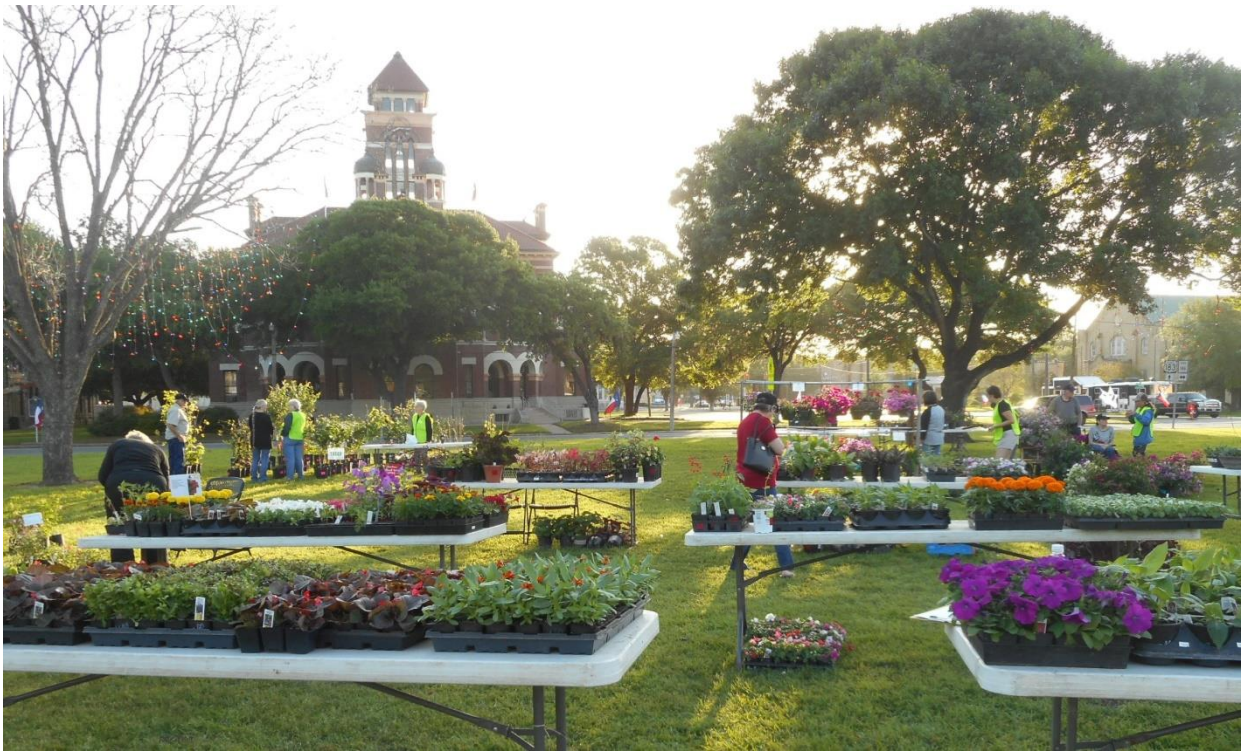
As the Garden Grows

A Publication of the Gonzales Master Gardeners

Gonzales, Texas April 2017 Volume 7, Issue 4

The Annual Spring Plant Sale has come and gone. What a great time everyone had setting up and selling plants! The weather was great, new students had a great time and all enjoyed the chance to teach gardening to the public. Thanks to everyone who made it a great success.



SILENT
AUCTION

Gardening Activities for April

(Submitted by Fran Saliger)

It's time to plant warm season vegetables such as cucumber, muskmelons/cantaloupe, squash, Swiss chard and green beans. Get those tomato transplants in the ground or they will not produce much as the temperatures get too hot to set fruit.

Try planting Tatume squash this year. They produce small fruit, the size of baseballs, for using as you would a zucchini squash. As they grow larger, they become like a winter squash, turn orange like pumpkins and cook like a winter squash. They tolerate the hot summer really well but need lots of room to grow. If you want some seeds, contact Fran Saliger.

