



# ECHO

## Extension's Community Horticultural Outreach

May—June 2005

Hello Friends,

Enough great words cannot be said about your efforts for this year's plant sale. Your hard work was admired by many, and I received numerous compliments on your wonderful job. I appreciate all that you did for this effort.

Keep in mind that we are one third of the way through this year, and you should be well on your way to meeting your volunteer hour certification or recertification hours. Most of you are right on track; however, there are folks with no volunteer hours thus far. You will be accountable for these hours by December. These requirements have been put in place to give structure to our organization, and they will be enforced.

We've got fun times ahead as we work together on everything from helping in the CEMAP gardens to researching thrips on roses and making new friends with our horticulture therapy program. If you haven't checked out the latest progress made on our website, go to [www.ccmgatx.org](http://www.ccmgatx.org). Webmaster, Vicki Burk, has added some fantastic features to improve the site.

Take care,

Landry Lockett, CEA-Horticulture, Texas Cooperative Extension



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## Planting and Harvesting Herbs for Herbal Teas

By *Mary Nell Jackson*

Healthy, inexpensive and enjoyed by everyone~ tea is the ideal beverage especially for picnics. Trying to stay away from caffeine you say, well come to the May CCMG program/picnic and learn how to grow your own herbs for teas.

Mark Blumenthal, founder and Executive Director of the American Botanical Council based in Austin, TX and Editor/Publisher of *Herbalgram* reports in a recent issue of the *Herbalgram*, "the total number of products and annual demand for specialty tea products in the U.S. has reached record levels, according to the latest edition of The Tea Is "Hot" Report." He states that The Tea Is "Hot" Report forecasts annual tea sales of \$10 billion in 2010 based largely on the projected demands of American 'baby boomers' embracing specialty tea as their primary beverage. Look out Starbucks!

You may recognize and perhaps purchase many of the leading specialty tea brands such as Celestial

Seasonings, Honest Tea, Tazo, The Republic of Tea, Stash Tea, and Traditional Medicines ~ these are a few among hundreds of other brands and products. Some are strictly herbal while others contain caffeine. {*camellia sinensis*}

Wouldn't it be more convenient, less costly, more healthful and just plain fun to go into your garden to harvest your own tea plants to create your mixes to consume fresh or dried. Of course, if you choose this method your herbs must be cared for organically. Spring has sprung on the Collin County landscape...time to plant. Our monthly CCMG May meeting will be all about making herbal teas as well as adding 'real tea' to herbal mixes.

If you want to get a head start on your herbal tea harvest plant flavors you like. A few choices I enjoy are lemon verbena, all the mints, lemon thyme, lemon grass, lemon balm to name a few. You can see I love lemon/mint flavors.

This is a picnic you will not want to miss. Everyone will receive a small bag, enough for a few pots of herbal blended tea. We hope you will learn how unexpected combinations of herbal teas create good health and happy taste buds. See you and the ants in the Pole Barn at the Heritage Farmstead in May.

## Hello...Answer Line

By *Rhonda Meiore*

Well folks, spring 2005 is proving to be a busy one for the Answer Line. The call volumes are picking up rapidly. The recent questions have been about vegetable gardening and turf. I've been reviewing the call logs from 2004. If the calls are like they were last year we will soon be getting questions about perennials and annuals that can stand up to the Texas heat. These calls will be in addition to the ongoing turf and vegetable garden questions that we are currently receiving.

Rene Mahoney has requested that we all be more proactive in signing up for phone duty. There are still open dates in April. Almost all of May is open for volunteer sign up. There are still quite a few 2004 interns who haven't started their phone duty at all. Interns will not be eligible for certification without fifteen hours of phone duty so sign up soon, please. To sign up for phone duty, call Sheila Nelson at the Extension Office. Sheila can be reached at (972) 458-4232.

## ***Getting to Know... Mary Means***

***By Janice Miller***

You may know Mary Means as the Coordinated Education and Marketing Assistance Program (CEMAP) project chairperson. She's the lady with the beautiful smile and wonderful wit that meets you out by the gazebo at the Texas A&M Coit Road Extension center on the CEMAP workdays. Mary works with Dr. Wayne Mackay to coordinate the tasks that CCMG's complete to help extension employees keep up the planting beds in the gardens. The tasks are varied depending on the time of the year, but generally include planting, weeding, pruning, and general clean-up. Mary wants to continue working as the CEMAP chairperson because it's a job that she truly enjoys. Having volunteered in the CEMAP gardens several times myself, I understand why she enjoys it. It is very gratifying work. At the end of the morning, you can step back and survey the difference the team has made. In the process you have had the opportunity to visit with old friends and make some new ones and generally learn something new. In addition, we make a huge difference to Dr. Mackay and his staff. This year's state convention in May will bring in master gardeners from around Texas to view the newest varieties of plants being tested. It will be an opportunity to show-off the wonderful facility and grounds. Several beds were recently planted with petunias and by May they will display a riot of color. Mary explained her next project as the CEMAP chairperson "every two years, there is a commercial field day. Commercial landscapers and high school groups come to listen to speakers and see what kinds of products are available." The field day will be held in September and Mary is looking forward to making it run smoothly. When asked why she enjoys being the CEMAP chairperson she replied, "You feel good, get inspired and talk to nice people. It's been good for me."



