



As the Garden Grows

A Publication of the Gonzales Texas Master Gardeners

November 2021 Issue 9

President's Message

Gonzales Master Gardeners has members that grew up in this area and others, including myself, relocated here. Texas is a large state with many different characteristics and climates. A gardener would want to understand the uniqueness of this part of the state.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has designated thirteen hardiness zones. Gonzales is classified as 8b. This number indicates how a plant will respond in the environment and the ability of plants to grow based on the lowest average temperature.

We have two optimal growing seasons determined by the days between the last spring freeze, typically early to mid-March and the first fall freeze, generally occurring in late November. Annual rainfall historically averages thirty-five inches. July is the driest month and May -June and October are the wettest months. August is the hottest month and can reach triple digits. January-February are the coldest months. The ground does not freeze so all except annual plants should survive.

This information is useful for planning purposes. Best to look at the forward weather forecast to fine-tune precise planting dates and to be on the lookout for weather anomalies.

Nick Wentworth, GMG President

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From My Garden

(Marcus Pridgeon, Travis County Master Gardener Class of 2015)



When Johnna and I moved back to Gonzales in September 2020, we developed a small vegetable garden (approximately 900 square feet) in the southwest corner of our yard on virgin (virgin being a euphemism for rock hard) ground. I removed the sod from the site with a manual sod cutter (effective, but not for the faint of heart). Because the ground was so hard (I could barely penetrate the soil with a pick axe), I hired a local gentleman with a small tractor to break the ground with a chisel (to approximately 18 inches) and till in Kitchen Price Mushroom Compost. The garden is configured with two sixteen-foot bull panel fence sections, one for berries and one for grapes. The remainder is configured into three separate growing beds. The 2021 fall planting is our third crop. Between each crop I have rested, fertilized, and added new organic matter (again, more mushroom compost) to the beds.

On October 12th, I planted four sixteen-foot rows of Danvers 126 carrots. I chose Danvers because it is the variety used by Arline Rinehart Schacherl in the Children's Garden. Danvers is also a recommended variety in the Travis County Texas A&M AgriLife Extension *Garden Guide*. I purchased the seed in bulk from Green Gate in Seguin (inexpensive, ½ cup for \$3.75). According to the Burpee Seed website, Danvers is an heirloom carrot developed by market gardeners in Danvers, Massachusetts and shared with Burpee in 1886. Burpee calls Danvers "*a first-class carrot for all soils.*" Danvers are a "short" variety, producing a carrot from six to eight inches long.

The Burpee website showed a fall seed start date (for our zip code) from September 15 to October 6. The Travis County Texas A&M AgriLife Extension *Vegetable Garden Planting Guide* shows that carrot seeds can be started into early November. I decided to wait a little later in the planting window because October temperatures have remained well into the 90° range.

I sowed the seed rows one-foot apart and planted the seeds approximately ½ inch deep. I should see the seedling emerge in 14-21 days. When the plant heads reach 3 inches in height, I will thin so the plants will be approximately two-inch apart. Burpee recommends thinning to one inch, but I like to give my plants a little more room. The plants require approximately one-inch of water per week during the growing season. Days to maturity is a little longer for fall planting, from 75 to 90 days; so, I should have carrots by early January.

My intent is to complete the winter crop with onion transplants sometime in January. Now I just water, weed, and wait.

Another September and a Great Class

Submitted by Gail Johnson



September has come and gone, and the Gonzales Master Gardeners have greeted an enthusiastic class of 20 students!

This is particularly gratifying since Covid robbed us of last year's class. Students bring a refreshing renewal to the organization since their enthusiasm is contagious. By the end of another long hot Texas summer, we need their energy! We have projects to do and children to greet this fall as we fulfill our mission of public education, and our students make great contributions to our work.

We start our classes by hitting the hardcore science that provides our new members with the background they need to absorb the rest of the program and make the most of their experiences. We have heard from David Dement who does the best Botany class we have ever found and Fran Saliger with her "plants everywhere" Propagation class which everybody loves. It was my privilege to cover Soils for the group and next we will visit the San Antonio Botanical Garden where we can see that a beautiful garden is populated not so much by exotic plants as by healthy ones. Students get some great ideas from the gardens in addition to a really fun day.

We ask them to bring their cameras and take pictures of what pleases them so when we talk about landscaping in the spring, they will have a "book" of ideas of things that pleased them.

This is Class 11. My, but Class 1 seems so long ago! We have been fortunate to retain some of those original students who now find themselves in lots of different roles. We emphasize having our own members educate themselves and take on teaching roles and we are proud of the outstanding job they do. The world seems to be drifting away from the "old fashioned" format of in-person classes in favor of "on-line learning", but research shows that students learn more in live classes than online. Certainly, there is an enormous amount of very valuable information out in the ether which we can all take advantage of it. How often do I ask my long-suffering spouse, "Well, did you google that?"

So, welcome, new Master Gardeners. We are so glad to have you and here's to our current Members who are always busy at work in our communities.

Plant Propagation Class

(Submitted by Fran Saliger)



Thanks for a very exciting class on Plant Propagation. With twenty-four in attendance and nine class assistants present, it was a very crowded room with lots of learning going on. I hope everyone got some good tidbits of information to use in your horticulture and gardening adventures. If you didn't get a particular plant, give me a call and I'll see if I can get you a cutting or two.

Shirley Frazier, co-chair for the Spring Plant Sales, did a great job in recruiting members for the Grow Teams. Grow Team leaders will keep you busy propagating and trying out your newfound techniques for growing plants for the sale. Afterwards, there were several who stayed on and propagated left over cuttings in the Greenhouse. It's always great to see the Greenhouse fill up with plants.