Try growing the vining crops like cucumbers and cantaloupe on a trellis. This saves space and allows the cucumbers to grow straighter as they dangle on the trellis. Cattle panels work great for a trellis. For the cantaloupe, slip the fruit into sections of pantyhose for support tied to the trellis.

Fertilize tomato, pepper and eggplant transplants weekly with a soluble fertilizer for a few weeks after planting. Once the first fruits set, side dress the plants with a turf type fertilizer, spreading 2-3 tablespoons evenly in a 1-foot diameter circle around each plant. Scratch into the soil and water it in well. Repeat in three weeks.

Fertilize corn when it is about knee high. Use a turf type fertilizer at a rate of 1 cup per 10-15 foot row. Scratch it in and water well. Repeat in two weeks. When the corn is waist high, mound up the soil to anchor the corn stalk in place so that the wind and rain don't knock it down.

It's time to start planting heat-loving vegetables such as okra, southern peas and watermelons. Try some new varieties of okra such as Lee, Cajun Delight, Jade and longtime favorite Clemson Spineless.

As warmer weather sneaks in, the cool weather annuals are going to slow down. Be ready to pull them up as they look spent, rework the bed with compost, and plant some warm season annuals. Zinnias would be a great selection to try from transplants or start from seeds. Don't forget to fertilize them with a turf like fertilizer. Try some vines such as morning glory, black-eyed susan vine, and hyacinth bean.

Finish planting perennials this month so that they can get established before the heat sets in. Consider plantings of perennials that bloom later in the summer and fall.

Be on the lookout for caterpillars and aphids on your plants. Use Bt for the caterpillars on your vegetables but leave the ones that become beautiful butterflies. Plant a sacrificial plant for the monarchs and swallowtails such as parsley and dill. A blast of water or insecticidal soap is effective on aphids but may need to be repeated. Just remember that the insects need to eat also. Don't kill off the pollinators.

Roses that bloom only in the spring can be pruned after their blooms fade away. The same is true of other spring-only blooming plants like redbuds, flowering quince, spirea and most azaleas.

Maintain a layer of 2-4” of mulch around woody ornamentals to deter weeds and gradually decompose over time to build the soil. Newly transplanted trees and shrubs are especially helped by mulching to keep out the weeds. This also prevents them from being damaged by weed-eaters and lawnmowers.

Don’t forget to fertilize your trees and shrubs. Repeat every 4-6 weeks until August.

Once your lawn has grown enough to be mowed twice, it is time to fertilize. This means that April is the time for our area. The goal is to apply about a pound of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet of lawn. The simplest way to know how much fertilizer to apply is to divide the first number on the bag into 100. So for example, a 21-7-14 fertilizer would be applied at a rate of about 5 pounds per 1,000 square feet. A soil test will tell you what kind of fertilizer to use. In the absence of a soil test, choose a fertilizer with a ration of nutrients similar to 3-2-1 or 4-1-2. If your lawn has plenty of phosphorus and potassium, use only nitrogen to support good growth.

Once all these chores are complete, take time for a trip on country roads or a roadtrip to the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center in Austin, TX. April is the best time to see all those wildflowers in bloom.

MG Class Students Learn About Rain Water Harvesting

(Submitted by Carolyn Parratt)

The GMG students listened intently to Bryan Davis, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Agent, as he explained the importance of rainwater harvesting. According to Bryan, native tall grasses like Big and Little Bluestem, Yellow Indian grass, Switchgrass and Sideoats Gamma aid in the absorption of rainwater into the ground through their deeper root systems. Examples of manmade water control methods such as gabions (circular wire cages filled with rock), berms, rock walls, rock landscaping and rain barrels assist in diverting water flow toward ponds or gardens and away from roadways.

Bryan discussed and showed diagrams of dry line (overhead) versus wet line (underground) collection systems. He explained the design of each system and how to decide which would best fit your needs. The PACE building has a dry line system with a first flush diverter to catch debris (Figure 1).

