

THE LATEST DIRT

McLennan County Master Gardener Association
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June 2009

President's Letter

My phone rings. The caller ID reads *Matt*, "I'm almost finished with this field; what do you want.....SNAKE!!!!!!!!!! All I hear is silence. A couple of minutes later I drive up to the tractor Matt is driving and he standing on the top step leaning outward, holding on with one hand and with the other hand proudly displaying a beautiful Great Plains Rat Snake. (I know what you're thinking.) Matt is the son of Doctor Ken Keil of Eastside Animal Hospital in Lacy Lakeview. I have witnessed Dr. Keil wrestle a six foot long Red Racer (Western Coach Whip) out from under a Yucca, then hand the snake to me and ask me to hold it up high so he could get a good picture to send via phone to Matt. In both cases the snakes were gently released back into the environment in which they were found. On another occasion while traveling across a lonely West Texas highway late at night I was startled as Neal (cactus friend) hit the brakes and swerved to avoid a huge rattlesnake stretched across our lane. He quickly reminded me that snakes kill and eat hundreds of rats and mice and they won't bother you if you don't bother them.

It occurs to me that there are two issues these snake stories offer for our contemplation. One issue is fear of something not completely understood, but I leave that subject for another time. The other issue that needs attention focuses on conservation. Too often we are quick to destroy an animal or plant without considering the impact that act has on other animals and plants. The Arizona Mesquite makes great firewood, but often underneath its protective umbrella of branches and leaves a seedling Saguaro (*Carnegiea gigantea*), the largest native cactus in the United States, begins its life sheltered from wind, hail, and the burning sun until it has roots and body mass to survive whatever its environment bestows upon it. Over the years I have cleared hundreds of acres of trees and brush to make room for Coastal Bermuda pastures. Now I wonder what I traded in order to have lush green grass. As I drive the roads checking to see how Ole Bessie is doing I can't help but notice the wild flowers elegantly following the sun on its path across the sky. The colors are striking as if a rainbow had collapsed and painted the fence rows and ditches before me. I observe very few flowers blooming in the pastures on the other side of the fence. Could it be that Bessie enjoys more than just Bermuda grass in her dinner salad? Is it possible I have created an environment that is now out of balance?

Each of us needs to consider the impact we have on the environment around us. Integrated Pest Management (IPM) gives us direction as we endeavor to become better stewards. IPM is a strategy used to manage insect pests in the landscape using

McLennan County Master Gardener Association Officers 2009

President- Steven Lovecky Vice President- Jan Serface Secretary- Nelda Cooper
Treasurer- Louie McDaniel Sponsor- Shane McLellan Newsletter- James Storrs
Send volunteer hours to Julia Khoury at 8512 Bosque, Waco 76712, or tkhoury@hotmail.com
www.mclennanmastergardeners.org

economically and environmentally sustainable practices. A great place to find out more about IPM is online at <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/earthkind/>.

Whether you are responsible for 1000 acres or .1 of an acre you as a Master Gardener have a responsibility to promote conservation. The trick is to balance that responsibility with practicality and reality. Unfortunately, mankind has not done a very good job and the scale tips back and forth as we react to the demise of many plant and animal species. Our responsibility as Master Gardeners is to train people we come in contact with and encourage them to practice responsible stewardship as they go about everyday life. The various gardens around Central Texas influenced by the McLennan County Master Gardeners are good references to demonstrate the art of balancing aesthetics and an “Earth-Kind” environment. The Trailside Garden at the Carleen Bright Arboretum and the McGregor Demonstration Garden are our latest additions to a practical and beautiful demonstration of ecological balance. Take time to stop by the McGregor garden soon and attend the dedication of the Trailside Gardens on June 4, at 5:30 pm.

Finally, as you reflect on your own environmental footprint consider what you have traded for the space you occupy.

-Steven Lovecky

night meeting PROGRAM PREVIEW night meeting

The June 10 meeting will be held at the home and garden of Jo Campbell. You may have seen the newspaper article on May 5 about her home and garden. The property has been in the family for many years. This is an excerpt from the article:

Waco lawyer Jo Campbell enjoys giving tours of the many “rooms” at her Bellmead home. There’s the “white room,” the “meditation room,” and the “garden room,” just to name a few. But these rooms are not enclosed, or even indoor. They are all part of the expansive gardens that stretch through her flowing 8-acre homestead, which her family has owned since the Civil War.

