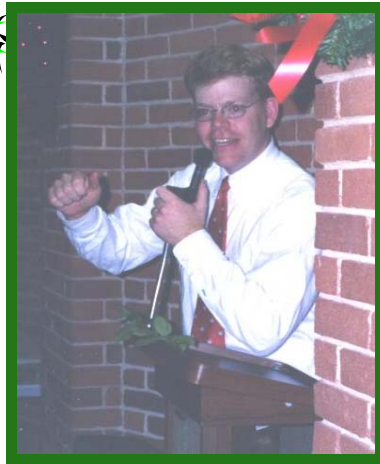




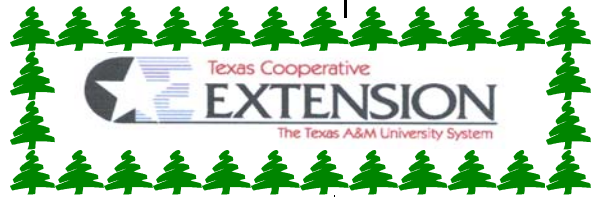
# ECHO

## Extension's Community Horticultural Outreach

DECEMBER 2003



**"You are Great!"**



Educational programs of Texas Cooperative Extension are open to all individuals without regard to race, color, sex, disability, religion, age or national origin. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas cooperating.

Merry Christmas to you My Friends,

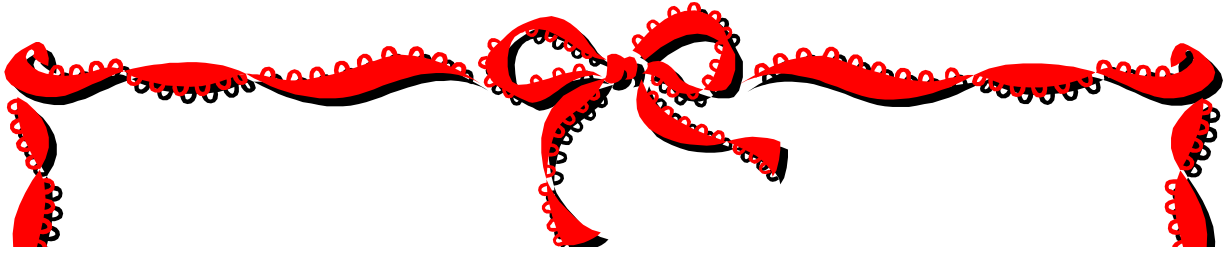
What a fun year I've had with you in 2003! Together we have done so much good for Collin County. Master Gardeners alone have contacted and helped well over 7,000 people with researched-based horticulture information. During the year, the members of CCMGA have given 5,496 hours in volunteer time. According to the Volunteer Center of Plano, that is the equivalent of handing Extension and Collin County a check for \$93,981! As I said at the banquet, there is no way for these numbers to tell the full story about the gardening successes that you have allowed people to experience. These numbers do not tell of the happiness that you have brought residents of North Texas. I'm so proud of you! You are doing wonderful work in Collin County and the surrounding area.

Speaking of the banquet—Great job! It was such an elegant, festive event. I was amazed at how much work got done so quickly. The food was fabulous, and all of the detailed planning paid off. I could not believe that the building was completely clean an hour after the event. All of you made my family and friends feel very welcome. Thank you for being the special people you are. I enjoyed showing you off!

Interns, thank you so much for the helpful telephone headset. It has already become a friend of mine. What a wonderful gift! It's been great getting to know you all this fall. You're a talented and motivated crew, and I look forward to the good times that we will have together serving Collin County.

Collin County Master Gardeners, you are GREAT! Enjoy this time with family and friends, and have a very merry Christmas.

