



As the Garden Grows

A Publication of the Gonzales Master Gardeners

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Almost Everything You Need to Know about Vegetable Gardening

(Submitted by Fran Saliger)

Everyone is getting “Spring Fever” and eager to get busy in the garden with all this warm weather we have been having in recent weeks. Take the time to study up on how to plan and plant a vegetable garden. There is a wealth of information out there on vegetable gardening. Consult your sources carefully. Use reliable sources and remember that there are many myths about what to do.

An example of such a myth is to place eggshells in the hole when planting tomatoes. Tomatoes need calcium to prevent blossom end rot. According to The Central Texas Horticulture, a Texas AgriLife source, blossom end rot is a common disorder in tomatoes, but may also be found in peppers and eggplant. It’s caused by a calcium deficiency in the fruit, but adding calcium to the soil won’t solve the problem. As plant cells are developing, they require a lot of calcium. Moreover, tomato fruit develops quite rapidly, sometimes depleting the plant’s available calcium supply. There are many reasons why your tomato fruit may develop faster than it can replenish its calcium, but usually the reason is irregular watering. Soil that is very wet, when you irrigate, then very dry, between waterings, leads to irregular water-uptake and the fruit develops in fits and starts. Usually blossom-end rot is only a problem for the first harvest of the season, then plant growth kind of evens out, and water-use by the plant evens out a bit too. When growth and water uptake occur at a steady rate, the fruit develops in a more even manner as well and cells in the fruit receive enough calcium to develop properly.

The best scientific guidelines for complete knowledge about vegetable gardening can be found at www.aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu. Once you’re in this site check out the “Vegetable Resources” site. Here you will find information about individual vegetable plants, how to plan your garden, pests and diseases, fertilizing, harvesting and so much more. Check out the Vegetable Variety Selector for Gonzales County in the Central Coast region (F). Ask a Master Gardener. If they don’t know the answer at first, they will certainly help you get the correct information.

Planting times for vegetables vary according to a region's last frost date and the first frost date. For Gonzales, the average last frost date in the spring is February 14 and the average first frost date in the fall is December 16.

The following information is just the "tip of the iceberg": Vegetables are divided into two general groups—warm season and cool season. Cool-season crops can stand lower temperatures; plant them before the soil warms in the spring. They also can be planted in late summer to harvest after the first frost in the fall.

Warm-season crops cannot tolerate frost and will not grow when the soil temperature is cool. Plant them after the last frost in the spring and early enough to mature before frost in the fall.

Gardening Activities for February

(Submitted by Fran Saliger)

Asparagus, bulbing onions, and artichokes should be planted by mid-month. Fertilize established asparagus beds with an all-nitrogen fertilizer early in the month to encourage strong fast shoots. Harvest stalks at 6-8 weeks then feed again and allow the plants to grow untrimmed the rest of the year.

Start some Swiss chard, carrots, turnips, beets, spinach, lettuce and radishes now but be prepared to cover in the event of a frost/freeze. Don't plant root crops too deep and thin seedlings once they have their first true leaves. Thin seedlings to a distance of at least the width of the mature roots at harvest by clipping off seedlings with scissors to avoid damaging roots of nearby seedlings.

Mustard can take moderately cold weather and can be seeded now in our area. Parsley is also rather cold tolerant and a good time to set out transplants is mid to late in the month.

Seed potatoes can be planted this month.

Plant cool season annuals like pinks, snapdragons, larkspur, English daisies, sweet alyssum, ornamental chard, petunias, calendulas, Iceland poppies, stocks and others.

Cut perennial herbs back this month to remove unsightly growth. These plants will be sending out a fresh new growth in the spring.

Get after those weeds now before they get any bigger. They are easiest to remove by hand or a hoe when small. Do not use a weed and feed product. It is too early to fertilize warm season grasses. Fertilize your warm season lawns in late March or April.

