



Brazos County



Brazos County Master Gardener Newsletter

Gardening News for the Brazos Valley
Volume 1, Issue 8

Editor: Donna Murray
November/December

From the Editor;

I'm very excited about this issue of the newsletter. We have the first in a series of articles, with plant lists, of locally native plants to use in your home landscape. Herbal Highlights makes its debut, and will be views and comments from the Master Gardener who grows herbs here. Want to know the favorite veggies of the long time author of the weekly Garden Line column? It's here. Going into Fall and the swiftly approaching holiday season is covered by two articles that will help you get there. There is so much more, I know you will find information you can use, because, I'm proud to say, the majority of this issue is written by Brazos County Master Gardeners. I invite your comments and suggestions. brazosmg@ag.tamu.edu

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Bringing Plants Indoors

By Charla Anthony
Horticulture Assistant, Brazos County



Brazos Valley gardeners use containers of tropical and subtropical plants on patios, decks and porches to add beauty and color during the summer. Although these plants may have performed well outside, most cannot withstand frost or freezing temperatures.

With the first frost in Bryan and College Station occurring most often in the last week of November, it is now time to prepare these plants to bring them indoors for protection.

Some plants to consider protecting from cold temperatures are hibiscus, bougainvillea, begonia, coleus, plumerias and most ferns. Decide which plants you want to over-winter indoors. Some may be replaced easily or at little cost and may not be worth the time and effort to protect.

To prepare plants for the transition, first move them into shaded areas outside. This will help them adjust to the reduced level of light indoors. Light is the energy source plants use to make the food they need to grow, so once you move them inside, set them in areas with plenty of light (typically near windows and glass doors). When plants are brought inside, they may respond to the sudden reduction of light by dropping some leaves; if they have been moved to outdoor shade for at least a few days before coming indoors, the transition will be easier and fewer leaves may be lost.

Before bringing container plants inside, clean the plants and inspect them for pests. Remove yellowed leaves, dead stems and dried flower stalks. Give the leaves a water bath and gently wipe them dry. Clean the outside of the container, using a brush to remove soil or debris.

Carefully inspect the plants for pests. Before you bring plants infested with spider mites or aphids inside, spray them with insecticidal soap or a product labeled for treating these pests. Treat scale with a light horticultural oil spray. You may discover that ants have moved into the container during the summer. Before moving these plants indoors, drench the soil with a product labeled for treatment. Finally, look for frogs, toads and lizards. They are beneficial, so remove these harmless creatures and release them outside.

Note that plants will require less water once they are moved inside for the winter. Water plants when the soil feels dry and before the leaves start to wilt. Tropical plants dislike being watered with cold water. Try using room-temperature water. A light misting with either rain or distilled water is also beneficial. Because plants will grow slowly or produce little new growth once they're indoors, they should not need fertilizing during the winter. If a plant is actively growing, however, it can be fertilized using a slow or timed-release product.

On warm, sunny winter days container plants may be moved outside for brief periods. This is a good time to thoroughly water them if the soil is dry.



Herbal Highlights

Holiday Spices

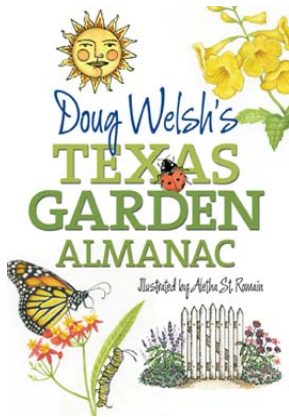
Sandra Williams
Brazos County Master Gardener

Experience as well as research can demonstrate that memory, emotions, and sense of smell are linked deep within our brains. It shouldn't surprise us that we each associate particular smells with particular events. Some odors are offensive, some pleasurable, and they may be uniquely so, based on personal events and experiences.

I always associate the fall and winter holidays with certain spicy aromas---cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg and cloves--commonly associated with baking cakes, cookies and apple pies, as well as a special ham studded with cloves, pineapple and maraschino cherries. Living in a household with depression era parents, baking was reserved for special occasions and holiday dinners. Those baked goods were thus very special treats.

In today's world all of these spices are readily and inexpensively available at any grocery store. A quick look at the history of the spice trade will remind us of the long journeys made to distant lands under perilous conditions. The spices mentioned came from far away, tropical regions and were very dear commodities.

Nutmeg comes from the tree *Myristica fragrans* which is native to Indonesia and Australia. It is the actual seed of the tree and is grated from the dried seed or nut. Cinnamon is derived from the processed bark of *Cinnamomum verum*, indigenous to India and Sri Lanka. Cloves are the dried flower buds of *Syzygium aromaticum*, another Indonesian tree. Ginger of course comes from the dried rhizome of ginger plants, *Zingiber officinale*.