Mary Means has been a Collin County Master Gardener since Fall 2002, but horticulture is in her blood! Her father was a Professor of Horticulture at Clemson University and two of her four siblings are master gardeners in Clemson, South Carolina. When Mary's father passed away 15 years ago, her mother donated money to build a Xeriscape garden at Clemson University. Named for her father, the L.O. Van Blaricom Xeriscape garden is a popular spot for weddings. Mary's mother who still lives in Clemson recently turned 92! Mary and her husband Ken have two sons, Rick and David. Her oldest son, Rick lives in Austin with his wife and 6 month old son. David lives in Richardson and works at Raytheon, which also happens to be where Ken works.

Mary was born and raised in Clemson, South Carolina. She met Ken while still in high school and they were married during their third year in college at Clemson University. Mary graduated with a B.A. in Education and English. Mary said that her practice teaching "was a horrible experience" and she swore that she would never teach! Ken graduated from Clemson University and joined the Air Force as a lieutenant. Ken and Mary moved to Luke Air Force Base in Arizona where after five years Ken separated as a Captain. While they lived on the Air Force Base, Mary worked as the Campus Coordinator for Golden Gate University. She recommended, scheduled and advertised courses, located instructors, counseled students, prepared press releases and letters for potential students and instructors. She also coordinated textbook selection with instructors and managed classroom facilities. In addition to working full time, she wrote and published a weekly newsletter for the officers' wives club.

After moving to the North Texas area, Mary spent many years working for the Wylie United Methodist Church in various capacities. As secretary, her job responsibilities encompassed everything from publishing the weekly newsletter to doing the church bookkeeping. Mary then accepted a position as the Director of Music. Her responsibilities included directing four choirs, purchasing and maintaining music, caring for 5 pianos and 2 organs and writing a column for the weekly church newsletter. In addition to directing, she played the piano and the organ and sang when needed. After leaving the employment of the church, Mary worked as a temporary for Manpower, Inc where she worked in a variety of environments including legal offices, medical companies, hospitals, large corporations and small businesses, government offices and non-profit organizations. Mary has not "officially" worked since 2001. "Officially" meaning at something that she was paid to do! Since quitting work she has taken several horticulture courses through Collin County Community College and put together some very useful books docu-

*(Continued on page 4)*

**PLANT IN THE SPOTLIGHT:****Cedar Elm (*Ulmus crassifolia*)****By Candace Fountoulakis**

Way back when, America loved the elm. Then along came the dreaded Dutch elm disease and we quit planting the American elm in our home landscapes. A pity yes, but here in Texas we have a native that endures despite that legacy and its genetic similarities. The cedar elm in winter is a very nice tree indeed. The small, intricately branched twigs resemble its more famous relative and create a pretty view when seen from below. Although the cedar elm (*Ulmus crassifolia*) doesn't typically form the vase shape of a mature American elm (*Ulmus americana*), it does fit very well into modern, smaller yards with a more upright, narrow stance. In the forest, the tree is often found growing quite successfully in crowded conditions, which as city dwellers we can relate to all too well. Along creeks I see this tree towering above its neighbors, healthy and green in spring and summer. Cedar elm flowers and sets seed in the autumn, unlike the more common spring bloomers. The small rough leaves and petite seeds are easy to compost when they are released by the tree and provide a nice yellow fall color most years. Thinking about an alternative to the Bradford pear that split last spring in a sudden storm? Consider the cedar elm. It is widely available, so you can choose a good specimen with a strong central leader and plenty of healthy leaves. Fall is the best time to plant trees in north Texas but you can be looking around now for the best suppliers. The bark is variable, but lighter in color and less vertically ridged than American elm and, as the accompanying photo shows, the elm is nothing if not adaptable! The tree in the photo stands in a Plano cemetery where it consumed a portion of the iron fencing surrounding the family plot. Plant a cedar elm and leave a legacy in your own landscape.



Fence Eating Elm

*(Getting to Know Mary Means, Continued from page 3)*  
menting native plants and woody plants.

Mary and Ken moved to Blue Ridge Texas about a year and a half ago. Since then they have been planting trees, shrubs and plants that will attract wildlife to their 20 acres of rolling hills. However, Mary's biggest project was completed in April of 2004 when she submitted a Wildlife Management Plan to the Collin County Tax Assessor. The lengthy report included information on how she and Ken planned to attract wildlife to their property. The report also included the types of animals and birds expected. Mary and Ken were subsequently granted the only agriculture exemption based on wildlife that has been granted in Collin county to date. In order to keep the agriculture exemption, Mary and Ken must continue to improve the property to attract wildlife. Since moving in, they have planted about 100 trees and shrubs. All of which provide shelter and food to birds and other wildlife. Last spring they had the pond re-dug and stocked it with channel catfish, hybrid bluegill, red ear brim and minnows. The fish provide a food source for the waterfowl which visit the pond. The waterfowl include Great Blue Herons, Killdeer, Mallards, Sandpi-

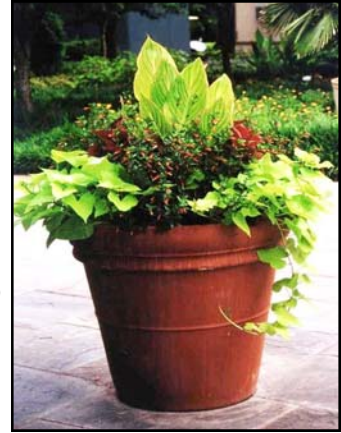
pers, Great Egrets and Mergansers. The Wildlife Habitat around the house supports a large number of Songbirds, and Neotropical Birds. It is also home to coyotes, bobcats, foxes, skunks, rabbits, and armadillos. Ken and Mary recently planted 9 fruit trees and several new roses.