Cut perennials back to a few inches high to remove all the cold damaged growth. Ornamental grasses can be cut back to 6-10 inches high. The magic date to prune roses is Valentine's Day on February 14. It's also the time to plant bare root roses.

Complete your pruning chores this month prior to the emergence of new growth on trees, shrubs and woody vines. If you planted trees this winter, continue to keep them watered. Form a circular berm of soil around the plants about 4-5 inches high and about 3-4 times the width of the root ball. This will

be filled with water to provide deep soakings of roots during the critical first few months after planting and on into summer. Don't pile mulch around the trunk of the tree.

South Texas Home, Garden, & Environmental Show

(From the Wilson County News)



The South Texas Home, Garden, & Environmental Show is set for Saturday, March 11, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., through Sunday, March 12, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., at the Floresville Event Center, with free admission both days.

Activities include:

- **South Texas Landscape School** (Sun. 9-3). Tuition for one \$25; tuition for 2 in same family \$40.
- **Gardening South Texas Radio Show** (both days, noon-2 p.m.). Ask Calvin Finch & Jerry Parsons gardening questions in person!
- **Lecture Series** — on Tomato Gardening, Old Fashioned Roses, Attracting & Producing Monarch Butterflies, Gardening Floresville Style, Texas Super Star Plants, and Enjoying the San Antonio River.
- **Rain Barrel Workshop** by Youth (Sat. 2-4)
- **Last Chance Forever Raptor Show** (both days, 1-2)
- **Plant Exchange** (Sat. 9-4)
- **Youth Fishing Activity** (Sun. 1-3) • **Youth Activities** — Home Depot Birdhouses, Planting Milkweeds for Butterflies, and other activities both days
- **Exhibits** — Arts, Crafts, Gardening Supplies, Environmental Agencies, Master Gardeners (both days)

Plus:

- **Plant Sales** — rodeo tomato, vegetables, old-fashioned roses, native plants, milkweed for butterflies, herbs and other plants! (both days)
- **Music** — County Line Community Band (10-12)
- **Food & Snacks** (both days)
- **Silent Auction** (Sat. at 3; Sun. at 2)
- **Garden Items & Other Bargains**

Go to www.gonzalesmastergardeners.org "What's Hot" to download the registration form and event flyer.

Gonzales Master Gardeners Project Updates



Children's Garden Ready For Planting

(Submitted by Arline Schacherl)

The two introductory classroom sessions in January on seeds have set the stage for the next step: planting seeds. By setting up an ongoing classroom experiment to watch what happens to seeds after planting, the students will discover what actually takes place underground in a garden. Thanks and great job to MG volunteers Jennifer, Nancy F., Thomas, Debra, Carolyn P., Fran, Shirley, Robbie, Dee, Janis, and Arline who helped with one or both of the classroom sessions.

A workday at the Children's Garden on Saturday, January 21 was very well attended. MG volunteers Sandy L., Nancy S. Jennifer, Fran, Robbie, Jacky, Thomas, Sandy, Nancy F., and Arline tackled the chores of adding and mixing in Looney Litter to each raised bed that first graders will plant. Drip irrigation lines were put in place and finally the string grid for square-foot gardening was replaced. It's amazing how much can be accomplished in a couple of hours with a great crew of Master Gardener



volunteers! Thanks to Thomas for contacting Looney Litter and to Sandy L. for picking up the mixture. Thanks to Carl for getting the egg-shaped team signs attached to the raised beds. While the garden is resting, preparations are underway for planting carrot, lettuce, radish and spinach seeds with the students on **Thursday, February 23, beginning at noon**. MG volunteers Carolyn P., Robbie, Debra, Thomas, Jennifer, Nancy F., Sandy L., Pam and Arline will help the teams of students plant their seeds using templates for proper placement of seeds. There will be a flurry of activity during each twenty-minute session when two classes arrive at the garden. Other volunteers are welcome to come because extra hands can always be put to work, keeping seeds in supply and photographing the action! Thanks to all who have helped with this project.