Figure 1

Bryan asked when was the last time the clean out had been flushed? Dwight Sexton, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Agent, said probably over a month ago. Bryan demonstrated opening the plug to release sediment and water (Figure 2).

Figure 2

Figure 3

Bryan and Dwight explained the rain barrel set up (Figures 3 & 4).

Figure 4

Figure 5

Rain barrels were constructed for each student to take home (Figures 5 & 6).

The advantage of blue or black barrels over clear or white ones is that there is no algae buildup in the barrel. This reduces contamination in the water and plugging up the faucet outlet. With the installation of a properly working rain harvesting system, dependence on our precious underground water supply is reduced.

Figure 6

Gonzales Master Gardeners Project Updates

First Grade Children's Garden

(Submitted by Arline Schacherl)

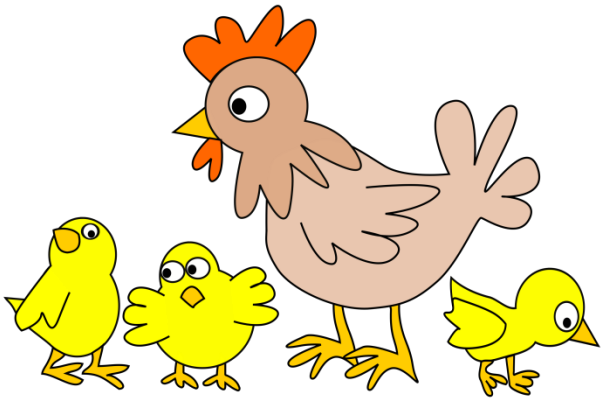
The first graders had a wonderful sunny afternoon at the Children's Garden on March 30. They were able to harvest radishes, spinach and lots of lettuce to take home. The children will return on **April 20 from noon until 2:00pm** to harvest the carrots and the rest of the lettuce and spinach. As always volunteers will be needed. Contact Arline if you can help with the harvest. It has been another great successful year teaching the children about seeds and how they grow.

NOON LUNCH MEETING

Our next GMG noon lunch meeting will be held **May 4, 2017.** Donna Bell and Lynette Jarrett will be providing lunch. Bring something to share with the group for door prizes.

All Master Gardeners are encouraged to attend, including the MG students.

Lunch and Learn - Backyard Poultry



We will have another Lunch and Learn seminar on **Wednesday, April 19, 2017**. Carolyn Parratt will be presenting "Backyard Poultry". Carolyn is a Gonzales Master Gardener and lives out in the country. She enjoys raising chickens on her ranch in addition to her other projects. Her presentation on backyard poultry is sure to be informative. Lunch will be provided and is free to the public.

April 21 Greenhouse Workday

A pallet of soil will be delivered to PACE on **Friday, April 21**. Several Volunteers are needed to move the soil from the sidewalk to the Greenhouse around 9 am. If you ordered soil, please pick it up at this time. We will also need to continue the cleanup of the Greenhouse. If you can help out, please contact Fran Saliger. Thanks.

www.gonzalesmastergardeners.org

If you haven't checked out our web site lately, put it on your list of things to do! You can always find out what's happening with GMG.

Carolyn Parratt and Jo Swiger have been very busy adding to the "Fun Stuff" page. It's not just for kids. Carolyn has done an outstanding job of posting all kinds of insects on the page with interesting information about each of them. It's a great spot to start your search about what kind of insects are out there.

Don't forget to check out the monthly calendar to find out what's happening each month.

Plant of the Month

(Submitted by Brenda Thompson)

Snowflakes (*Leucojum aestivum*)

Snowflakes (*Leucojum aestivum*) are another great bulb for naturalizing over most of Texas. The white flowers have a green dot on each petal and bloom in late January and early February. Foliage appears a few weeks after planting and is also an attractive addition to the garden. Their bloom season usually lasts at least a month. All these bulbs can take full sun but also thrive in partial shade, even under deciduous trees like pecans that lose their leaves in winter. Select a well-drained site and set the bulbs about twice the depth of the height of the bulb. Water to settle the soil but little or no irrigation should be needed to grow these bulbs successfully. As the foliage matures after the bloom season it is best to not remove it until it begins to yellow. During their dormant period these bulbs need no irrigation and actually enjoy being hot and dry during our long summer season.