New Book-Can't Wait

Interview with Dr Doug Welsh
By Donna Murray
Brazos County Master Gardener

The Brazos County Master Gardeners will be the first local group to host a book signing on November 6th, for Dr. Doug Welsh, Professor and Extension Horticulturist, and author of Doug Welsh's Texas Garden Almanac. Like the anticipation of Christmas presents brings about peeking in closets, I couldn't wait for the book to be released, and had to ask some questions.

What prompted you to write this book?

I see too many colleagues retire without passing on their knowledge, wisdom, and personality through the written word. I guess I have a lot to say and share through presentations and radio and television; I simply wanted to put what I share on paper.

Dr. Welsh sent me the introduction and I've included some excerpts that may give some additional insight to the purpose and workings of his book.

I am blessed that my vocation and avocation are the same--gardening. For over three decades, I have studied horticulture. I have never gotten tired of it and continue to learn daily. Over the past 27 years as a garden educator in Texas, I have written thousands of gardening fact sheets, publications, and news columns. I have also produced over a thousand garden segments for television shows and have fielded tens of thousands of gardening questions in person, on the telephone, and during call-in radio shows. I discovered that if I knew as much as I could about the *Three Ts* * trees, turf, and tomatoes * I was able to answer most questions correctly.

If I don't have the answer, I am fortunate to have Texas A&M University extension and research colleagues to call upon to get one that is accurate and thorough. Through them, I not only find out what to do in the garden, but also try to understand the hows and whys to help others (and me) do the best possible job in the garden with the best possible outcome.

If you are a gardener, I hope this almanac provides in-depth answers to all your gardening questions not only by telling you what to do and how to do it, but also by explaining why. For you *yardeners* (a term popularized by garden book author Jeff Ball to describe homeowners who simply want to take care of their yards properly with the least amount of time and effort), this almanac is meant to inspire, invoke a call to action, and help you overcome the fear of the unknown in gardening.

How long did it take, from concept to copy, to put this body of work together? I'm not counting the life time of experience.

I started this project in August 2005. It took a little over a year to write the manuscript; then a year to produce the artwork, edit the manuscript, design and layout the book; then to the printer.

I hear the illustrations are wonderful. Why art instead of photos?

I visioned the book as an old-fashioned almanac with a modern, fresh look. Illustrations were essential to the almanac style of the book. Aletha St. Romain's artwork makes the book a unique and beautiful addition to a library. In addition, there are instructive illustrations that are impossible to recreate through photography.

Do you have another book in mind? I have one in the back of my mind, BUT after the current effort I'm not prepared to launch another project any time soon.

This will have to hold anticipation at bay until I have my copy in hand. November 6th at the Brazos Center, 6:30-8:30. See you there.

**Elmer's Vegetable Varieties, Part I
Dr. Elmer Krehbiel
Brazos County Master Gardener**

Editors' note: Dr. Krehbiel has written a weekly article for The Eagle for over 11 years and has been a Master Gardener 14 years. He's been asked many times what vegetables he grows. So he agreed to write an article on his favorite varieties, requesting it be included in this issue, "to allow you time to order the seeds for spring planting." Part II will be the bonus article, "Elmer's Vegetable Garden Management", in the Jan/Feb issue.



Dr Krehbiel working in his vegetable garden

I grew up on a farm 57 miles west of Oklahoma City. Our family garden was about 2,000 square feet with vegetables from asparagus to watermelons. When I was 14 to 19-years-old, I gave many melons from the cotton field to other families...especially those with teenage sons and daughters.

Just before my senior year at Oklahoma A & M College, my wife and I had moved into a double hut with a large yard in Veterans Village. I dug up grass for a 10 x 10 foot garden and carried many buckets of organic material from the beef cattle lot across the street. By mixing this in with the clay soil, I developed a raised bed. The 10 'Marglobe' and 'Rutgers' tomato plants grown in that plot produced enough for us and several other couples. It is interesting to see these and others that were our favorite

varieties, from about 50-years-ago, showing up now as favorite heirloom vegetables.

Through the years I've grown several heirloom and many hybrid varieties of vegetables in Oklahoma, Arkansas, Virginia, Montana, Nebraska, Ohio and Texas. Variety selection is a major factor for vegetable production, along, with soil fertility and timing of management. New varieties are developed to improve traits with additional benefits. So, if they appear better, we should try them! I have two new heat-tolerant tomato plants in my garden this fall.