Second Grade Class Sessions

The Second Graders will be meeting with Dee Sengelmann's team on **Thursday, February 16. Meet at 7:45 am for set up. The session will be over with by noon.** Second graders from East Avenue will meet at the PACE building to learn about stems and roots as they continue to study the Parts of a Plant. Contact Dee ASAP if you can volunteer to help with the class. She asks that you bring some weeds showing good root and stem production to share with the class.

Lunch and Learn Event February 23, 2017

Gonzales Healthcare Systems & Methodist Healthcare Ministries
Invites you to attend a community informational luncheon

The Greatest Wealth is Health

Presented by:

Master Gardener David Dement
& Cynthia Green

Learn how to eat clean by
growing your own foods.

Sponsored By:



Date: Thursday, February 23rd
12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Located at the First United Methodist Church
in the Fellowship Hall

RSVP is required by 2/17/2017.
Please call (830)672-7581, ext. 1010.
Lunch will be provided to attendees.



SPRING PLANT SALE MARCH 25, 2017



The Spring Plant Sale date, March 25, 2017, will be here before we can blink an eye. We will have a committee meeting on **Tuesday, February 21 at 1:30pm** after the morning MG training session. Everyone who is planning on being at the event is encouraged to be there. We will be discussing set up procedures and finalizing plans for the event that will be on Texas Heroes Square in downtown Gonzales, Texas.

Committee Leaders:

- Budget: Nick Wentworth
- Marketing and Publicity (signage and news articles): Fran and Julie Fairchild
- Signage for event (signs for site): Charlotte Knox
- Plant Procurement: Shirley F., Donna Bell and Fran
- Plant Identification: Cheryl Hillman
- Grow Team Leaders
 - Herbs: Dee Sengelmann
 - Vegetables: Sandy Llewellyn
 - Perennials/Natives: Fran
 - Houseplants: Shirley F.
 - Succulents/Cacti: Shirley
 - Trees: Donna Bell
- Silent Auction: Arline and Melissa
- Children's Booth: Carolyn Parrott

All current MG students are encouraged to attend (volunteer hours for attendance).

NOON LUNCH MEETING

Our next GMG noon lunch meeting will be held **March 2, 2017**. If someone would like to be the host for the lunch please contact Fran ASAP (no one volunteered!). A sign-up sheet is on the bulletin board for bringing lunch (usually two people). Lunch Expenses are reimbursed for up to \$60.00. Bring something for a door prize.

All Master Gardeners are encouraged to attend, including the MG students. The board voted in January to allow ½ volunteer time for attending our “mini Lunch and Learn” meeting.

Future Lunch Hosts:

April 6, 2017-Mike Ohlhavsen and Carolyn Parratt

May 4, 2017- Donna Bell and Lynette Jarrett

June 1, 2017-Summer Social-Pot Luck lunch

Fruit Specialist Training Class was held at PACE on February 9 & 10.
The next generation of Class Instructors!



Planting a Spring Garden

For your garden of daily living



Plant three rows of peas:

- 1. Peace of Mind*
- 2. Peace of Heart*
- 3. Pease of Soil*

Plant four rows of Squash:

- 1. Squash Gossip*
- 2. Squash Indifference*
- 3. Squash Grumbling*
- 4. Squash Selfishness*

Plant four rows of Lettuce:

- 1. Lettuce be Faithful*
- 2. Lettuce be Kind*
- 3. Lettuce be Patient*
- 4. Lettuce Really Love One Another*

No Garden is complete without Turnips

- 1. Turnip for meetings*
- 2. Turnip for Service*
- 3. Turnip to Help one Another*

To conclude our garden, we must have Thyme

- 1. Thyme for each other*
- 2. Thyme for Family*
- 3. Thyme for Friends*

*Water freely with patience and cultivate with love.
There is much fruit in your garden because you reap
what you sow*



