



ECHO

Extension's Community Horticultural Outreach

MAR—APRIL 2004

Hello Friends,

The amount of telephone calls and our business this spring are good indications that we are doing our job. This year we are involved in more programs, giving more talks and answering more plant questions than ever before. I am proud of you all for the impact that you are having in North Texas. You are expanding the efforts of Extension exponentially.

As most of you know, the plant sale was a huge success. Your hard work was evident. I agree with the many comments that were made to the effect that this went so smoothly that it was as if we had done this before. Certainly we learned some good lessons to apply to next year's plant sale for continued success. Candace Fountoulakis and her crew are to be commended for a wonderful job of planning and implementation. Growers are currently being paid for the plants that we bought, and an update about how we came out financially will be available at the next general meeting.

Thanks for your hard work this spring! Keep on sending your hours in to Diane Sharp. Also, remember that if you are unable to fulfill your scheduled Telephone Answerline time, please find a replacement for yourself. This will help keep us out of a bind at the office.

You're great!

Landry Lockett, CEA-Horticulture
Texas Cooperative Extension



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.

Don't Miss our

APRIL MEETING

Thursday, April 22nd

Noon at the Heard

Welcome to the New Collin County Master Gardeners

By Janice Miller



Marge Bryan

Marge and her husband moved to Allen about a year ago from the Houston area. Marge completed the Harris County Master Gardener program in 2002. Marge stayed involved in the Houston area by working with the HCMG's Friendship Garden which grew vegetables for a Women's Shelter and volunteering at the McDonald House.

Her gardening interests include butterfly gardening, herbs, and day lilies. Marge said that she has been collecting day lilies and she now has them planted "everywhere".

In the past year, Marge has been involved in the Allen Garden Club and volunteering at a local elementary by participating in their developmental reading program with first grade students. As a Collin County Master Gardener, she is already involved in the Horticulture Therapy program and the Plant Sale.

Mary Lou Cole

Like a traveling vine, Mary Lou Cole joins Collin County Master Gardeners after travels from Vermont through Tucson to the Collin County section of North Dallas.

Mary Lou is transferring her membership from the Dallas County Master Gardener Association where she recently graduated with her 2002 class.

Mary Lou's gardening interests include herbs, Xeriscape, and perennials. In addition to being a Master Gardener, Mary Lou is also a Master Naturalist. Mary Lou is the Treasurer for the Master Naturalists and she volunteers at the Discovery Gardens in Fair Park.

Bird Watching keeps Mary Lou traveling and she is currently planning a trip to the Houston area. Her dream is to bird watch "down-under" in Australia.

Impressed by the number of volunteer opportunities that are available to the CCMG, Mary Lou is eager to volunteer and has already worked the Plant Sale.



Maribeth Flowers

Maribeth Flowers currently a Wylie resident has lived in the Dallas area since 1987 after moving from Chicago. Maribeth has been active with the Speakers Bureau in the Dallas County Master Gardener Association since graduating with the class of 1997. As a self employed landscape designer, she has put her love of plants and of design to great use!

Pat Marquardt

Pat Marquardt calls herself a "nomad", originally from Boston, she has lived all over and currently resides in Plano. Pat transferred her membership from the Dallas County Master Gardener Association where she graduated with the class of 1999.



Pat's gardening interests include natives and creating wildlife habitats. Pat has five children scattered around the United States and Canada. Regardless of their residence, they all rely on her for gardening advice.

Pat works as a health care consultant with a focus on end of life issues. She started her career as a home health care nurse, moved into consulting specializing in start ups. Most recently she was the president and a full time consultant for Journey Home.

Shirley Reynolds

About a year ago, Shirley and her husband moved to McKinney from Clear Lake, a Houston suburb to be closer to their daughters and grandchildren.

Shirley graduated with the class of 2000 from the Galveston County Master Gardener Association. As an active member, Shirley helped with the Galveston County Demonstration Garden located at the extension office and their yearly plant sales, including a Fruit and Nut sale in February and a Perennial plant sale in the fall.

Shirley considers herself a "dirt gardener" and particularly enjoys perennials and native plants. Shirley's other interests include cooking, genealogy and antique collecting. Shirley is already volunteering in Collin County Master Gardeners with Horticulture Therapy.