When she moved back to Central Texas from Austin in 1992, Campbell began the task of turning all of the acreage — which used to be cotton and vegetable fields, when she grew up there in the 1940s — into lush green and colorful, flowering gardens.

With each passing year, she developed different sections of the property, which are all tied together by a white stone pathway and lined with a stream of rose bushes. What she has created during these past 18 years is an impressive landscape that takes an hour to walk and has so many different facets that it almost has to be seen to be believed.

Dawn and John Segrest are going to lead us on a tour of Jo's gardens. Although Jo isn't in the Master Gardener organization, she is in the Waco Rose Society and other groups. The eight acres of gardens, rock garden and ponds contain much interesting architecture and beauty. Do your best to come to this meeting! You might want to bring along a lawn chair since seating is limited.

TIME: 6:30 PM Wednesday, June 10

Directions:

Take Highway 84 through Bellmead towards Corsicana. Go under Loop 340 and you will then go about 2 or 3 miles to the next major intersection with a traffic light. At the traffic light (which is Williams Drive) turn right and almost immediately turn into a parking area on the side of Jo's garden. If any members cannot walk far they can park directly in front of Jo's home address- **4514 Harrison Street.**

Refreshments: Jan Serface is asking for volunteers to bring light refreshments for the gathering. If you are willing to help out with this, please call or e-mail Jan so she will know she can count on you.

MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

Anita Dawson has a new e-mail: adawson10@hotmail.com

Renee Garrett's new e-mail address is: rgarrett@ctxwifi.net

Irene Dauphin- to reach her, call her cell number: 498-6009

Genova Wilson has moved to:
1005 CR630, Hamilton 76531
(She, her daughter & son-in-law have built a house on their ranch there.
Genova joined the Hamilton Co. Master Gardener group)

FROM JENE HERING

As you received notice from Jeanette, the date for the mulching project at McGregor has changed. We are aware there are several conflicts on Saturday. The pond tour certainly is a conflict, and for those of us who have toiled on the Trailside bed at the Arboretum, the dedication might be considered as a conflict,

but there is an important effort needed at McGregor on Saturday, June 6, at 9:00. The task for the day is to mulch the plants put in ground the week before last. There will be little to no heavy lifting and hauling.

The plan is to rerun the wood chips already at the site through Louie's chipper to get them to a more desirable size, and they will be taken to the bed in a front loader. Here is the only physical exertion required. This mulch from the edge of the bed will be placed around the plants. There will be numerous 5 gallon plastic buckets available to haul them in to the plants locations. Sounds simple, Right? All that is needed is sufficient Master Gardeners to make short work of the last major effort of this project. I estimate that a maximum of 2 to 2.5 hours will be sufficient to get this job done; probably less.

By the end of this growing season, we as Master Gardeners will be especially proud of this project that is viewable by thousands of drivers each day. For those not familiar with this particular location, this corner is passed by a large number of travelers daily of a major east-west highway as well as the local citizens of McGregor, many of whom have expressed admiration for the efforts of McLennan County Master Gardeners.

We look forward to seeing you on Saturday June 6 at 9:00.

Thanks
Jene Hering

FIELD TRIP TO A&M

Thirty-two Master Gardeners and friends visited Texas A&M on May 28. If you didn't go, you missed a real treat. Literally, we ate our way to College Station with homemade cinnamon rolls baked by James Bays and his sugar cookies on the way back plus other goodies. Everyone had a great time.

We toured the Horticulture Garden and viewed many different plants. After a picnic lunch we went to Holistic Garden.

Dr. Joe Novak met us there and lectured and tested us with interesting questions and information. The Holistic Garden was established in 1986 as a teaching facility for courses in horticulture and floriculture. The gardens show how production of food and ornamental crops can be in balance with the natural ecosystem. It has features that enable anyone, regardless of ability or disability, to garden.