Plant of the Month

(Submitted by Brenda Thompson)

Desert Spoon, Desert Sotol, Wheeler Sotol, Grey Sotol

Dasyilirion wheeleri

Agavaceae



Desert spoon has a dense rosette of graceful, attractive blue-green leaves and a short, woody trunk. It grows in limestone or granite hillsides in the Trans-Pecos and adjacent Mexico, north to New Mexico and Arizona. Often confused with yuccas, sotols have long slender leaves that arch gracefully from a central trunk, making a symmetrical, rounded form. The leaves have sharp spines or teeth along their margins, and are spoon-like at the base, giving the genus the common name of "desert spoon". Extremely tolerant of drought, heat, and soil type, they must have well-drained soil and full sun to thrive. From May to August they have tall, dramatic flowering stalks, with male and female flowers on separate plants. One of the most ornamental of all desert plants, *dasyilirions* are striking in the landscape or in large pots. Because of their wicked spines, they must be planted away from pedestrian areas unless they are used for security plantings. An extremely useful plant to man, sotol has been used to make temporary structures, corrals, roofs, baskets, mats, ropes, liquor ("sotol"), cattle feed during

drought, and food for humans.

Plant Habit or Use: medium shrub

Exposure: sun, partial sun

Flower Color: creamy white or greenish

Blooming Period: spring/summer

Fruit Characteristics: 3-winged shell

Height: to 5 feet/ flower 9 to 15 feet

Width: to 6 feet

Plant Character: evergreen

Heat Tolerance: very high

Water Requirements:

Soil Requirements: adaptable

Note: Thankfully, there is a toothless variety of the sotol called Mexican grass tree or *Dasyilirion longissimum*, which is just as hardy but without the teeth.

Area Events

(Submitted by Brenda Thompson)

Marion: The Guadalupe Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas presents "Why Vines?" at 7:00 p.m., **February 14**, at St. John's Lutheran Church, FM 465, Marion. For additional information, visit <http://npsot.org/wp/guadalupe>.

San Antonio: Rosarian Ed Bradley will present "Roses for 2017," **Thursday, February 16, 1-3 p.m.**, at 3355 Cherry Ridge, San Antonio. Free. Bexar County Master Gardener (BCMG) Educational Seminars/General Meetings are held on the afternoon of the third Thursday every other month at the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Office, Suite 208. Bradley will share his expertise his wealth of knowledge on growing roses in San Antonio. For more information email President@bexarmg.org, or call 210-699-0663.

La Marque: "Pruning Roses" with GC Master Gardener, Consulting Rosarian, and American Rose Society member John Jons presenting, 9:00-10:00 a.m., **February 16**, at Galveston County Master Gardeners' Research & Demonstration Garden in Carbide Park, 4102 Main St., La Marque; Ph 281-534-3413; email reservations to galvcountymgs@gmail.com, further details see <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston/>. Free.

Seguin: Thursday, **February 16** at 7:00 pm, Guadalupe County Master Gardeners will meet at the Texas AgriLife Extension, 210 E. Live Oak, Seguin. Joe Urbach, a Hays County Master Gardener who has written several books on gardening, will present "Phytonutrient Gardening". Sure, you know how nutritious raising your own food is, but Urbach takes you back to how that happened, how certain varieties are more nutritious than others and how that came to be. A fascinating history of some of the foods we eat, how to get the most nutrition from them, and which to eat for certain health conditions. Free. Open to the public. For more information, visit www.guadalupecountymastergardeners.org.

Houston: "Daylily Sale" offered by Lone Star Daylily Society at the Texas Home & Garden Show **February 17-19** at the NRG Center, 1 NRG Park, Houston. Times for the sale are Feb 17, 2 p.m.-7 p.m.; Feb 18, 10 a.m.-7 p.m.; and Feb 19, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Offering 55 varieties, ranging from oldie-goldies, to newer releases by well-known hybridizers, such as Bell, DeVito and Trimmer. Prices range from \$5-\$12. For more information, visit lonestardaylilysociety.org and see a copy of our color flyer to see samples of what you can expect to find. Any questions, call Debbie Pike at 979-236-1478.