Clusters of white bell-shaped flowers with green polka dot trim on arching stems, lightly scented. Grows 18" tall. Forms clumps in our growing region. Mid-Spring bloom. Plant in well-draining, amended soil 3" to 4" deep, 10" apart in full or part sun. Protect from snails.

Summer snowflakes, *Leucojum aestivum.*, is the correct common name of what we frequently call snowdrops. The foliage comes up in February and looks almost exactly like that of the daffodil, which blooms about the same time.

They slowly increase in number each year and should probably be divided every six years.

Note: Mine bloomed last of February and 1st part of March – all depends on the winter we have.

Area Events

(Submitted by Brenda Thompson)

Waco: Join Master Gardeners at the Downtown Farmers Market on Saturday, **April 15,** from 9 a.m. to 1:00 pm. Learn about Butterflies and Bees and ask questions about specific garden interests. Handouts and seeds are available and it's all free! New temporary location: 500 Washington Ave. across from the Courthouse. Since November 2011, the Market has been and will continue to be open every Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., and Tuesdays from 3:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m. seasonally, featuring the best local agricultural producers and artisan vendors within 150-miles of Waco.

Houston: Open Garden Day, 8:30-11:00 a.m., Monday, **April 17,** at Genoa Friendship Garden, 1202 Genoa Red Bluff Rd., Houston. Plants for sale in our greenhouse. Master Gardeners available to answer your questions. Free. For additional information, visit https://hcmga.tamu.edu.

San Antonio: Environmental Horticulture, Thursday, **April 20,** 1-3 p.m., 3355 Cherry Ridge, San Antonio. Dr. Barron Rector, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Range Specialist in College Station, will discuss the ecosystems of old and compare them to today! Free. Bexar County Master Gardner (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. For more information contact BCMG President at President@bexarmg.org, or call 210-699-0663.

Seguin: Thursday, April 20, at 7:00 p.m. Guadalupe County Master Gardeners will meet at the Texas AgriLife Extension, 210 E. Live Oak. National Wildlife Federation Habitat Steward Meredith O'Reilly will present "Gardening for Wildlife." Learn how to attract butterflies and birds to your yard, plants to use and water features. Social at 6:15 p.m. Announcements at 6:45 p.m. Everyone is welcome. Free. For more information, visit www.guadalupecountymastergardeners.org.

Hempstead: Peckerwood Garden presents Evening at Peckerwood Lecture Series: Friday, **April 21,** 7 p.m.-9 p.m., 20559 FM 359 Rd., Hempstead. Topics will include various aspects of horticulture, botany, garden design, plant collecting adventures, conservation and many other related fields of interest. Wine and refreshments provided. $10 admission and parking, $5 for members. For more info, visit http://www.peckerwoodgarden.org/explore/visit-peckerwood-garden/ or email info@peckerwoodgarden.org.

Tyler: Smith County Master Gardeners at the library, **April 21** at 11:30 a.m. "Flower Arranging from the Garden" with Master Gardener Neysa Mueller. 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.

Athens: Henderson County Master Gardeners Association's 2017 Plant Sale will be held 9:00 a.m. to 2 p.m., Saturday, **April 22,** at Senior Citizens Center, 3356 State Highway 31E, Athens. Included will be a wide variety of trees, shrubs, bulbs, perennials, annuals, natives, heirlooms, vegetables and herbs. This event will be held inside. For more information, call 903-675-6130, email hendersonCMGA@gmail.com, or visit www.henderson-co-tx-mg.org.