This garden is totally dependent on the help and monetary contributions from the public. They also have several plant sales each year to raise money. We will pass along this information to you later.

The tour offered something for everyone and we came away enriched with this experience.

-Jan Serface

Volunteer opportunities June/July

June 4, 5:30.....Dedication of Trailside Gardens

June 11, 9:00....McGregor Demonstration Garden Mulching (date may change)

July 6, 8:30.....Cedar Ridge "tidy up" morning.

July 8, 1- 4 pm.....Vegetable Gardening Program at CBA (Jan Serface..
Volunteer request coming soon)

July 15, JMG 2 Workshop (Sarah McCormick...Information coming soon)

For those of you still needing hours for completing of your certification, please contact your mentor, project leader, or me. There are several things that can be done independently on weekends or after work in the evenings.

More opportunities will become available, but are not scheduled yet. I will list them and get them to you as soon as they are scheduled.

HOURS FOR THE MASTER GARDENERS FOR THE FIRST FOUR MONTHS OF 2009- 1/01/2009 - 4/30/2009

Volunteer Hours	1386 ³ / ₄
Education Hours	239 ³ / ₄
Contacts	7118
Contacts Media	308,000
Meeting Attendance	176
Arboretum	344

(These hours are included in Volunteer Hours)

Trailside Garden	121 ¹ / ₄
Docent Tour Training	48
SuperStar Flower Bed	96 ³ / ₄
Miscellaneous	78

(Pond- Gardener's Gathering)

-thanks to Julia Khoury, our Numbers Lady, for this report

FIRE ANTS BEWARE- JUDY IS AFTER YOU

Judy Tye has written another witty and informative column for *Waco Today*, this time taking aim at fire ants. If you missed it, here is a link:

<http://www.wacotrib.com/today/content/wacotoday/stories/2009/05/26/05282009wacWTgarden.html>

And speaking of fire ants, Linda Buckner submitted this to share with those of us who didn't make it to A&M on May 28:

When we visited A&M last week, we were given this recipe to eliminate Fire Ants in your yard. This can be used sparingly. Also, be prepared - it smells pretty bad.

Using a 5 gallon bucket, add **1 gallon of compost**, then fill bucket almost to the top with **water** and mix.

Add **¼ cup of molasses** and mix. (This activates the compost mixture.)

Set aside for a day or so and then add **2 tablespoons of citrus oil**, mix and drizzle in your garden.

(Note: the citrus oil softens the insect shell which allows it to absorb the mixture.)

Comments:

Any type of molasses will work.

If you're going to make several batches, you can buy bulk molasses from the feed store – just bring a small bucket to carry it home in.

Thank-You Notes from Students

We have received the following thank-you notes from TSTC students that were awarded our scholarships this month.

"First and foremost, my name is Jose Aldaco and I want to thank you for my \$200 scholarship I was chosen for. I never really in my life thought that after 10 years of being out of school I would earn something as important as a scholarship. Especially knowing that there are as many students out there that would love the privilege of getting one, especially in these tough times. So when I heard the news at the end of my first semester, I was thrilled. Thank you so much. You have no idea how much of a boost for my books it was. I appreciate the acknowledgement, and it has really encouraged me to do better and study harder. Simply because not just any and everyone gets a

scholarship. So from the bottom of my heart, thank you, and I hope to represent your choice in the best way I can."

TSTC Golf Course & Landscape Management Student - Jose L. Aldaco, Sr.

"My name is Josh Allen and I am a Texas State Technical student. I am a student in the Golf Course and Landscape Management program. Recently I was chosen by the faculty and staff of my department for a \$200 book scholarship awarded by your organization. My mother and I are paying for my education and the scholarship will help me pay for my books this semester. I am very proud to be a part of the landscape design program. Your scholarship will allow me to have the books I will need on the first day of class. Thank you for donating to our program. I will continue to work hard and maintain a high GPA while I am in school."

Josh Allen

"Thank you so much for the scholarship. It is deeply appreciated, and will greatly assist me during this summer. This semester was my first at Texas State Technical College for landscape management, and once I graduate I hope to open a landscaping business. I've learned so much in the short time I have attended to help me fulfill this dream and I couldn't see myself doing anything else. Again, thank you so much and God bless you."

