

THE LATEST DIRT

McLennan County Master Gardener Association
Volume XI Issue 9 September 2009

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Matt bent down low in the knee deep water as he approached the snake. Slowly, almost hypnotically, he moved closer and closer. His eyes locked with the green, beady eyes of the snake. "I got him!" said Matt as he stumbled out of the muddy water to flaunt his prize. It was a large Blotched Water Snake and it was not happy. "Don't let him do that!" Ken (Matt's Dad) shrieked as the snake latched onto Matt's arm, extending his jaws perpendicular to his body as if he were trying to eat Matt starting with his appendage. Its razor sharp teeth, curving inward, now locked onto Matt's skin. Juggling the snake with his bare hands, Matt quickly pried the snake off revealing its white cottony mouth now mixed with blood from Matt's arm. "Naughty snake!" is all Matt mumbled as the snake lunged at me distracted by my cell phone positioned for a close-up photo of the bloody scene.

This is stuff nightmares are made of. Forever I have had dreams of snakes chasing me and being terrified of the inevitable pain that was sure to come, only to awaken with heart pounding and sweat running down my forehead. In the movie "Batman Begins" Bruce Wayne confronts his fear of bats and eventually evolves the character of Batman using the misunderstood facets of bats to bring terror to the proprietors of evil. Ironically, the last time I had a dream about snakes, I was trying to catch a Western Hognose Snake instead of running from it. On a much lighter note we too often succumb to preconceived ideas about the interactive

world around us. Attitudes such as "Well, that's the way we've always done it" or "It was good enough for my great-grandfather so it's good enough for me". Or these two "Don't touch that. You'll get a disease" and "The only good snake is a dead snake." To create rules about subjects and issues you don't understand is to relent to a life of mediocrity. There are unlimited bases for investigating the world around us, whether our focus is on plants and animals or investing into the lives of people who cross our path.

When I was a child the world was an open book. As I reached middle age, circumstance and tradition defined my initiatives. Now as I approach the golden years I want to know what I missed. I find myself reevaluating the rationale that determined my mode of operations. Yet, wisdom dictates that change must be tempered with reality and often what has worked well in the past even now will work just as well. This discussion is what we call "learning" and yes, you can "teach an old dog new tricks."

Whatever else you do, don't go grabbing snakes. Leave that to the experts. But do take time to evaluate any possible misconceptions that proliferated over your lifetime and search the many avenues available to you through the Master Gardener Association and Texas AgriLife Extension Service. Then when you give someone advice and recommendations you don't have to worry about presenting them with "Snake Oil."

-Steven Lovecky

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

PROGRAM PREVIEW

**NOTE: Evening meeting 6:00 PM at Carleen Bright Arboretum
Wednesday, September 9**

Preserving Nature's Beauty

Enjoy flowers from your garden long after they have bloomed. Pressed flowers can make beautiful framed pictures, note cards, candles, trays or any number of things you care to enhance. A piece of flower art is truly an original creation that can decorate your home or be given as a gift. Receiving a handmade gift in this day and time of instant communication and gratification can be a rare treat that may give immense pleasure to your friends and family.

Pressing flowers is a very old craft and can be traced to the Victorian era. A herbarium can be created for a record of different plants, varieties of pansies, grasses or wildflowers. Herbariums can be found in museums as records of plants found all over our country. Flowers you have collected on vacation is a good way to remember happy memories.

-----Eva FitzGerald

Note: A photo of one of Eva's pressed flower creations is on the last page of the web edition of this newsletter. Each flower in the composition is a Texas native: bluebonnets, wine cups, Indian blankets, Indian paintbrush and blackfoot daisy. You can see that Eva does professional quality work. Even if you think you would never practice this art yourself, her explanation and examples should be of interest to everyone. And Mother Nature furnishes the most important materials for free!
JMS

MINUTES

The McLennan County Master Gardeners met at noon on August 12, 2009 at the arboretum.

The July minutes were approved as written in the newsletter. Nelda Cooper gave the treasurer's report in the absence of Louie McDaniel. The ending balance as of July 31, 2009 was \$11,806.77.

Business: Congratulations to our newest member, Penny Gifford. Penny has completed her education and volunteer hours.

Projects and Committees: Jeanette Kelly reported that a workday is scheduled for August 19 at 9 am at the McGregor Garden. Also, a workday will be on Aug. 22 at Woodway Elementary at 7 am. Cedar Ridge Elementary will have a workday on Aug. 28 at 8:30 am. Master Gardeners will work with one grade level a month in the garden at Cedar Ridge Elementary. The docent training program has been completed and tours will organize for the

fall. The Children's Garden Fair will be Oct. 18 from 3-5 at the arboretum. Jeanette passed around a sign-up sheet for volunteers to help with the fair.

The Master Gardeners will have an office at the Agri-Life Extension Offices. Terry Irvine volunteered to chair a committee to clean and organize the office space. A workday will be scheduled soon to repair erosion in the Trailside Garden. A date will be set in early Oct. to plant and mulch. A stone bench will be added to the garden near the arbor.

Announcements: Sharon Richardson reported on the planning meeting for the new intern classes that will begin June 2, 2010. Seventeen MG's attended the planning session at the Agri-Life offices. Jan Serface, Doug Quicksall, and Ila Jean Carothers attended the Texas Master

Gardener director's meeting. The Texas MG newsletter will be sent to all master gardeners starting next month. Steven announced that broken bags of mulch, compost, top soil, etc. are available from him or Julia Khoury. Please call Julia before coming.