Our Cookbook Project Needs Your Help



We need your recipes! 152 recipes from 18 contributors does not a cookbook make! The publishers recommend at least 75 contributors to make a successful return (profit). Our goal is to have at least 50 contributors who each submit five recipes. The cookbook will have a “This and That” category, so send in your recipes for dirt, organic pesticide, or anything else interesting. Nine volunteers have committed to helping to put the book together, we just need the “meat” of the book. The recipes can be copied and mailed, faxed, emailed, whatever is easiest. **Please call Karen Lai at (972) 842-8456 if you have any questions or email Karen at mksfoods@aol.com**

Submitted recipes have been categorized as follows:

17 - Appetizer & Beverage	9 - Breads & Rolls
18 - Soup & Salad	26 - Main Dishes
16 - Vegetable & Sides	40 - Desserts
10 - Cookies & Candies	16 - This & That

Information Booths and Displays — Renee Ferguson, Project Leader

March was a very busy month for the Information booths. We have had tables loaded with our publications at Shades of Green, Home Depot in McKinney, King of Glory Lutheran Church's Spring Gardening Festival and, of course, at our own plant sale. Our efforts, as well as some of the other groups, to get the word out to the public about who we are and what we do seems to be working. It has been mentioned that the phones have been very busy for this time of year. Thanks to all of the volunteers that staffed these booths, you all did a Great Job.

The upcoming events for the next couple of months are as follows:

- *Home Depot* in McKinney (75 and 380) – April 10 – 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. – one more volunteer needed
- *It's A Natural* (Arbor Hills in Plano) – April 17 – 9:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. – one volunteer needed in the morning and one in the afternoon or one all day
- *Texas SmartScape Lawn and Garden Showcase* (Plano) – April 24 – 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m.
- *Home Depot* in McKinney (75 and 380) – May 8 – 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. – one more volunteer needed
- *Crumps Nursery* (McKinney) – Date and time to be determined

To work any of these events, please contact Renee Ferguson at 972-359-9607 or rennybird@comcast.net.

Project Leader: Diane Poston, cisco007@swbell.net



THE JMG CORNER:

The **Junior Master Gardener** committee has been hard at work and their efforts are soon going to pay off. In April a training session is planned for the McKinney ISD (MISD) 3rd and 4th grade teachers. The training session will introduce the program to them and illustrate how the **JMG** program enriches the curriculum and at the same time allows the children to have fun and learn about horticulture and our environment. This training session will prepare the teachers to initiate a fall **JMG** program in their classroom. In addition, we will be conducting a pilot **JMG** program in a third grade class in each of two MISD schools.

Another opportunity that is in the works is with the Girl Scouts. Currently the Service Council is interested in the program as a way for the older Cadets to earn their service badges and together with them, we will be working with the younger scouts in earning their **JMG** Golden Ray Series certificate and/or **JMG** certificate. The **JMG** program has just issued a new Golden Ray series in a partnership with the National Wildlife Federation called the Wildlife Gardener. We are very excited about this new program and think that it is a perfect match for the Girl Scouts. To learn more about this program, visit www.jmgkids.org.

In April, we will have a children's activity table at both the City of Plano-"It's a Natural" event on the 17th and the "Texas SmartScape Lawn and Garden Showcase" on the 24th. The theme for the It's a Natural activity table will be trees and will include leaf rubbing, tree ID, and a 'how tall is that tree' activity. The SmartScape activity table will be located in the children's tent (out of the wind) and the theme will be butterflies. We will have lots of information about butterflies and the activity will be making coffee filter butterflies to illustrate 'insect symmetry'.

If you are interested in this exciting program and wish to become involved or if you would like to be a 'helper' in any way, please call or e-mail Diane Poston cisco007@swbell.net. This is a great opportunity to **get involved** and have lots of fun.

City of Plano Happenings:

Plano Pure Products Spring 2004 Sales Dates

April 17th and May 15th

8:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Parkway Service Center

4120 W. Plano Parkway

Bulk Products

Bulk Compost- \$20.00/cy

Bulk Topdressing - \$30.00/cy

Bulk Wood Mulch - \$12.00/cy

Bulk Soil Blend - \$24.00/cy

Bagged Products

Bagged Compost- \$4.00/bag

Bagged Topdressing - \$5.00/bag

Bagged Wood Mulch - \$3.50/bag

Biodegradable Kraft Bags \$6.00 for 20 bags

Texas SmartScape Lawn and Garden Showcase

Saturday, April 24, 2004

10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Environmental Discovery Center (at the Parkway Service Center)

4120 W. Plano Parkway

For more information visit www.planopure.com

It's Purple Martin Time!