Sincerely, Austin Ramirez

MINUTES FROM MAY PROGRAM

McLennan County Master Gardener Minutes

May 13, 2009

The noon meeting was called to order by President Steven Lovecky at the arboretum. The April minutes were approved as written in the newsletter.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Treasurer, Louie McDaniel reported an ending balance of \$10,081.57.

BUSINESS: Congratulations to four new Master Gardeners: Edrena Smith, Sonia Warriner, Donna Lindsey, and Clara Henderson. James Storrs was recognized as a new MG as he was unable to attend the April meeting.

PROJECTS & COMMITTEES: Jeanette Kelly gave the projects report.

The new name for the newest garden at the arboretum is Trailside Gardens. Planting will be Thurs., May 14 at 9 am. The "garden polishing" will be June 3 at 9 am. and the dedication will be June 4 at 5:30 pm.

A workday for the Superstar Bed will be May 20 at 9 am. Contact Ann Plasek to help.

A workday at Cedar Ridge Elementary is scheduled for May 26 at 9 am. Contact Sandy Back.

Beasts and Blooms had 2,468 visitors at the zoo and 585 visitors came to the Gardener's Gathering at the arboretum.

Woodway Elementary is providing a catered lunch on May 15 for all of the volunteers.

Workdays are the first Monday of the month for the Earthkind Rose Demonstration beds at TSTC. The next workday will be June 1 at 8 am. Contact Jo Von Rosenberg.

A planting will be Thursday, May 21 at 9 am at the McGregor Demonstration Garden. Call Jene Hering to help.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Master Gardeners will take a field trip to Texas A&M on Thursday, May 28 to visit the horticulture and holistic gardens. Cost is \$20.

A Professor from A&M will talk about Fall Vegetable Gardening at the July meeting from 1-4. This will be free and open to the public.

Steve Chamblee from Chandor Gardens in Weatherford, TX will talk about Tough Flowers in Texas from 1-4 at the August meeting.

The Master Gardener Plant Sale is May 16 in Waco.

Ila Jean Carothers gave a report on the TMG Conference in Marshall, TX. We tied for 2nd place in the medium division for the project "Children's Garden Fair" at the arboretum. Congratulations to Judy Schmeltekopf & Jeanette Kelly and also Ila Jean Carothers for writing and submitting the project.

The next meeting will be June 10 at noon at the arboretum.

Nelda Cooper
Secretary

ATTENDANCE AT THE MAY MEETING

Jane Anderson, Sandy Back, James Bays, Grady Bonner, Ila Jean Carothers, Jo Ann Clafferty, Mark Clark, Nelda Cooper, Jean Cunningham, Irene Dauphin, Kim Dougherty, Victor DuPart, Eva FitzGerald, Melody Fitzgerald, Xan Foulks, Brenda Golubski, Jene Hering, Jeanette Kelly, Rachelle Kemp, Julia Khoury, Steven Lovecky, Lori Lutz, Louie McDaniel, Barbara Mersinger, Andrea Moore, Georgia Peterson, Anne Plasek, Doug Quicksall, Art Reinking, Carol Reinking, Sharon Richardson, Laurie Sappington, Judy Schmeltekopf, Dawn Segrest, Jan Serface, Della Setser, Edrena Smith, Gale Storey, James Storrs, Mary Lou Trice, Judy Tye, Barbara Vance, Melba Waldrop, Sonia Warriner.

Interns: Missy Kinder, Elizabeth Milam, Gerry Milnor.

DEADLINE FOR NEWSLETTER ITEMS FROM OFFICERS

This is a reminder that the deadline for officer reports and columns is the 25th of the month preceding each issue. Beginning this month, anything received by the editor after the end of the day of the 25th of any month will be held over for possible use in a future issue. I will send out a reminder around the 20th of each month. Sonia and I will appreciate the cooperation of all. Of course, articles, photos, and the like from all members are welcome; in fact, are encouraged, at any time and will be used as space permits.

Thank you!