Your friend,  
Landry Lockett



*Sending You Wishes For a  
Wonderful Holiday filled with love and good  
cheer!*

*The following pages are our Christmas Card to  
you. Take a minute or two to look back at  
highlights from our Fall activities, and get  
acquainted with our new Collin County Master  
Gardener Officers for 2004! \**

*See you all at our annual meeting scheduled for  
Thursday evening, January 22nd at the Coit  
Road Research and Extension Center!*

*In the meantime, pick up the new  
Master Gardener Directory and handbook at  
the Ext. Office in McKinney.*

*\*We look forward to Secretary Emma Bookout's bio and advice in January's newsletter*



Fall Class 2003



Little Hands on the Farm



Arboretum, 11/7/2003



Who are these Sunflowers?



*Happy Birthday Landry!*



Neil Sperry's Talk on 11/20/03



**Diane Poston  
President  
Collin County Master Gardeners Association**

**Question: Tell us where you grew up and a little about your family then and now.**

**Answer:** I was born in an Army hospital in Fort Dix NJ, and grew up in a very small and very historic area in Central NJ. The farmhouse I grew up in was built in 1682! My grandparents were immigrants from Hungary, and I lived with them in that very old farmhouse. Up until nine years ago, I lived within a two-mile radius of that farmhouse and never thought about moving away until I met John from Dallas. Now I'm transplanted here! I have one son who lives in New York, and John has three grown sons, all here in Texas.

**Question: What is your educational and/or professional background?**

**Answer:** I fell into the accounting field after a very short and unsuccessful stint as a waitress. In New Jersey I managed a small accounting firm for many years. After moving here, I was a controller for an ad agency, which was lots of fun, but we went belly-up, and I found my true profession/hobby—Gardening! Now I'm blissfully unemployed (too young to be retired)!

**Question: Do you have other hobbies? What interests do you have that might surprise us?**

**Answer:** Sewing, cooking, traveling, camping, hiking. I have done stained glass in the past, and when I have the time, I would love to start it up again.

**Question: Where do you spend your vacations? What would be your ideal vacation?**

**Answer:** Usually I try to make it back to the northeast to visit relatives. Some of my favorite vacations have been to Maine, Abaco-Bahamas, Big Bend and the Outer Banks of North Carolina. An extended trip to Alaska, or northwestern Canada or someplace uninhabited and with mountains and lots of trees would be my dream vacation.

**Question: If you could have the garden of your dreams, what would it look like and what would you grow? Where would it be?**

**Answer:** The garden of my dreams would be a cottage garden or English garden with lots of different plants—definitely not the formal look. It should be an extension of living space for the house. I would have very little grass, blooms all the time, a good mix of evergreen and herbaceous plants, and secret hiding places for my kitties. I love Texas, however, I think I would really like to try this wonderful hobby in some place with four actual seasons like Virginia or Maryland, maybe even back in New Jersey.

**Question: What advice do you have for our new interns as they become acquainted with Extension and helping the public?**

**Answer:** Remember you will never know everything. Always be open to learning. Think before you give advice. Make sure whatever you suggest is research based. Also, remember that the people you are talking to may not have as much passion and love of gardening you have. Listen well, be patient with them, ask good questions and supply reasonable advice. Relax and enjoy what you are doing, and take time to breathe in the fresh air and smile.



**Susan Owens  
First Vice President  
Collin County Master Gardeners Association**

**Question: Tell us where you grew up and a little about your family then and now.**

**Answer:** I grew up in Denison Texas. I am the oldest of four children and the only girl. I never missed having a sister as they all treated me like a queen! I have been married to Jim Owens for 20 years. We have lived in the same house in Celina for 18 years, and we have a very special family of five children, two sons -in-law, and three wonderful grandchildren. When I married Jim, he had custody of his three daughters from a previous marriage, and I had two boys from a previous marriage. All five lived together, and there are truly so many miracles in this beautifully blended

family that it is an article in itself. In May, 2004, my youngest will receive his bachelor's degree which means all five have received their bachelor's degrees!