By Diane Poston

The purple martins have arrived! My husband and I have been in the process of establishing a purple martin colony in our backyard for the past four years. We started with a PVC castle that we purchased in Canton in 1999. This was a unique 8 compartment white 'castle' using red funnels for the roof. We were able to attract two couples the first year and we were hooked! The castle did not hold up to the weather and after the first year, we decided to invest in the manufactured gourds. We started with 8 gourds on one pole and, just this year, have added 4 more gourds. It is a regular martin condo!

This year during the weekend of March 6th we saw the first martins arriving and were so excited. It is like having old friends come back to visit. Usually they first start arriving around the end of February and into March. They will perch and fly around the houses for the first couple of weeks and then get serious about building their nests. We have been having a big problem with sparrows and have to take down the housing daily to clean out the sparrow nests. The Purple Martin Conservation Association suggests bumping off the non-native species (the English House Sparrow), but we just cannot bring ourselves to do this, so every night we take down the housing and clean out the sparrow's work for the day until the martins start nesting. After that the martins become very territorial and defend their own nests. We have installed starling resistant entrances on our gourds, and would suggest this option for anyone interested in establishing their own colony. As bad as the sparrows are, the starlings are worse and have been known to kill the baby purple martins.

There is nothing like working in the garden and having the martins flying around overhead singing their beautiful song. We love to talk to them, and I really think they listen. They will sit up there and cock their heads and just watch us. In the evening, around dusk, we sit in our yard and watch them come home to roost. It's like clockwork; first the martins come in, then the chimney swifts swirl



and dive into our chimney. At that point our outside lights come on and the sun sets, and we head for the indoors to listen to our chimney swifts chatter through the evening. Does life get any better? The real benefit of having both the martins and chimney swifts around is that they eat all kinds of bad bugs. It is thought that they are huge mosquito eaters, but that is not so. They fly and eat during the day, and high in the air. This is not when or where mosquitoes are flying. They do eat squash bugs, termites, beetles and numerous other bad bugs. Unfortunately, they don't discriminate and also eat the good and the beautiful. But that is all in accordance with the balance of nature. Last year we had three nesting martin couples and raised eleven babies. We are hoping that this year their numbers will increase.

Gardening in the spring would not be complete or as gratifying without our purple martins. For more information, call me or visit www.purplemartin.org.

TIMELY REMINDER

Don't forget to get your registration in for the Texas Master Gardener Advanced Training Seminar scheduled for May 6, 7, and 8. Prices go up after April 15th! Look at the schedule of events on the texasmastergardeners.com website for more information

Spring Gardening Festival

By Diane Sharp

King of Glory Lutheran Church in Dallas hosted the second Spring Gardening Festival on Saturday, March 20th. Collin County Master Gardeners joined 25 other exhibitors, 20 speakers and Neil Sperry, for a day of gardening information. The exhibitors included animal rescue groups, garden clubs, nurseries, gardening organizations and more. The Dallas Master Gardeners provided most of the speakers, had an information table and plant clinic. Our information booth was manned (or woman-ed) by Becky Alexander, Cheryl Lehnertz, Sandy Seiser, and Diane Sharp. Diane spoke on *Texas Superstars – Wait! Don't Plant That Begonia*. We talked to quite a few people, handed out lots of information, told everyone about the plant sale, and maybe even recruited a few new Master Gardeners. The Spring Gardening Festival provided another good opportunity to spread the word about Master Gardeners and to help people enjoy their lawns and gardens by giving them help with some problems.

THINGS TO DO, PLACES TO GO...

By Helen Snyder

Please confirm all dates and times before you go.

The Heard Museums 15th Annual Native Plant Sale is April 16, 17, and 18. The 16th is for members. 972-562-5566 x 237. www.heardmuseum.org. "Shop from over 24,000 plants, including with 40 new varieties. You'll find everything your north Texas landscape needs -- trees, shrubs, perennials, grasses and vines. This year we've added native bulbs and, back by popular demand, a large selection of culinary herbs."

Dallas Arboretum: www.dallasarboretum.org, 8525 Garland Road, Dallas. (214) 327-8263.

Saturday, April 10:

9:30 a.m.— 11:30 a.m. Creating a Butterfly Garden. \$20

9:30 a.m.— 11:30 a.m. Show Stopping Annuals that Beat the Heat \$20

Saturday, April 24: 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Go Native, incorporate native plants into your landscape. \$20

Richland College, Dallas: 972 238-6106.

Summer class listings come out the middle to the end of April and classes begin the first week in May.