Mary inherited 18 Guineas when the property was purchased. The first year, their numbers dwindled to 11, but now there are 37 and counting. When Mary works in the yard, the animals including her dog, cat and the guineas follow behind her creating what she calls "Mary's pet parade"!

If you haven't had a chance to meet Mary, take the opportunity by going out some Wednesday and helping with the CEMAP gardens or catch her at one of the monthly meetings. Mary has a wonderful sense of humor and you will enjoy getting to know her.

## Container Gardening By Nancy Furth

**Practical, Pretty, Plentiful and Productive Pots of Plants  
sometimes perennial, palatable, portable, provocative,  
perfumed and picturesque; nowadays echoing the aplomb  
of their makers and each displaying a little pizzazz!**



*Color, balance, form and texture should all be considered in the container composition.*

I don't know about you, but I've grown tired of the all-inclusive term '*container gardening*'. It just doesn't tell the whole story anymore. I have shared my container gardening program with many audiences and found that they often seem confused at first or have very limited ideas as to what container gardening is all about. Those who are not in touch with today's gardening trends conjure up visions of clay pots filled with marigolds and geraniums on Aunt Martha's back porch or Dad's lone potted tomato plant languishing in the hot sun. Others have the mistaken notion that one must have a greenhouse, solarium or terrarium to container garden. These ideas do tell some of the story, but they don't take into account the fact that *container gardening* has evolved into a form of artistic expression. As stated in the March/April issue of *The American Gardener*:

"Recent years have witnessed a kind of containermania. . ." "Whatever their shape, size, or composition, when containers are also exquisite arrangements set thoughtfully into borders, on patios, and adjacent to entryways, our gardens are doubly enriched."

Our Speakers Bureau *Container Gardening* program was developed six years ago when the resurgence of gardening in containers was just gaining momentum on the gardening scene. At that time, I had to search the Metroplex to find plantings that would serve as attractive illustrations for the program. I soon realized that I needed to experiment and create my own examples. Since then, this method of gardening has exploded into an exciting, imaginative and artistic form of expression for me and gardeners everywhere no matter what their level of experience. So much so, in fact, that today gardening magazines regularly publish articles devoted to this convenient and almost fool-proof form of gardening. The Horticulture Gardening Institute" and American Horticulture Society now offer an online program entitled "The Art and Science of Container Gardening". Public gardens, such as the Dallas Arboretum and others all over the country, dazzle patrons by accenting their gardens with strategically placed, portable works of art. During the four years that my daughter attended college in Denver, CO., I visited the Denver Botanic Garden every chance I got and witnessed the number of pots increase tenfold over that time period. In addition, more and more plant nurseries are now 'dressing up' their retail centers with creative container displays enticing customers to purchase more plants-and more pots!

As educated gardeners, you and I know the basic rules of gardening in a contained space. We know that proper drainage is essential to success. As long as the receptacles we use have adequate drainage holes, the sky's the limit when it comes to choosing containers. Imaginative gardeners convert all types of receptacles into charming and practical containers for plants. Containers can be found in our attics and other out-of-the-way spots, as well as in nov-

*(Continued on page 6)*

*(Container Gardening, Continued from page 5)*

elty stores and antique shops. Although traditional clay and masonry pots are always attractive, today's gardeners have more choices available than ever before. Pots that aid maintenance by being lightweight and more water-retentive come in a wide range of sizes, designs, and colors and are usually quite economical. Next in importance, choosing a good quality, lightweight potting mix is crucial. New and sometimes better soil mixes are popping up in the market place regularly. Some of these contain slow release fertilizers and/or water retaining polymers. Mixing our own blend is also an option.



*Design for a small garden*

Over the last few years my interest in container gardening has not diminished. For this Master Gardener or anyone with a passion for plants, the versatility of this form of gardening spurs us on. There are no limits to the types and kinds of plants that are suitable. I have tried annuals, perennials, herbs, roses, shrubs, small trees and vegetables. Container gardeners are able to stretch the limits and go beyond what grows in their climate and soils just by supplying all the necessary requirements for success in a contained environment. If you can answer yes to any of the following questions, you will benefit from gardening in containers.

- Do you have limited gardening space?
- Do you have less time than you would like for gardening?
- Are you physically limited to working in raised beds or containers?
- Is your gardening space unsuitable for growing the plants you want to grow because of poor drainage, soil conditions, or too much shade or sun?
- Do you have a desire to be a creative garden artist?