Hitchcock: "Galveston County Master Gardeners 2017 Spring Plant Sale" with pre-sale seminar 8:00 a.m.-8:50 a.m., plant sale 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., **February 18**, at Jack Brooks Park Rodeo Arena, 10 Jack Brooks Rd and Hwy 6, Hitchcock (Galveston County Fairgrounds).

Pasadena: Harris County Master Gardener "Fruit Tree and Tomato" Sale will be held **February 18** at Campbell Hall, Pasadena Fairgrounds, 7600 Red Bluff RD., Pasadena. For more information, visit <https://hcmga.tamu.edu>.

Smithson Valley: The Lindheimer Chapter (Comal County) of the Native Plant Society of Texas will hold their monthly meeting on **February 21** at the GVTC Auditorium, 36101 FM 3159, Smithson Valley. The doors open at 6:30 p.m. and the meeting starts at 7:00 p.m. The speaker will be Kathryn

Bryant, Management Chair, Lindheimer Chapter Plant Sale. Kathryn will speak on "Plant Sale Primer." Kathryn will review native plants of interest for the sale and propagation techniques. The meeting is free and the public is welcome. For more information, call Martha Guethle, 830-438-5996.

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La Marque: "Galveston County Master Gardeners Annual Spring Fruit & Citrus Tree, Vegetable, 'Texas Tough' Perennials, Bulb, and Craft Sale," 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., **February 18**; pre-sale seminar 8:00 a.m.-8:50 a.m., at Jack Brooks Park Rodeo Arena, 10 Jack Brooks Rd and Hwy 6, Hitchcock (Galveston County Fairgrounds) For a complete list of plants included in the Sale, visit aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/Galveston/index.htm.

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Bryan: Brazos County Master Gardeners will present "Blue is the New Gold," a water conservation program, **February 25**, 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m., at Brazos Center, 3232 Briarcrest Drive, Bryan. Learn methods to efficiently manage your outdoor use of this limited natural resource! Experts will give information and guidance related to rainwater harvesting, efficient home irrigation systems, how soils capture water and plant selection to conserve water. \$45 per person. Visit brazosmq.com for registration form and complete agenda information.

Galveston: The Friends of Moody Gardens will host the 5th annual Gulf Coast Herb Fair and Luncheon on Wednesday, **March 1**, in the Visitors Pyramid at Moody Gardens, 1 Hope Blvd, Galveston. The featured speaker during the luncheon will be Alicia Cahill, owner of The Kitchen Chick. Activities being planned include exciting vendors in the Visitors Pyramid, a Garden Blessing accompanied by music and the story of the Tussey Mussey, plus a lovely luncheon for \$35/pp. Checks can be sent to Ellen Perry, 2903 Dominique Drive, TX 77551. For more information, phone 409-740-6842 or email e.l.perry@att.net. For additional information, visit <https://files.acrobat.com/a/preview/f706afb5-3856-4a07-8ce2-9223dd12981b>.

Austin: Locally raised heirloom veggies and herbs make their big debut 9 a.m. at Sunshine Community Garden (SCG), 4814 Sunshine Dr., Austin, **March 4**. The sale is the largest Certified Organic Non-Profit Plant event in Texas. More than 150 tomato varieties, 72 wicked hot and sweet bell pepper varieties, 15 kinds of eggplants, 5,000 herbs and other plants ready for spring planting. For complete list of plants on sale and varieties to grow visit <http://www.sunshinecommunitygarden.org/>.