To become a favorite vegetable variety in my garden, it must be easy to grow, be manageable in size, disease resistant, and yield well with fruit that is a good size, shape, color and excellent flavor. Why grow anything less?

Clip and Save

Elmer's current favorite vegetable varieties for 2008 Planting

Asparagus: UC-157

Bush Beans: Derby

Pole Beans: Smeraldo & Kentucky Wonder

Beets: Red Cloud & Red Ace

Broccoli: Early Dividend & Premium Crop

Cabbage: Golden Acre & Early Jersey Wakefield

Carrots: Scarlet Nantes & Chantenay Red Core

Cauliflower: Snow Crown & Snowball Y Improved

Corn, Sweet: Legend/Y & Sugar Bun/Y

Cucumber, slicing: Sugar Crunch

Lettuce, Semi-heading: Buttercrunch & Bibb

Melons, cantaloupe: Ambrosia & Super 45

Onions: TX Grano 1015-Y

Peas, English: Mr. Big & Little Marvel

Peas, Snap: Super Sugar Snap

Peas, Southern: California Blackeye No. 5 & Texas Pinkeye Pepper, Sweet

Pepper, Bell: Golden Bell & Red Beauty

Potato, Irish: Kennebec

Radish: Cherriette & Cherry Belle

Spinach: Space & Melody

Squash, summer: Sweet Gourmet Zucchini

Tomato, large: Big Beef & Surefire

Tomato, medium: Bush Celebrity & Sunmaster

Tomato, Small: Husky Cherry Red & Supersweet 100.

For additional vegetable varieties and planting guide go to <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/brazos/Home.html>. It has been recently renovated by Master Gardeners, Elmer Krehbiel and Mike Chandler, and is now up to date and easier to use.



Gardening with Kiddos

Adapted from the Junior Master Gardener activity, "Lizards Lair"

Lizards can be some of the most interesting, colorful and beneficial additions to a garden habitat. You can welcome lizards to your garden area by creating a Lizard Lair that provides a shelter and even a perfect place to bask in the sun.

In talking with your kiddos you can point out these cool lizard facts:

- Lizards are reptiles (they are cold-blooded and must rely on the environment to warm or cool their bodies)
- Lizards will often seek shelter in rocks, brush piles or other small, confined areas
- Some lizards can change their color to blend into their surroundings (this is a cool adaptation that has helped them to survive by being better at hiding and hunting!)
- Most lizards commonly found around the home feed on insects and spiders
- Most lizards have the ability to lose and grow back a tail
- Some lizards are legless
- Some lizards can chirp, squeak or make other sounds

To create a home for lizards in your garden you'll need to gather the following materials.

Materials: Large clay pot (10" or larger), sticks, flat rock or small clay saucer, and golf ball to baseball-sized rocks to fill the clay pot

Time: 45 minutes

Carefully place rocks and sticks in a large pot until full. Gently rock the container back and forth to settle the contents and place the container in a protected area that receives partial sunlight. Place flat stones or small clay saucer atop the rocks to create a basking stone for the lizards. Use additional rocks or sticks if needed to make a firm base for the basking stone.

You can create a log of lizard sightings in the garden area on a calendar simply by placing a tally mark for each different time a lizard is spotted. Make a note of the time of day the lizard sighting took place to determine if lizards are more active during certain times of the day.

If you want to get jazzy use acrylic paints to decorate your Lizard Lairs!

Lizards Seen in Our Yard

Donna Murray (Brazos County Master Gardener) and grandkids



We have seen **Geckos**, *Hemidactylus turcicus*, a specialized group of tropical and subtropical lizards known for their ability to climb straight up because they have suction cup-like structures on their feet. They are very pale and we see them mainly at night. When it loses its tail, as this one did, the tail keeps wiggling or “dancing” as my granddaughter says, to distract a predator. This gives the lizard time to escape.

Green anole, *Anolis carolinensis*, is another lizard that is fun to watch. Sometimes green and sometimes brown. If you sit still, just maybe, you can catch it changing color. We have watched it line its body up with a stem or leaf and then it really is hard to spot.



Skinks, in the family *Scincidae*, have a shiny almost metallic look. We have spotted the Five-lined Skink, *Emeces fasciatus*, with its bright blue tail and a coppery colored lizard that we think is a skink but haven't positively identified.