Hempstead: Peckerwood Garden presents Peckerwood Garden Open Day: Saturday, **April 22,** 10 a.m.-3 p.m., 20559 FM 359 Rd., Hempstead. Visitors enjoy 1-hour guided tours of the garden led by knowledgeable docents. Guided tours are offered approximately every 30 minutes, leaving between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. Purchase Tickets. $10 admission and parking, Free for members. For more info, visit http://www.peckerwoodgarden.org/explore/visit-peckerwood-garden/ or email info@peckerwoodgarden.org.

Houston: The spring Galveston County Plant Swap will be on Earth Day, Saturday, **April 22,** from 8 a.m.-noon at the Johnson Space Center Gilruth Center on Space Center Blvd (between Nasa Rd. and Bay Area Blvd). It will be in the covered Bluebonnet Pavilion. Spend Earth Day morning swapping plants! For additional info, visit: http://www.freewebs.com/gcplantswap/.

Houston: The Houston Rose Society will be hosting their spring rose show on Saturday, **April 22,** at Memorial City Mall, 303 Memorial City Way, Houston, noon-4 p.m. Use the entrance near Dillards. See roses grown by expert exhibitors and decide what your next rose will be! Free to the public. For more information, visit www.houstonrose.org.

Houston: Houston Rose Society Spring Garden Tour, Sunday, **April 23,** noon-6 p.m. See four spectacular gardens filled with roses of all kinds. Consulting rosarians will be on hand to answer your questions about roses. This event is free to the public. For more details about the tour visit www.houstonrose.org.

La Marque: "Beneficials in the Garden" presented by Dr. William M. Johnson, Galveston County Extension Agent for Horticulture, 6:30-8:00 p.m., **April 25,** at the Galveston County AgriLife Extension in Carbide Park, 4102 Main, La Marque. Fee/Free. Participants must pre-register: 281-534-3413. Galveston County Master Gardener event. Further details www.aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston.

Tyler: Smith County Master Gardeners at the library, **May 5** at 11:30 a.m. "Heat Loving Plants" with Master Gardener Andie Rathbone. 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.

Austin: Inside Austin Gardens Tour, will be held **May 6,** 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. rain or shine, and features 5 private gardens, 1 public garden. A rare, behind-the-scenes look at gardens that demonstrate realistic, sustainable practices for Central Texas. Garden Themes: Earth-Kind Landscaping; Wildlife Restoration & Preservation; Birds, Butterflies, and Zen; Sun & Shade; A Journey Through Fairyland and the AgriLife Testing Ground. $20 advance purchase for all 6 gardens $25 on tour day for all 6 gardens, $5 on tour day for single-garden ticket. Information and tickets at www.InsideAustinGardens.org or call 512-854-9600.

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 (Plantatarium: A Center for Exploration-aka PACE)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
APRIL 9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18 MG Class Trip Wildflower Center-Austin 9:30am	19 Backyard Poultry Lunch & Learn-Noon	20 1st Grade Children's Garden Harvest	21 GH Workday 9:00 am	22
23	24	25 2nd Grade Class Session #4 GISD Volunteer Reception	26	27 Board Mtg. 9:30 am	28	29
30 Volunteer Hours Due	MAY 1	2 MG Class-EcoSystem-Baron Rector 8:30-12:30 pm	3	4 MG Noon Lunch Mtg.	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16 MG Class Graduation	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25 Board Mtg. 9:30 am	26	27

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

Editors:

Fran Saliger
fsaliger@gvec.net
Charlotte Knox
lotteknox@aol.com

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Office

1709 E. Sarah DeWitt Drive
Gonzales, TX 78629
Phone: 830-672-8531
Fax: 830-672-8532
E-mail: gonzales@ag.tamu.edu

Web pages:
http://gonzalesmastergardeners.org

http://gonzales.agrilife.org

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. Individuals with disabilities who require an auxiliary aid, service or accommodations in order to participate in this meeting are encouraged to contact the County Extension Office at 830-672-8531 to determine how reasonable accommodations can be made. The information given herein is for educational purposes only. Reference to commercial products or trade names is made with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by the Texas A & M AgriLife Extension