Speakers Bureau Schedule of Talks [Nancy Furth, Project Leader \(n.furth@verizon.net\)](mailto:n.furth@verizon.net)

Date:	Talk:	Location:	Time:
April 6	Container Gardening	Wylie	7:00 p.m.
April 12	Container Gardening	McKinney Senior Center	10:30 a.m.
April 13	Wildflowers, Legends and More	Heritage Ranch	TBA
April 14	Wait! Don't Plant That Begonia!	Allen High School	7:00 p.m.
April 15	Herbs	Farmersville Garden Club	Contact Mary Nell Jackson
April 15	Raised Bed Gardening	Vines High School	7:00 p.m.
April 17	What a Difference a Plant Makes!	Allen High School	7:00 p.m.
April 20	Butterfly and Hummingbird Gardening	Plano Senior Center	7:00 p.m.
April 24	Alternatives to Turf	Texas SmartScape Lawn and Garden Showcase	10:00 a.m.
April 26	Wildflowers, Legends and More	Celina Garden Club	Contact Judy Toole
April 27	Landscaping for Wildlife	Wylie	7:00 p.m.
April 29	Shade Gardening	Vines High School	7:00 p.m.
May 4	Raised Bed and Vertical Gardening	Wylie	7:00 p.m.
May 10	Shade Gardening	McKinney Senior Center	10:30 a.m.
May 13	Landscaping for Wildlife	Vines High School	7:00 p.m.

HORTICULTURE EDUCATOR: Bart Blaydes

By Helen Synder



Professor Bart Blaydes has been teaching horticulture at Richland College in Dallas for the last 28 years. A 5th generation Texan, he attended Texas Tech University, the University of Texas at Dallas and East Texas State (now Texas A&M at Commerce).

As a new student at Richland, I thought it would be nice to introduce Collin County Master Gardeners to this professor and horticulturist. I asked him the following questions:

In your 28 years as a teacher of horticulture at Richland College, what changes have you seen in horticulture and what is offered here at school?

“The industry has made the field of horticulture more professional by requiring education and licensing on the State level. The State now requires a two year degree to change from a total of 72 hours to 65 hours overall.”

How have studies impacted the way people garden today in Texas vs. the way they gardened 28 years ago?

“Use of more drought tolerant plants, designing with water requirements on plants by cutting down on irrigation of large mass plantings. They now use larger hardscapes, cutting down on turf surface areas.”

When and why did Richland College decide to make a major commitment to the horticulture department and build two \$100,000 greenhouses?

“Two years ago our old greenhouses were falling apart so we had to replace them. We also must keep up with the new technology of the industry.”

What is the most popular horticulture class here?

“Texas Native Plants; the Trees course, and the Shrubs course.”

Who are the students in the horticulture classes, i.e., gardeners, people training for jobs, etc.?

“The students are a mix. Some are right out of high school, while others are making a career change and a few who want to learn gardening.”

What are the biggest mistakes Texas gardeners make?

“The most frequent mistake is that they over water, over water, over water! Next would be that they don’t know the characteristics and growth habits of plants. They plant plants in the wrong location or use plant varieties that won’t do well here in the Dallas area.”

How many students study horticulture each year at Richland College?

“This spring we have 347 enrolled in classes.”

You are a landscape architect. Does this mean you drew up a plan for your garden, and you stuck to it—no fudging?

“Always stick to your plan and use seasonal plants that can be changed to set moods for a garden or change textures in small amounts. A plan should always have a theme such as an English Garden, Japanese Garden, etc.”

Horticulture Educator, cont.

If you could only have one shrub in your yard, what shrub would you choose here in Texas? Why?

"I have three, not just one:

1. **Agarito, Mahonia trifoliolata is evergreen with bluish green leaves, yellow flowers and red fruit that makes jelly or wine. Seeds can be used as a coffee substitute if roasted.**
2. **Evergreen Sumac, Rhus sempervirens is evergreen with glossy leaves, white flowers and red fruit that can be mixed with water to make a tart cooling drink. I have eaten the fruit right off the shrub—it has a tart taste.**
3. **Green Pittosporum, Pittosporum tobira is evergreen with glossy leaves and white to pale yellow flowers. It has a problem with freezing out here."**

What do you consider the best all-around tree for a small yard in Texas?

"Depends on where you are in Texas because of soil conditions and temperature zones. If I had to pick it would be:

1. **Texas Mountain Laurel, Sophora secundiflora, 25-35 ft. tall evergreen, fragrant purple flowers.**
2. **Eve's Necklace (Texas Sophora), Sophora affinis, fragrant pinkish white flowers, interesting black seedpods.**
3. **Lacey Oak, Quercus laceyi, 35-45 ft. tall with grayish green leaves."**

What perennials do you consider a waste of time or too much work for the effect?