The first and last questions are the most compelling reasons I have to increase the number of container gardens I grow every year. Luckily, my first-hand knowledge of their maintenance requirements (watering and fertilizing) keeps me from going overboard and planting more pots than I can comfortably care for. One of the most important rules I have taken to heart is to place the majority of my pot creations close to a watering source.



*Gardens are doubly enriched when plants and containers are artistically combined.*

Although I do grow specimen plants in pots and a limited number of vegetables, creating mixed plantings is my personal forte. As long as I remember to combine plants with similar watering and fertilizer needs, the combinations of plants seems limitless. Choosing the right containers; combining plant forms that are pleasing and in scale with the chosen container; considering various flower sizes and shapes and complimenting them with foliage plants that have contrasting textures keeps my creative juices flowing!

Our *Container Gardening* program is currently being revised and put into Power Point format. The updated version will continue to include all the important tips for selecting containers and growing mediums (including recipes for making your own), planting, fertilization and watering guidelines, plus it will expand our plant and vegetable recommendations.

In addition to changing the format of this program from slides to

*(Continued on page 8)*

## How Many Crape Myrtle Varieties Are There, Anyway?

By Susan Owens, Grower of Crape Myrtles

Wow! That is really the question of the day between many horticulturists. Some have said 80, some have said 250, some 55 and some have stated 125. Whatever the figure, there are more than just a pink one, a purple one, a white one or a red one. Most of the crape myrtles have been introduced since 1960. There are many features of a crape myrtle such as the color, size it will mature at, growth form (shrub like, weeping, miniature or tree form), disease and pest resistant, patented varieties, Indian named varieties and the list goes on.

Tall tree form like crape myrtles such as Fantasy, white, will grow +40 feet. Biloxi (pink) will grow to 30 foot and Natchez (white), Basham's Party Pink, Choctaw (pink), Muskogee (lavender), and Tuscarora (dark pink) will grow to 20 foot. So when selecting these types of crape myrtles one needs to have a plan in place for planting it. Many times in the nursery these crape myrtles will be in 5 gallon containers and only stand about 4 feet tall. The homeowner will then plant it next to the house under an eave and within 5 years the tree will need to be moved as it grows up to the eave and around it.

Medium height crape myrtles will grow from 10 to 20 feet. Acoma (white) is a beautiful shrub like crape myrtle that will only grow to about 12 foot but its growth habit is almost that wide. Cherokee (pink), Seminole (dark pink), Tonto (dark pink) Catawba (dark purple) and Potomac (pink) are medium growing tree form crape myrtles. Tree form means that they can be trained to grow as a tree by trimming up the under growth and keeping the suckers cut back. Please note that many of the varieties are Indian names. Most of these varieties were developed by Dr. Donald Egolf. He was a pioneer in developing varieties that are resistant to powdery mildew. A pretty good rule of thumb, is that most of the Indian named varieties will be resistant to powdery mildew.

There are also crape myrtles that only grow as tall as 3 feet down to 18 inches. These are dwarf varieties and weeping varieties. Dwarf varieties want to grow as a flowering shrub. Baton Rouge (dark pink), Sacramento (dark pink), Pixie White and Snowbaby are a few. Orlando (lavender) and Delta Blush (pink) are just a couple of the weeping variety which look great planted in a large planter.

Dr. Carl Whitcomb has patented several varieties that have really changed the market for crape myrtles. He introduced the new red varieties. Red Rocket, (Red) will grow up to 20 feet, Dynamite (Red) is slightly shorter than Red Rocket, Tightwad (Red) is considered dwarf as it only grows to 5 feet. His newest red variety is Siren Red. And to quote Dr. Whitcomb, "if you thought Dynamite was red, wait until you see Siren Red". Pink Velour will grow to 20 foot and puts on the most beautiful display of hot pink (like velour) blooms. Raspberry Sundae is a bi-color crape myrtle which is pink with white ruffled edges. Raspberry Sundae is usually the last of these varieties to bloom but comes at a time of year when the other blooms are fading. One more of Dr. Whitcomb's is Burgundy Cotton. This variety has leaves much the color of Japanese maple and the flowers are a pinkish white, really beautiful and hard to find.

Many people are simply amazed when they realize just how many crape myrtle varieties there really are. And this list is just a portion.

**Fundraising Update****By Candace Fountoulakis****2005 Texas SuperStars and EarthKind Roses Plant Sale**

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the volunteers who worked so hard to make our second annual sale even better than our first attempt last year. Although there were some disappointments and miscues, we did manage to bring plants to the public that are Texas-tough and worthy of garden space. Many customers were assisted with valuable information and ideas as well as plant material which makes our role as master gardeners in this event essential. The CCMGA Advisory Board meeting on April 14 will bring out the final numbers and these will be distributed to interested members at our next general meeting on April 28 at the Heard. I will be happy to discuss concerns and ideas for improvements to our sale efforts at that time. Please email me with any critiques you have so that any future plans can be improved to assist us in providing the latest information and assistance to the residents of our county in their home horticulture endeavors. [fjohn94@aol.com](mailto:fjohn94@aol.com)

**Information Booths Update****By Renee Ferguson**

For those of you who need to take the summer off to be with your families, don't despair – Information booth opportunities will begin again in August and then in the fall! In August there will be a Frisco Home & Garden Show at the Frisco Convention Center. Then in September we will again participate in a multi-county effort at the Dallas Home & Garden show. More information on these two events will be coming later.