**Question: What is your educational and/or professional background?**

**Answer:** I received a BS degree in mathematics and a minor in biology from Texas Women's University. I taught math for several years and then worked for my husband in our insurance agency for 15 years. This past April I retired from the insurance agency, and in July of this year I started a grower business, SLO Grown Farms and Garden. I am actively growing many varieties of crape myrtles, right now, at least fifty different kinds and 4 different types of roses: Knock Out, Nacogdoches, Pretty Lady and Souvenir of St Anne's. In January of 2004, I will begin a plant propagation internet class through Texas Tech University with Dr. Cynthia McKenney. I am very excited to learn plant propagation and to begin using the knowledge gained in my new endeavor.

**Where did you get your interest in gardening?**

**Answer:** My interest in gardening originally came from Jim's father, Ray Owens. He was very influential in sparking curiosity in me. When the last of my 5 children left for college, I enrolled in the Master Gardener program.

**Question: Do you have other hobbies? What interests do you have that would surprise us?**

**Answer:** One hobby that I have other than gardening that might surprise all is aerobic exercise. I love to walk, jog and lift weights. Where are the results?.. I guess a stronger heart, surprising?

**Question: Where do you spend your vacations? What would be your ideal vacation?**

**Answer:** Many of our vacations are spent with our grandchildren in Kentucky. It is quite a joy having grandchildren, and we try to see them at least every six weeks. My ideal vacation is in Hawaii. We will be going back in January of 2004, so I will miss our first Master Gardener meeting in January. The most ideal vacation would be to go skiing at Vail and then leave there and fly straight to Hawaii.

**Question: If you could have the garden of your dreams, what would it look like and what would you grow? Where would it be?**

**Answer:** I saw the garden of my dreams in October of this year. It is the San Antonio location of The Antique Rose Emporium. They have fabulous demonstration gardens full of native and adapted plants and, of course, antique roses peppered in-between. I would love to someday turn my five acres into something much like that.

**What advice do you have for our new interns as they become acquainted with Extension and helping the public?**

**Answer:** Honor the position you have earned. You have gained some valuable information, and you will find that sharing the knowledge with the public will be a rewarding experience. Always remember, we continue to learn, and if you do not know something, do not be afraid to say, "I don't know, but I will find out". Humility is a beautiful trait!



**Diane Sharp  
Second Vice President  
Collin County Master Gardeners Association**

**Question:** Tell us where you grew up and a little about your family then and now.

**Answer:** I was born and raised in Arlington Heights, Illinois, a Chicago suburb. I am an only child and so were both of my parents, so family reunions were held daily. I've been married to Ron Leeper since 1970. We have two children—Chad, 31, and Sara, 27, and two granddaughters Kylie, 7, and Kamryn, 5.

**Question:** What is your educational and/or professional background?

**Answer:** I have math degrees from the University of Wisconsin at White-water and UTD. I began teaching math at Richland College in 1976 and later taught at CCCCD. I'm not teaching currently, but may return to the classroom sometime. We came to Texas after college when Ron joined Texas Instruments. He currently works at Raytheon in McKinney where he is Director of Operations of the Space and Airborne Systems. We lived in Richardson for 28 years and have lived outside Celina for 4 years. We have a few acres, just enough for a horse and a little hay. We absolutely love life in the country and just wish we had bought a little more land.

**Where did you get your interest in gardening?**

**Answer:** I don't know how I came to garden. Our house had a few very old established perennial beds that got very little attention, although after I left home my dad had incredible vegetable gardens. I have always loved color and unusual plants. I believe if a little is good, a lot is much better.

**Question:** Do you have other hobbies? What interests do you have that would surprise us?

**Answer:** I have been a quilter for over thirty years, although lately, I specialize in planning instead of finishing, so I now have an absolutely incredible fabric collection. I enjoy reading, especially mysteries. We've played bridge in the same couples group for twenty-five years. What you may find surprising is that my husband and I began ball-room dancing a few years ago to be ready for our daughter's wedding, and we really enjoy it. We've even performed in several shows! Now, that's really incredible for us.