"None. If you are a true gardener you won't mind working on short blooming plantings."

CLOSING NOTE: Mr. Blaydes has designed and planned lovely demonstration gardens on the Richland campus that incorporate many species to study and enjoy for fall color, flower color or texture changes. Although his time is extremely limited for a guided tour (Friday mornings between 8 and 9 a.m.), the gardens outside the greenhouse can be viewed by the public during school hours. If you would be interested in a group tour with Mr. Blaydes, please contact Helen Snyder.



Now ending its bloom time, the TEXAS MOUNTAIN LAUREL, Sophora secundiflora, at the Dallas Arboretum was a sight to behold two weeks ago. Some say the fragrance is like grape soda!

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

The following article appeared in the February, 2004, issue of the National Geographic

It was written by Joel Achenbach
Washington Post Staff Writer



Centaurea maculosa
Spotted Knapweed

WHO KNEW?

Plants on the Warpath

The roots of combat

At some point in the 1970s, people started talking to houseplants. They figured plants would grow better if made the recipients of verbal nourishment and a little extra CO₂. There was an even bigger presumption: Plants were gentle, peace-loving, tolerant organisms. (Hippies, obviously.)

But now we know the sordid truth: Some plants are stone-cold killers.

Consider the spotted knapweed, accused invader of the American West. The dogma among ecologists is that invasive alien species thrive because they're free of the diseases, insects, and other enemies that keep them in check on their native turf.

Knapweed, however, has a secret weapon: Its roots secrete a chemical that kills other plants. This is known as allelopathy, and it's tough to prove because soil is such a dense stew of microbes, mites, nematodes, and all sorts of chemicals. How do you tweeze a toxin from the mix and know where it came from and what it's doing?

Colorado State University scientists recently manages to identify knapweed's killer chemical. They grew the plant in a sterile liquid, then examined the compounds its roots released into the liquid. When one chemical, catechin, was applied to the roots of other plants, it triggered the production of free radicals, which passed from the roots upward, activating a wave of cell death. In essence, a tiny amount of catechin induced other plants to commit suicide.

"People think plants are innocuous. We're showing that plants can be as mean as any animal," says Jorge Vivanco, leader of the team.

Plants may also use chemicals to "communicate" with one another. In the case of knapweed, the message is simple: "You die now." (Vivanco's group calls this "negative communication." To say the least.) But sometimes the message, delivered to fellow members of the species, is something along the lines of "mites attacking; shore up your defenses."

For example, when lima bean plants are attacked by spider mites, they call out the cavalry, emitting a chemical distress signal that attracts carnivorous mites that eat the spider mites. The signal inspires nearby uninfested lima bean plants to do the same thing.

Because we humans are so biased toward visual and auditory signals, and don't tend to sniff everything and lick random objects, we don't realize how much the world around us is shot through with chemical warnings.

Plants don't make that mistake. When something crosses them, they take action.

So the next time you take a stroll in a garden, maybe you should look over your shoulder.

—Joel Achenbach

Washington Post Staff Writer



A message to all our Plant Sale volunteers:

I just wanted to express my gratitude to all the volunteers who helped make our first annual plant sale such a tremendous success, in spite of a few rookie oversights and a couple of circumstances beyond our control. The wealth of insight, experience and willingness to go the extra mile by so many members of the Collin County Master Gardeners made the tasks of the project coordinator so much easier. Those that also were able to help out this past Thursday, Friday and Saturday were particularly appreciated, and I hope to personally thank those who went way beyond the call of duty and exceeded the hours for which they originally signed on, just to make sure the positions they filled were manned for the entire sale. With the continued input of all of us, we can make next year's sale even better. I look forward to hearing the final numbers from 'Kid Lockett' and how we can improve on our first effort.

Candace Fountoulakis

**ATTENTION MASTER GARDENERS:
HEARD NATIVE PLANT SALE
VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE**

We will be helping out at the Heard on

April 14th 9-2 Unload & Setup

April 15th 9-2 Unload & Setup

April 16th 9-7 Unload & Setup 4-7, assist with sale

April 17th 9-4 Assist with sale

I have set up a schedule with 2 1/2 hour and 3 hour shifts, Anyone wanting to volunteer that has not signed up at our last meeting, should contact me, I will add your name to the schedule.

Diane Poston

This **ECHO** Newsletter was co-edited by JANICE MILLER and NANCY FURTH. Your suggestions on formatting and content are appreciated. Article contributions are always welcome. Our next issue will be the May/June issue which will go out the first week of June. Articles should be submitted by May 31st.

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