Do you have an interesting plant or rare plant in your garden? Consider sharing your plants with others. These "Pass Along" plants are a great way to keep them going. These are plants that you don't see in the nurseries anymore.

If you really like propagating plants, consider taking the Advanced MG program on Plant propagation thru the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension program (<https://txmg.org/>). It's a great class and an opportunity to teach others.

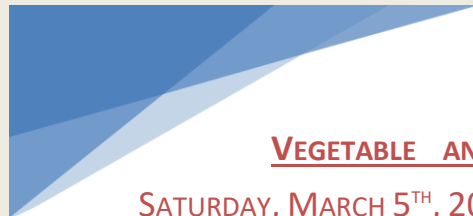




In the Garden Landscape

Rake and mow.	Potted Plants can still stay outdoors until frost date. Water thoroughly and bring inside if necessary.
Divide and Move: Shrubs, roses, trees, evergreen spring-blooming perennials	All Plants: Take cuttings and collect seeds now before the freeze.
Trees: You can start to prune your Oaks and other trees now.	Cool Weather Vegetables, Fruit, and Herbs: Water as needed, mulch and fertilize on your schedule. Check Brassicas for insects and treat. Sow wildflowers and still time to plant those bulbs. You can plant strawberries now.

*Plenty of time to think
about next year's garden.*



VEGETABLE AND PLANT SALE

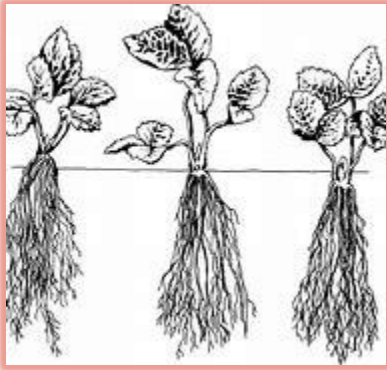
SATURDAY, MARCH 5TH, 2022, 8:30-5:00

SATURDAY, APRIL 16TH 2022, 8:30-1:00

Notice the Grow
you are interested in
contact that group's

Teams on Page 1. If
joining a grow team,
leader.

Strawberries



Strawberries can be grown successfully in home gardens in Central Texas, but to have luscious, sweet fruit in the spring, plant strawberries in the fall.

Cooler fall weather helps establish the plants, setting them up for berry production next spring, says Larry Stein, a Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Specialist.

"What we've found is that it's better to establish them in the fall (September, October or early November). Let them grow as big a plant in the fall as they can and they fruit in early spring," Stein says. "As soon as the main crop is gone, you pull them out."

Theoretically, strawberries can bear fruit throughout the summer, but that's just not practical in a Texas summer, Stein says. It's better to concentrate on a spring crop.

Strawberries are one of the easiest and best home garden fruits for kids to grow. Children will love to pick them right off the plant, wash and eat them. While you may not get bushels of strawberries, it will be fun and, for a few special weeks, you will reap luscious red berries.

Here are some tips to ensure strawberry success:

- Strawberries like well-drained, fertile soil, so be sure to add compost or other organic matter when preparing to plant. Since strawberry plants do not tolerate soggy soils, a raised bed or container is ideal. Apply a nitrogen fertilizer every three weeks after the plants are actively growing.

- When planting strawberries, be sure the crown (the area between the roots and the leaf stems) is slightly above or level with the ground - never below. Strawberry plants should be placed about 10-to-14 inches apart from each other.

- Use mulch to keep berries off the soil and away from snails, slugs and sowbugs. Pine needle or straw mulch is ideal. Birds will find your berries, so cover the plants with netting that is anchored all the way around the planting, otherwise the birds will walk under it.

- Plants need full sun, and frequent, deep soakings, especially during the bearing season.

Wondering which strawberry to grow?

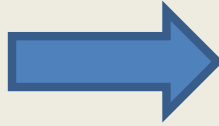
Choosing the right variety to grow is critical to success as hundreds of varieties exist, but the short day (spring-bearing) type perform best for home gardeners in Texas.

Chandler is a medium to large strawberry with exceptional flavor. This popular variety is the one most commonly grown by commercial producers. Sequoia, an old favorite, is a large, sweet strawberry. Although high in quality, the fruit is sometimes soft and perishable when ripe. Camarosa, a variety recommended by a fellow horticulturist, has a high yield and firm fruit that is large to very large. This variety may not be readily available.

While bare root plants may be used, container grown plants are more often available in garden centers. Credit: *Charla Anthony is the horticulture program assistant at Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, Brazos County, 2619 Texas 21 W., Bryan, Texas 77803*

Technology-Based Learning

Log on to



<https://agrilifelearn.tamu.edu/s/>

Search: Enter Course Name or Interest

Free: Plant Disease Diagnostics, Intro to Rose Rosette Disease, Plant Pathology for M.Gs., IPM for School Gardens 101

Beekeeping 101:\$45.50, Employee Greenhouse Crop Production:\$50.00, Tomato 101:The Basics of Growing Tomatoes: \$20.00.



NOVEMBER

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4 GMG Monthly Meeting 	5	6
7	8	9 GMG Class Tree Planting 	10	11	12	13
14	15	16 GMG Class Containers/Greenhouses 	17	18 Black Walnut Class for Kindergartners 	19	20
21 First Frost Date for our region. *	22	23	24	25 	26	27
28	29	30 GMG Class Rainwater Harvesting/Conservation  Volunteer Hours Due!				



Happy Birthday to our November Birthday Members!!

Editor: Mayra Guisinger

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