Pictures from Linda Brown, Galveston County Master Gardeners. For more lizard details see <http://citybugs.tamu.edu/FastSheets/Ent-1019.html>; http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston/beneficial17_lizard_gecko.htm

Gardenline: Your Garden Questions Answered

Each Wednesday when you call the Brazos County Extension Office at (979)823-0129, a Master Gardener will research your question and give you an answer based on the unique garden challenges we face in our county. Master Gardeners have gone through extensive training on various horticultural topics and are certified to disseminate information supported by Extension and research of Texas A&M University.

It is our mission as Master Gardeners to bring you quality, relevant, and accurate information on your gardening concerns. So, write down the number and keep it handy so when a pesky insect invades or something is not quite right with your garden, you can pick up the phone and give us a call.

Gardenline: Wednesdays 9-1

979-832-0129, email: brazosmg@ag.tamu.edu

Landscaping with Native Plants

A series on using native plants in local landscapes

**TREES
& SHRUBS**



By Judy Schafer
Research by Judy Schafer and Sandra Williams
Brazos County Master Gardeners

It is a good idea to plant trees and shrubs in the fall or early winter in the Brazos Valley. This gives the plants a chance to develop a good root system before a long hot summer. Plan to water these plants every week during periods of low or no rain fall the first two years until they have a chance to get established in the landscape. Be sure to consider the mature size of any plant in considering placement in the home landscape. Avoid power line areas when adding trees and tall shrubs to the landscape. Consider areas that need shade: as an example the west side of the home for shade to lower summer power bills. Trees planted too close to foundations can damage the foundation. Any plants planted too close together will not allow for proper development and shape of the mature plant.

Large Shade Trees

Bur Oak *Quercus microcarpa Michx* Grows to 50 feet tall and lives up to 50 years. This a tree that should be used more that is drought tolerant. It has large leaves and large acorns. Deciduous Requires moderate moisture.

Live Oak *Quercus virginiana Mill* Grows to 50 feet tall and lives up to 50 years. This tree can provide dense shade. It is evergreen. Oak wilt might be a problem. Can withstand dry conditions.

Water Oak *Quercus nigra L.* Grows 50 feet tall and lives from 25-50 years. Gives fall color, needs moist conditions. Will hold leaves into winter and provide fall color. It's easy to transplant.

Willow Oak *Quercus phellos L.* This tree grows to 50 feet and lives over 50 years. Needs moist conditions. Deciduous.

Texas Red Oak *Quercus falcata Michx* These can grow to 50 feet tall. They are deciduous and give good fall color. They can get oak wilt. They have low water needs. They need sun or part shade.

Shumard Oak *Quercus shumardii Buckl* This tree will grow to 50 feet and live 50 years. It needs moist conditions. It is deciduous.

Pecan *Carya illinoensis* This is the state tree of Texas. It grows to 50 feet and will live 50 years. It needs moderate moisture. Native pecans are better for landscape trees, Mohawk is recommended for nut production.

Bald Cypress *Taxodium distichum Rich* Will grow to 50 feet and live 50 years. Gives good fall color, deciduous. It needs moist conditions but adapts to many soil conditions. It needs full sun.

Cedar Elm *Ulmus crassifolia Nutt* These trees will grow to 50 feet and live 25 to 50 years. They need moderate water and are deciduous. They give yellow fall color. Sometimes have problems with insects and disease. Sometimes has corky wings on twigs.

Winged Elm *ulmus alata Michx* Grows to 60 feet, conspicuous corky wings on twigs. Bloom before spring leaves appear. A favorite Elm tree, easy to transplant, rapid grower and rather free of disease and insects.

Eastern Red Cedar Juniper *Juniperus virginiana L.* These trees can get 50 feet tall and may live 50 years. They are evergreen. They can take dry conditions. There are male and female trees.

Mexican Plum *Prunus mexicana* These smaller trees grow to 25 feet and live up to 25 years. They flower in the spring and need moderate moisture. The fruit makes good jelly. The tree is deciduous and gives fall color.

Acacia smallii (Huisache) These are often seen in groups in fields like Mesquite grows. They will make a small tree in the landscape. The leaves are very small, evergreen. Flowers are small yellow balls in spring with fragrance. There may be a problem of shape recovery after ice storms. Tree can be pruned to recover.

Smaller Trees and Shrubs

Carolina Cherry Laurel *Prunus caroliniana* These can grow into large trees, they are evergreen, require moist conditions and good drainage. These make a good tall hedge.

Possumhaw *Holly Ilex decidua* These grow to 25 feet and live 25 years. They are deciduous and need moderate moisture. These provide colorful orange berries in winter.