*(Container Gardening, Continued from page 6)*

PowerPoint, new images need to be added that will reflect today's trends and design tips. I will be taking pictures throughout the year and continue to practice creating my own provocative pots. To make this a program representative of our organization however, it would be beneficial to include contributions of images and personal recommendations from you, our members. Please feel free to jot down your proven composition ideas and submit pictures of your favorite containers with complete descriptions and plant information. A well-rounded program should include examples of gardens using annual and perennial flowers, grasses, herbs, vegetables, shrubs, small trees, citrus and more.

I am also compiling a companion reference album to be left in the Master Gardener Office containing pictures of many of the containers from our original program. All CCMGA members and interns are welcome to refer to it when they are in the office. Speakers are encouraged to take this book along when giving container gardening programs, and I invite each of you to contribute pictures of your favorite container gardens to the album so that it will reflect the immense creativity and knowledge of the entire Collin County Master Gardeners Association.

**Container Potting Soil Recipe:**

Mix a soil-less growing medium of 50 percent organic materials (one-half peat moss and one-half shredded bark), 25 percent perlite or vermiculite for drainage and aeration and 25 percent washed builder's sand (to help stabilize plants in the containers).

## Entomology Calls!

*Michael Merchant, PhD, BCE*

*Urban Entomologist*

*Texas Cooperative Extension*

The two types of calls I've been receiving over and over the past week concern bee swarms and defoliating caterpillars.

What to do with swarming bees is always a tough issue. My inclination in rural areas is to let things be; but in confined urban areas to recommend extermination. There are few places in an urban subdivision where bees will not do mischief. Contrary to common misperception, it is not illegal to kill bee colonies if they pose a threat to people or property. If you have not already done so, I recommend that agents call around to your local pest control providers to find out who is willing to do bee control and removal. Before I recommend a company to the public I have to be convinced that they have experience controlling bees and understand the importance of bee nest removal in homes. Most of the companies I refer folks to in the Dallas metroplex area do not do the repair, but will remove the nest as part of their service. I have posted a short article on this subject at Insects in the City online at [http://citybugs.tamu.edu/IntheNews\\_Details.asp?ID\\_Key=415](http://citybugs.tamu.edu/IntheNews_Details.asp?ID_Key=415)

I've received calls from several counties regarding caterpillar outbreaks. While the exact identity of the culprits is not always certain from your descriptions, the solution should be the same. Spray if there is a pressing aesthetic issue, or if the trees are already under some other stress; otherwise leave them alone. Defoliated trees should recover in a few weeks. In a month the homeowner won't know there was ever a problem. For a News Update article on caterpillars, see [http://citybugs.tamu.edu/IntheNews\\_Details.asp?ID\\_Key=416](http://citybugs.tamu.edu/IntheNews_Details.asp?ID_Key=416)

On the subject of termites, swarming season is getting off to a slow start in north Texas this year. Expect to receive a steady stream of calls on termite control over the next few weeks. If you are not familiar with the Extension publications on this subject, go to <http://citybugs.tamu.edu/fastsheets.asp> and check out the publications listed there. Titles include "Commonly Asked Questions About Subterranean Termite Control", "Choosing a Termite Treatment Chemical", "Subterranean termites (B-6080)" and "Formosan termites (L-5233)"

As always, don't hesitate to give me a call if you need to discuss these or other insect-related issues. Phone: 972-952-9204 FAX: 972-952-9227, email: [m-merchant@tamu.edu](mailto:m-merchant@tamu.edu)

## **Garden Checklist for May and June**

by Dr. William C. Welch, Landscape Horticulturist, Texas Cooperative Extension

(The following information was compiled from the 2004 information available at <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/>)

- It is not too late to sow directly into the soil seeds of sunflower, zinnia, morning glory, portulaca, marigold, cosmos, periwinkles, and gourds. Achimenes, cannas, dahlias, and other summer-flowering bulbs can also be planted in May.
- Allow foliage of spring-flowering bulbs to mature and yellow before removing.
- Pinch back the terminal growth on newly planted annual and perennial plants. This will result in shorter, more compact, well branched plants with more flowers.
- Time to plant caladium tubers, impatiens, coleus, begonias, and pentas in shady areas.
- Replace or replenish mulch materials in flower beds and shrub borders to conserve moisture and reduce weed growth.
- Make cuttings of your favorite chrysanthemums and root them in a mixture of sand and peat moss. Cover cutting box with plastic and place in shaded area for 5 or 6 days to prevent wilting.
- Prune climbing roses as they complete their spring bloom season. Remove dead or weak wood as needed.
- Take a critical look at your landscape while at the height of summer development. Make notes of how you think it can be better arranged, plants that need replacement, overgrown plants that need to be removed, and possible activity areas that can be enjoyed by family members.
- Check for insects and diseases. Destroy badly infested plants. Spider mites can be especially troublesome at this time. Select a chemical or organic control, or use insecticidal soap.
- During the summer, soil moisture becomes extremely important and essential for good plant production. Because continual watering is oftentimes costly and time consuming, it pays to conserve the moisture around plants. This is best done by mulching. A good mulch will retain valuable moisture needed for plant growth, and improve overall gardening success. Mulches are usually applied 2 to 6 inches deep, depending on the material used. In general, the coarser the material, the deeper the mulch. For example, a 2-inch layer of cottonseed hulls will have about the same mulching effect as 6 inches of oat straw or 4 inches of coastal Bermuda hay.

