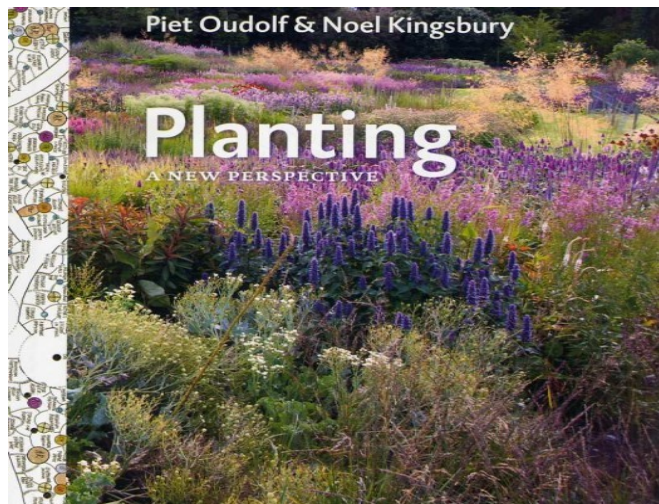
There, I've said it! I love Piet Oudolf, although I've never even met him. Who is Piet Oudolf? He is an influential Dutch garden designer, nurseryman and author. He is a leading figure of the "New Perennial" movement, using bold drifts of herbaceous perennials and grasses which are chosen at least as much for their structure as for their flower color. It was seeing photos of Oudolf's designs that made me fall in love with ornamental grasses, and because of him that I have added several different types of grasses to my garden.

Although many gardeners look forward to spring, and I do too, autumn always makes my heart flutter when the grasses send up their plumes and I see those beautiful seed heads blowing in the breeze. I look forward to autumn's beauty as much as I do spring's.

Planted along the perimeter of my garden are muhly grasses, zebra grasses, several different fountain grasses and some other grass types. I have even added 'Blue Dune' (*Leymus arenarius*). Known for its invasive properties, I know in my heart I will come to regret planting this particular plant in the ground instead of a pot where it could be controlled. But every time I see this electric-baby-blue grass shining as the focal point in the middle of my garden, I forgive it - for now at least.

Electric-blue lyme grass with pink muhly grasses, yellow-striped zebra grasses, and the white seed heads of fountain grasses may sound more like the beginnings of a baby nursery than a garden, but shows what a range of colors grasses can provide to the garden. Although grasses look spectacular in large gardens planted in masses, if you have only room for one or two, they can also be stunning growing in pots. They come not only in a wide variety of colors, but also a wide variety of forms and sizes. In my garden, I have added a number of flowers in between the grasses, such as daylilies, lantana, butterfly bushes, milkweeds, pavonia, carpet-type roses, liatris, coneflowers, salvias, sedums, and many others, along with numerous bulbs, so I can enjoy the fluttering wings of butterflies in and amongst the lovely grasses swaying to and fro. Oh, be still, my heart!

If you want to see some of Piet Oudolf's designs, just do a computer search. Or visit New York City's High Line garden, Chicago's Lurie Garden, and coming soon, Oudolf Garden Detroit. One of his many books is shown below. But be forewarned - you just might fall in love!





## Spencer's Talk

### Spencer Perkins, Henderson County Extension Agent



Fall is coming our way and I am ready for the cooler weather! There are a lot of neat events coming from the various committees of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in Henderson County. You can see above of the many great opportunities that the HCMGA have for you, I also wanted to share two events being held by some of the other committees in **Henderson County**.


The Henderson County Beef Cattle Committee will be hosting the **2018 Winter Pasture Seminar September 18th**. The committee is excited to have two guest speakers, Kevin Johnson and Jason Faubion, both assistant ranch managers at TCU. Topics will include winterizing the cowherd as well as forage strategies. This year's seminar will be held at the Cook Ranch located at 9501 County Road 4613, Athens, TX 75752. Registration will begin at 5:30 p.m. and presentation to begin at 6:00 p.m. Admission will be \$15.00 per person, a barbeque dinner will be provided, seminar will also grant 1 CEU for those with a private applicator license.

The Henderson County Wildlife Committee will be hosting the **2018 Fall Rendezvous on September 25th**. This year will be focused on youth in the outdoors and will have a great speaker discussing all the opportunities for the youth to get involved in the outdoors. The Rendezvous will be at the Texas Freshwater Fisheries at the Hart Morris Conservation Center located at 5601 CR 4812 Athens, TX 75752. Registration will begin at 6:00 p.m. with dinner and presentations to follow.



Bring on the cooler weather and some shade!



## Winter Pasture Seminar

Tuesday, September 18th

sponsored by Henderson County Beef Cattle Committee and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

The Cook Ranch  
9501 County Road 4613 Athens, TX 75752

Registration begins at 5:30 pm Presentations begin at 6:00 pm  
\$15 per person



**Winterizing the Cowherd—From a health perspective**  
Kevin Johnson, TCU  
Assistant Director of the Ranch Management Program and Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo Professor



**Forage Strategies : What makes sense (CENTS) for my operation?**  
Jason Faubion, TCU  
Assistant Director of the Ranch Management Program and John Biggs Professor

Includes barbecue meal & 1.0 CEU's for recertification of private applicator license

Please pre-register by calling 903-675-6130 on or before Friday, Sept. 14th.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension provides equal opportunities in its programs and employment to all persons, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

**Henderson County Master Gardeners**

The Master Gardener program is a volunteer development program offered by Texas AgriLife Extension Service by disseminating horticultural information to individuals and groups in Henderson County and to develop and continue community projects related to horticulture. We are a group of volunteers who share a love of gardening and are eager to learn and share their knowledge.

**‘Learn at the Library’ Series**

*“Fall Efforts to Prepare Your Garden for Spring ”*

**September 18th**—5:30 pm—6:30 pm

Bob Erickson will provide information on fall gardening including proper tools and equipment

*“TBD— look for announcements soon for our presentation”*

**October 16th**—6:30 pm—8:00 pm

Speaker and topic are coming soon!

The Library Series is open to the public and is held from 5:30pm to 6:30pm at the Clint W. Murchison Memorial Library in Athens, TX.



**Henderson County Master Gardeners**

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**Texas master gardeners**

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