Tyler: Smith County Master Gardeners at the library, **March 10** at 11:30 a.m. "Azaleas: New, Old, Native, and Exotic," with Keith Hansen, retired Smith County Horticulture Extension Agent. Presentation with Q&A to follow. Tyler Public Library, 201 S. College, Tyler. Free and open to the public. For additional information, call 903-590-2980.

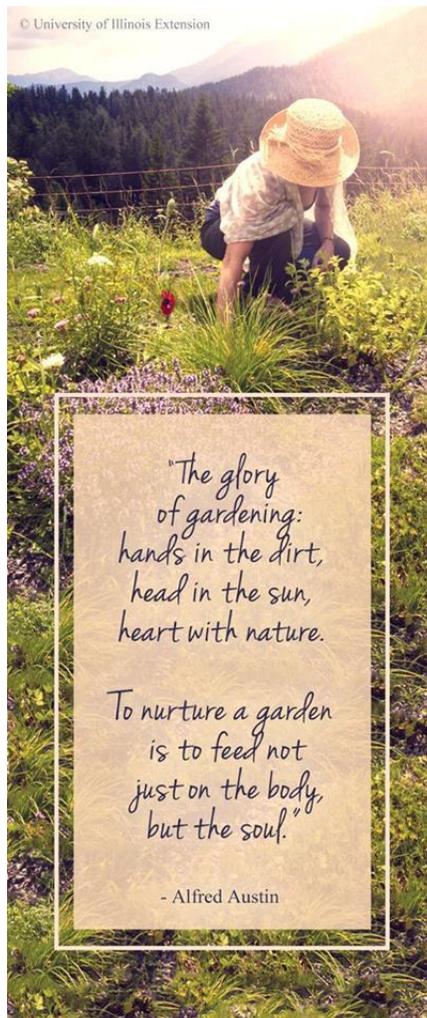
Orangefield: The Orange County Master Gardeners are having their 4th Annual Bloomin' Crazy Plant Fair Saturday, **March 18**, 8 a.m.-1 p.m. at Cormier Park, 8235 FM 1442, Orangefield. Hundreds of nursery and member-grown plants will be for sale, including many varieties of citrus, stone fruit, berries, cold-hardy avocados, LSU gold & purple figs, Texas Superstars, perennials, natives, annuals, house and tropicals along with succulents, lilies and many other hard to find and unusual plants. Plant specialists and members will be available to answer questions and help you select your plants. Specialty booths will be set up with unique gardening items. For more information, visit <http://txmg.org/orange>.

Check out www.txmg.org for events around the state

New Braunfels area: <http://txmg.org/comal/events>

Austin Area: <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/travis/>

San Antonio, Texas- <http://www.bexarcountymastergardeners.org>



DATES TO REMEMBER: (Check elsewhere in newsletter for details)

**Unless otherwise noted, all meetings/classes are at
623 N. Fair Street (Plantarium: A Center for Exploration-aka PACE)**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
FEBRUARY 12	13	14 Propagation of Grape Vines 9 am	15	16 2 nd Grade Class Session 7:45 am- noon	17	18
19	20	21 MG Class Plant Pathology 8:30-12:30 SPS Meeting 1:30 pm	22	23 Hospital Lunch and Learn 1st grade Class Planting Session Noon-2pm Board Mtg. 9:30 am	24	25
26	27	28 Volunteer Hours Due	MARCH 1	2 Noon Lunch Meeting	3	4
5	6	7 MG Class- Turf Grass 8:30-12:30	8	9	10	11 South TX Home Show
12 South TX Home Show Landscape Design School	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21 MG Class Container Gardens Earthkind-Tx Superstars 8:30-12:30	22	23 1st Grade Visit to Children's Garden Noon-2pm	24 SPS Setup 9am	25 SPRING PLANT SALE
26	27	28	29	30 Board Mtg. 9:30 am	31 Volunteer Hours Due	APRIL 1

Children's Garden: Corner of Moore and St. Louis St.-next to Eggleston House

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