### **June**

- Take a critical look at your landscape while at the height of summer development. Make notes of how you think it can be better arranged, plants that need replacement, overgrown plants that need to be removed, and possible activity areas that can be enjoyed by family members.
- Check for insects and diseases. Destroy badly infested plants. Spider mites can be especially troublesome at this time. Select a chemical or organic control, or use insecticidal soap.
- Supplemental irrigation is essential for many ornamental plants such as coleus, caladium, geranium, dahlia, azalea, and camellia during the hot dry summer days ahead. Water lawn and garden thoroughly, but not too frequently. As a general rule, soak to a depth of 8 inches. Finish watering by early afternoon, to lessen the chance of disease.
- During the summer, soil moisture becomes extremely important and essential for good plant production. Because continual watering is oftentimes costly and time consuming, it pays to conserve the moisture around plants. This is best done by mulching. A good mulch will retain valuable moisture needed for plant growth, and improve overall gardening success. Mulches are usually applied 2 to 6 inches deep, depending on the material used. In general, the coarser the material, the deeper the mulch. For example, a 2-inch layer of cottonseed hulls will have about the same mulching effect as 6 inches of oat straw or 4 inches of coastal Bermuda hay.
- There is still time to plant some of the colorful, heat-tolerant summer annuals. Direct-seed zinnias and portulaca, and purchase plants of periwinkle, salvia, marigold, and purslane. Be sure to water transplants as needed until roots become established.
- Removing faded flowers from plants before they set seed will keep them growing and producing flowers. A light application of fertilizer every 4 to 6 weeks will also be helpful.
- House plants can be moved out of doors this month. Sink the pots in a cool, shaded garden bed to prevent them from drying out so quickly; water pots, container plants, and hanging baskets often. Monthly feedings with house plant fertilizer will encourage continued growth.
- Now is the time to plan for next spring. Consider digging and dividing any crowded spring bulbs. Once the bulbs have matured and the foliage has turned brown, it is time to spade them up and thin out the stand. Crowded bulbs produce fewer and smaller blooms. They usually need thinning every 3 to 4 years.

*(Continued on page 11)*

*(Garden Checklist for May/June, continued from page 10)*

- June is the time to select daylily varieties as they reach their peak of bloom. + Fertilize roses every 4 to 6 weeks. Apply a high-nitrogen fertilizer immediately after a flush of bloom.
- Continue to spray susceptible roses with a black-spot control such as Funginex every 7 to 10 days.
- Re-blooming salvias, such as *Salvia greggii* and *S. Farinacea*, should be pruned back periodically during the summer. To make the job easier, use hedging shears, and remove only the spent flowers and a few inches of stem below. Fall-blooming perennials, such as Mexican marigold mint (*Tagetes lucida*), chrysanthemums, physostegia, and *Salvia leucantha*, should be pruned in the same manner during the summer to keep them compact, reducing the need for staking. This type of pruning should be completed prior to September 1, since flower buds begin forming about that time.

## North Texas Grape Growers Field Day

Texas Cooperative Extension, Collin County, will host a Grape Growers Field Day on Thursday, May 19, 2005 at Wales Manor vineyard in McKinney from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. Cost of the program is \$20 per person and will include a barbeque dinner and educational materials. Folks interested in attending this event may register by calling the Collin County Extension office at (972) 548-4232 or metro (972) 424-1460 x4232 by Friday, May 13, 2005.

Extension specialists will be on-hand to discuss growing grapes in North Central Texas with topics including such items as: plant selection, pest management topics, maintenance, marketing and economics. John Wales, owner of Wales Manor, will lead a tour of his vineyard and wine production operation and speak about his experiences starting and running a vineyard. One CEU hour will be given for people with private applicator licenses.

Below is the Agenda for the event:

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| 4:00 p.m. – 4:10 p.m. | <b>Begin Program</b><br>Landry Lockett / Rick Maxwell, TX Cooperative Extension                                  |
| 4:10 p.m. – 4:25 p.m. | <b>Welcome to Wales Manor</b><br>John Wales, Owner   |
| 4:25 p.m. – 4:35 p.m. | <b>Texas Wine and Grape Growers Association (TWGGA)</b><br>Dacota Julson, Executive Director                     |
| 4:35 p.m. – 5:15 p.m. | <b>Growing Grapes in North Central Texas</b><br>Dr. Ed Hellman, TX. Cooperative Extension Viticulture Specialist |
| 5:15 p.m. – 5:25 p.m. | <b>BREAK</b>   |
| 5:25 p.m. – 6:15 p.m. | <b>Economics and Marketing</b><br>Dr. Blake Bennett, TX Cooperative Extension Specialist                         |
| 6:15 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. | <b>Dinner</b><br>Hutchins Barbeque   |
| 7:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. | <b>Tour of Facilities</b><br>John Wales  |
| 7:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. | <b>Tour of Vineyard / Pest Management Topics</b><br>Dr. Ed Hellman   |
| 9:00 p.m.             | <b>Adjourn</b>   |