**Question:** Where do you spend your vacations? What would be your ideal vacation?

**Answer:** We enjoy traveling now that our children are grown, but we don't have a particular destination. I enjoy going new places. We seem to prefer country to city. We've gone on two cruises and will go on another one next year. Now, those are a lot of fun! I would go on another trip to Alaska any time.

**Question:** If you could have the garden of your dreams, what would it look like and what would you grow? Where would it be?

**Answer:** The garden of my dreams would be right here in Celina, but it would be finished! We always seem to be adding a new flower bed. Killing the grass and tilling is not our favorite activity. I point and Ron tills. I do almost all the planting. My dream garden would have no bermuda grass and only two or three grasshoppers instead of thousands. There would always be one or two new plants ready to be added, and nothing would die before I get it into the ground. I would like to have as many different plants as possible with every imaginable color of flower. I would like some peonies, and I would love a beautiful Peace rose, my dad's favorite flower.

**What advice do you have for our new interns as they become acquainted with Extension and helping the public?**

**Answer:** GET YOUR HOURS AND REPORT THEM ON TIME! (Well, of course, I had to say that!) Try as many different types of activities as you can. You won't know if you like something until you try it. Take advantage of educational opportunities. The more you know, the more comfortable you'll be talking to people. I think it's true that the more you put into the organization, the more you get out of it. There's something here for everyone. Find what you like and have fun!



**Beth DiGioia**  
**Treasurer**  
**Collin County Master Gardeners Association**

**Question: Tell us where you grew up and a little about your family then and now.**

**Answer:** I grew up in Plymouth Meeting, Pennsylvania which is a suburb of Philadelphia in southeastern Pennsylvania. I am the middle child of three. Bruce is two years older than I, Brenda is 18 months younger. My sister Kim was born when I was 16. My husband Larry and I have been married for 25 years. We've known each other since junior high school. I have three girls: Lauren 18 (my dancer), Kristin 15 (my softball player), and Erin 15 (my musician).

**Question: What is your educational and/or professional background?**

**Answer:** I have a degree in Marketing. I held various positions in Marketing and Human Resources before becoming a realtor. I've been a stay-at-home Mom for 18 years, during which time I've run an at-home marketing firm, pursued volunteer positions and fooled around with decorating my home. I've done a lot of driving! I recently started back to college at Richland to pursue my degree in Horticulture.

**Question: Where did you get your interest in gardening?**

**Answer:** Growing up, our property had a huge wooded area; my siblings and I spent many hours playing and building forts. I loved being in the woods. My father had a large and productive vegetable garden, and my mother threw out the requisite marigold seeds (saved from the previous year), but that was the extent of their interest. However, Mrs. Bingham lived two doors down. She was a "master gardener" and taught me to love gardening. A funny aside: for pin money, I used to weed gardens in the neighborhood!

**Question: Do you have other hobbies? What interests do you have that might surprise us?**

**Answer:** Most of my free time is spent studying and running my household. I still do a lot of driving! We frequently enjoy entertaining, and we are blessed with wonderful friends. I love to travel and would gladly vagabond about if given the chance.

**Question: Where do you spend your vacations? What would be your ideal vacation?**

**Answer:** We don't vacation in the true sense of going away for a week or two at a set time each year. We are more apt to take a long weekend and run away at the spur of the moment; it's amazing what even one night away from home can do to re-charge your batteries. Our favorite places are LaJolla, Napa and Lake Tahoe, CA; we can't decide if we are beach or mountain people. Renting a villa in Italy and immersing ourselves in the village life would be my ideal vacation.

**Question: If you could have the garden of your dreams, what would it look like and what would you grow? Where would it be?**

**Answer:** I love gardens like those designed by Rosemary Verey. Kind of the English garden look, packed with plants and somewhat blowsy. I like a garden with good bones and structure, but not so formal that it looks stiff. Blue, white and pink is my favorite color combination.

**Question: What advice do you have for our new interns as they become acquainted with Extension and helping the public?**

**Answer:** Have fun. Be kind. Don't be afraid to say "I don't know."

Best wishes  
from us all for

A Happy  
New  
Year!