The meeting was adjourned for a special program, "Texas Tough Plants" by Steven Chamblee of Chander's Garden in Weatherford, TX. The next meeting will be Sept. 9 at 6 pm at the arboretum. Eva FitzGerald will present the program, "Save That Flower"; how to dry flowers.

-----Nelda Cooper
Secretary

ATTENDANCE AT AUGUST MEETING

Sandy Back, Mark Barnett, Bonnie Belanger, Dick Belanger, Delores Black, Grady Bonner, Ila Jean Carothers, Mark Clark, Nelda Cooper, Susan Crawford, Irene Dauphin, Anita Dawson, Victor DuPart, Eva FitzGerald, Xan Foulks, Renee Garrett, Penny Gifford, Clara Henderson, Jene Hering, Jeanette Kelly, Julia Khoury, Donna Lindsey, Steven Lovecky, Lori Lutz, Barbara Mersinger, Elizabeth Milam, Andrea Moore, Maureen Moulden, Sarah Ortiz, Georgia Peterson, Anne Plasek, Sherry Prather, Doug Quicksall, Art Reinking, Carol Reinking, Sharon Richardson, Laurie Sappington, Jan Serface, Della Setser, James Storrs, Mary Lou Trice, Barbara Vance, Jo Von Rosenberg, Melba Waldrop, Sonia Warriner, Dorothy Whitehead, MJ Whitehead, Genova Wilson.

INTERNS: Sandy Burleson, Karen Dotson, Cindy Geletzke, Terry Irvine, James Prause.



Penny Gifford has completed her internship.

UPCOMING VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

September 16, 6pm.... **Carleen Bright Arboretum** Board tour with the MCMG Docents. (Brenda Golubski, 379-4172, brenda1160@yahoo.com)

September 22, 8:30 am.... **Cedar Ridge** (prep. day for program Sept 24)
Sandy back, 857-9736, sback@grandecom.net

September 22, 5:30 pm....**Habitat for Humanity** dedication at 2117 & 2119 Lasker Ave, (planting has not been scheduled yet)
(Melba Waldrop, 848-9283, melbadwaldrop@aol.com)

September 24, 8:30am -2:45pm...**Day in the Garden at Cedar Ridge.**
Sandy Back (as above)

September 30,9-11 am & 12:30-2:30 pm **Kids, Kows, & More....**
Call Sarah Chudalla at Ext. Office to volunteer, 757-5180
(4-5 volunteers)

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October 3, 8:30 a.m....**Trailside Gardens** work morning. We will be adding new plants, crushed granite, and mulch to the gardens.
Barbara Vance, 741-0000, barbara@bvance.com

October 12 through Oct. 16.....**HOT Fair Milking Exhibit**
8:30-11 am and 11:20 am-1:20 pm
Call Sara Chudalla (Ext. Office) 757-5180

October 15, 9:30 a.m.....McGregor Garden Club- probable tour

October 18, 3-5 pm. **Children's Garden Fair**
Jeanette Kelly, 776-2178, jkelly46@aol.com

As more opportunities become available, they will be announced.

Thank you all!

CALENDAR ADDITIONS

Master Volunteer Entomology Specialist Training

September 28-October 2, Conroe

Hosted by Dr. Paul R. Nester, Extension Program Specialist, Houston/Metro area, and the Montgomery County Master Gardeners.

- Registration fee of \$300.00 includes collecting kit with lots of goodies; lectures; Extension bulletins; 3 lunches, 1 dinner, snacks & drinks
- Transportation and lodging is on your own

Contact Paul Nester at PNester@ag.tamu.edu or 281-855-5639

LANDSCAPE DESIGN STUDY COURSE, Number III

September 14-15, College Station

Four courses available, may take any number of them and in no particular order

For information contact Tammy Landry 979-845-7342 or <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/southerngarden/landscapedesigncourses>

Course cost \$100. Cost of textbook \$40. (good for all 4 courses)

NATIONAL EARTH-KIND SPECIALIST TRAINING

October 7-9, Fort Worth

Registration fee \$295. includes EarthKind educational material, Power Point CD, EarthKind book and pin, experimental rose, 2 dinners, 2 lunches, snacks and drinks.

Transportation and lodging not included

Contact Steve Chaney at 817-884-1946 or sachaney@ag.tamu.edu



The Masters of Gardening

Be our Guest!

Saturday, November 7
Garden Hours are 9am—5pm

This fall, the Arboretum invites the Master Gardeners and their families to enjoy a day in the garden. Fall is one of the most beautiful times in the garden and we want to share this time with you! Admission to the garden for the Master Gardeners and one guest will be complimentary when you present your Master Gardener badge. So pack a picnic and spend a day enjoying nature.

During your visit you won't want to miss a trip through our award winning trial gardens. The gardens include trials on container plants, shade plants, All American Selections and much more. If you want to get all of the dirt on our trial results, join us for the Field Day for Master Gardeners.

Field Day for Master Gardeners

As an added bonus, Jimmy Turner will share all the results from his hard work in the Trial Gardens. Come find out what plants can beat the heat and which ones are must haves for your Texas garden. Because Space is limited, you will need to preregister for this event. The talk begins at 9am and tickets are \$15 or \$13 for Members of the Dallas Arboretum.

To register, call 214.515-6540 or email education@dallasarboretum.org.

The Dallas Arboretum has many activities planned for the fall season. For a full list and details, please go to www.dallasarboretum.org



This is an example of Eva FitzGerald's pressed flower art. Don't miss the September meeting (Sept. 9), which is an EVENING meeting at the arboretum (6:00 PM), to learn more about this art form.