## **Continuing Education Opportunities:**

### **A little about Entomology Specialist Training**

*By Diane Poston*

There will be an entomology specialist training offered to certified Master Gardeners on July 11-15 at A & M in College station. Two years ago Nancy Furth and Diane Poston attended this training and couldn't say enough good things about it. The training will include 4 days of in-class lectures, field trips to the hot spots for collecting insects and learning everything you ever wanted to know about insects. When Diane and Nancy attended the class they were even invited to a barbeque at one of the professors houses with an night time insect collecting expedition and were taken on a tour of the Entomology Department's vast insect collection. Entomology training will include experts speaking on insect identification, insect diversity, insect pest management, pesticide safety, insects in the garden and landscape, butterfly gardening, digital photography for insect identification, biting and stinging insects, collecting methods and shipping techniques. Participants have the option of making or improving their own collection during the course. If you are interested in entomology, this is for you! Please contact Landry Lockett or visit the website <http://insects.tamu.edu/mgtrain/> for registration information and forms.

### **2005 Crape Myrtle Conference:**

If Crape Myrtles are for you, don't miss this conference. You will have the opportunity to listen to speakers who will teach you everything you need to know! Topics will include: the history of crape myrtles, various varieties, care and feeding and maintenance, propagation, entomology and pathology and a research update. The conference will be from 8:00 am until noon, Saturday, June 25. Advance registration is available until June 17 for \$45.00 or \$80.00 for two people in the same household. For more information contact Susan Owens, at [crapemyrtle-trails@hotmail.com](mailto:crapemyrtle-trails@hotmail.com)

## **Out and About ...**

### **Activities and Events of Interest**

(The activities and events listed below are not eligible for continuing education or CCMGA Volunteer hours.)

**Dallas Arboretum:** Education opportunities abound at the Arboretum. Check out their Education page for more information: [www.dallasarboretum.org](http://www.dallasarboretum.org)

### **Texas Discovery Gardens at Fair Park:**

Visit the web site: [www.texasdiscoverygardens.org](http://www.texasdiscoverygardens.org) for a listing of all of the special events and activities. The month of May is packed with special events designed with the family in mind!

Of special interest is the Butterfly Plant Sale which will be held Saturday, June 4 from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Don't miss this once-a-year opportunity to purchase beautiful, low-maintenance native and adapted plants grown with tender loving care in the greenhouses at Texas Discovery Gardens. Many of these plants are not commonly available at retail nurseries. With these nectar and host plants in your garden, you'll attract clouds of butterflies and experience the joy of seeing in your own yard every stage of their amazing life cycle: egg, caterpillar, chrysalis and adult. *Texas Discovery Gardens members receive a 10% discount on plant sale purchases.*

### **Volunteer Opportunities:**

**Junior Master Gardener volunteer's needed:** The Vaughn Elementary School's Environmental Club JMG'er's will be taking a field trip to the Arbor Hills Nature Preserve on May 12<sup>th</sup> from 8:30 a.m. to around noon. They have requested one or two Master Gardeners to accompany them to help identify plants. Please contact Diane Poston at [cisco007@swbell.net](mailto:cisco007@swbell.net) or 972.735.9339 for more information. **You don't need to be involved in the JMG program** to volunteer, it's a great group of children and will be lots of fun.

## 2004 Annual Report

### Texas Master Gardeners <sup>sm</sup>:

### “First Responders” in Horticultural

Texas Master Gardeners are arguably the largest and most recognized corps of volunteers serving Texas citizens. Their activities, projects and expertise continue to significantly multiple the efforts of Texas Cooperative Extension.

In 2004, County Extension programs trained over 1,600 Texas Master Gardener Interns. To gain certification, each Intern must contribute a minimum of 50 hours of volunteer service. ***In 2004, the ranks of Texas Master Gardeners expanded to over 5,550 Master Gardeners, providing 360,710 hours of their time to Extension educational projects. This volunteer service, equivalent to 173 full-time employees, increases the human capacity of Extension by 17 percent.*** The economic value of this service translates to a ***\$6.2 million benefit to the State of Texas.***

These numbers are impressive, yet what the Master Gardeners do is simply amazing. These highly-trained and talented volunteers have become the ***“first responders”*** for horticultural education in ***112 Texas Counties.***

***Responding to telephone inquiries*** is a mainstay of Master Gardener work. Well-trained Master Gardeners answer the majority of home landscape and garden calls in urban Texas, totaling ***over 112,000 annually.***

Thirty-seven (37) ***County Master Gardener websites*** enhance Extension educational programs with localized gardening information and promotion of events. All the ***“web masters”*** for these websites are Master Gardeners

***Speakers’ bureaus*** are a component of most Master Gardener programs. A significant multiplying outreach for Extension, these bureaus provide public presentations, delivering research-based information to garden clubs, civic clubs and other community organizations. In 2004, Master Gardeners made over ***1,317 presentations to over 52,614 people.***

***Demonstration gardens*** have become a significant part of Extension’s horticultural education program statewide. Through the expertise, physical work, and financial backing of Master Gardeners, ***68 demonstration gardens*** showcase environmentally-sensitive, research-based horticultural practices and superior plant materials. Master Gardeners remain committed to preparing youth for the future by using ***the garden as a classroom.*** Teaching academics, leadership and life skills via gardening, Master Gardeners provided coordination and expertise to over ***550 School Gardens*** in 2004.

The Master Gardener program enhances the Extension’s capability to meet local educational needs. Master Gardeners provide leadership and support to educational programs targeted at critical issues, including youth development, environmental stewardship, water conservation, and leadership development.

Through dedicated leadership of County Extension Agents and Master Gardeners, ***the Texas Master Gardener program continues to be the largest Master Gardener program in the United States.***

#### **2004 Texas Master Gardener Statistics**

**Total volunteer hours: 360,710**  
**Full-time employee equivalents: 173**  
**Economic value to Texas: \$6.2 million**  
**Telephone inquiries handled: 112,000**  
**County Master Gardener websites: 37**  
**Speaking engagements: 1,317**  
**School gardens supported: 550**

# May 2005

| Sun  | Mon                               | Tue                              | Wed | Thu  | Fri  | Sat  |
|--|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----|--|--|--|
| 1  | 2                                 | 3                                | 4   | 5<br><i>Texas Master Gardener Conference<br/>Texas Smartscape Perennials 7pm</i> | 6<br><i>Texas Master Gardener Conference</i> | 7<br><i>Texas Master Gardener Conference</i> |
| 8<br><i>Texas Master Gardener Conference<br/>Container Gardening 9am</i> | 9<br><i>Dallas Arboretum 10am</i> | 10<br><i>Earthkind Roses 7pm</i> | 11  | 12<br><i>JMG Field Trip 8:30-12:30</i>   | 13   | 14   |
| 15   | 16                                | 17                               | 18  | 19<br><i>Grape Growers Field Day-4pm</i>   | 20   | 21   |
| 22   | 23                                | 24                               | 25  | 26<br><i>CCMGA—Monthly meeting 11:30 am—Heritage Farm-Plano</i>                  | 27   | 28   |
| 29   | 30                                | 31                               |     |  |  |  |

# June 2005

| Sun       | Mon   | Tue       | Wed       | Thu   | Fri       | Sat   |
|-----------|---|-----------|-----------|---|-----------|---|
|           |   |           | <i>1</i>  | <i>2</i>  | <i>3</i>  | <i>4</i><br><i>Texas Superstars and Earthkind Roses 9am</i> |
| <i>5</i>  | <i>6</i>  | <i>7</i>  | <i>8</i>  | <i>9</i>  | <i>10</i> | <i>11</i>   |
| <i>12</i> | <i>13</i><br><i>Herbs— 10am</i>                                     | <i>14</i> | <i>15</i> | <i>16</i>   | <i>17</i> | <i>18</i>   |
| <i>19</i> | <i>20</i>   | <i>21</i> | <i>22</i> | <i>23</i><br><i>CCMGA—<br/>Monthly Meeting 7:00 pm-Heard Museum</i> | <i>24</i> | <i>25</i><br><i>2005 Crape Myrtle Conference</i>            |
| <i>26</i> | <i>27</i><br><i>Texas Superstar Plants and Earthkind Roses—10am</i> | <i>28</i> | <i>29</i> | <i>30</i>   |           |   |

## This and That

- The 2005 Texas Master Gardeners Advanced Training Seminar For the Love of Gardening— Lessons and Inspirations will be held in Denton at the Doral Tesoro Hotel and Golf Club, May 5-8. Access to the schedule, reservation forms and tour information is available at the Denton Master Gardener web site [www.dcmga.com](http://www.dcmga.com)
- **The Plano Garden Club awards annual scholarships in the field of Horticulture for full and part-time students. If any of the CCMG's are or will be students, and are interested, they may contact the scholarship chairman at 972-867-6080. Scholarships are awarded in May.**
- Our May 26<sup>th</sup> meeting is at the Heritage farm in Plano. We have reserved the pole barn for a picnic setting and Mary Nell Jackson will share her knowledge of growing, harvesting & preparing herbal teas. There are display gardens & a great historical home to tour after the meeting. Tour will be \$3.50 and offers a grand historical home decorated for "Summer celebrations". Everyone will have tea to take home.
- The June 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting will include a program on "The Sex Life of Petunias and Bananas". The featured speaker will be Dr. Cecil Pounders. The meeting will be at 7:00pm at the Heard Museum in the Laughlin room and will qualify for 1 hour of education credit. (Note the room has changed from the SRC to the Laughlin room.)

### Thanks to ECHO Newsletter contributors:

Renee Ferguson  
Candace Fountoulakis  
Nancy Furth  
Mary Nell Jackson  
Landry Lockett  
Renee Mahoney

Sharon Meines  
Rhonda Mieure  
Susan Owens  
Diane Poston

Janice Miller  
[janicemiller@sbcglobal.net](mailto:janicemiller@sbcglobal.net)

CCMGA  
Texas Cooperative Extension Office  
825 N. MacDonald Street