Prairie Flameleaf Sumac *Rhus copallina* These grow to 25 feet and can live 30 years. Dry conditions are ok and they give good fall color. They may get freeze damage.

Viburnum These plants give flowers and fall color. They grow 25-50 feet tall and can live 30 years. They need moderate moisture and good drainage. Deciduous, some are evergreen, makes a good specimen tree or can be trimmed into a hedge.

Texas Mountain Laurel, Mescal Bean *Sophora secundiflora* These are slow growing, can reach 25 feet and live 30 years, they need moderate to dry conditions. They are evergreen with spring purple flowers. They need good drainage, red seeds are toxic.

Texas Redbud *Cercis canadensis* These trees grow to 25 feet and can live 30 years. They bloom in spring before leaves appear and are deciduous. They need moderate moisture. *Texensis* is best for this area. *Texensis* and *mexicana* are best for dryer areas.

Yaupon Holly *Ilex vomitoria* This under story bush grows to 25 feet and can live 30 years, requires moderate moisture. It is evergreen. There are male and female plants. Female plants have red berries in winter.

Farkleberry *Vaccinium aboreum Marsh* Under story evergreen small tree has small white bell shaped flowers along the limbs in spring followed by black shiny berries in winter.

Viburnum Rusty Blackhaw Large clusters of white flowers in spring with clusters of bluish black fruit in fall.

Before planting it pays to do a little research about a plant to make sure it will fit your needs especially for large permanent plantings. You may consider some of the above plants “too messy” for your taste or too large. Mature trees add to the value of a property. Not only do they provide shade but help clean the air. It is also good to plant a variety of different trees and shrubs so that if a disease or insect causes lose of one kind of tree not all are lost such as recent problems with Post Oak trees over a large area of Texas.

Texas Parks and Recreation through the urban division has a Texas Wildscape designation available for home and public landscapes. To receive this designation it is not necessary to have all native plants in the landscape. It is necessary to have protection, food and water available. Many native plantings will provide this as will as a lower care landscape through the use of native and adaptive plantings. To learn more about Texas Wildscape Certification go to <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/huntwild/wild/wildscapes/>

Educators, Like Master Gardeners, Wear Lots of Hats (Junior Master Gardener Teacher Workshop)

By Judy Campo Roebuck
Brazos County Master Gardener Intern



Teachers sometimes feel they have to be everything to everyone. They have to be pseudo-parents and grandparents to little ones in need. They have to meet many requirements set out by their administrators, the state of Texas, and their peers. Parents need and want to be informed about their child's progress. Teachers set limits, enforce rules, and encourage learning. Among these obligations and expectations, teachers also learn. There is a continuous quest for more and better ways to teach every lesson. The Junior Master Gardener program meets many of those needs.

Educators from several school districts were present at the George Bush Library recently to discover new ways to teach required lessons, using gardening (and gardening techniques) as a spring board. Funded by a Barbara Bush Literacy Corp Grant and hosted by the Junior Master Gardener Program office and Brazos County Master Gardeners, a workshop was hosted, so teachers would have hands on experience in how to implement gardening activities teaching skills, ranging from literature and math, to science and ecology. The attending elementary teachers completed a half dozen activities.

The Secret Smells Game illustrates that insects cannot talk but have developed specialized forms of communication, much like youngsters have done themselves with text messaging. Insects communicate with scents and hormones. A ball of cotton was dipped into a scent (of some sort) and placed into a film canister. The scents might be vanilla, orange juice, scented soap or lotion, chocolate, or perfume. Anything with a smell which can be identified can be used. Two canisters were made for each scent. The teachers were told they were going to be insects and their mission was to search out their partner insect using only their sense of smell.

Among the other activities was plant propagation demonstrated by Brazos County Master Gardener Cindy Bengs, and Judy (Campo) Roebuck, Brazos County Master Gardener Intern, with plants donated by the TAMU Horticulture lab. Charla Anthony, Brazos County Horticulture Assistant, explained the qualifications for the Junior Master Gardener Program and how JMG activities can fit into each schools curriculum. Each campus represented was given the Junior Master Gardener curriculum, Literature in the Garden, with the accompanying set of six children's books

Master Gardeners helped plant some seeds of learning on that busy Friday at George Bush Library, and teachers learned how to spread those seeds. The training gave teachers another tool to use while wearing their many hats.

If you'd like to know more about the Junior Master Gardener program visit their web site at <http://jmgkids.us/>.

Audacious Amaryllis

By Charla Anthony
Horticulture Assistant, Brazos County

Few flowering bulbs can surpass the beauty of the amaryllis. It provides weeks of pleasure during dreary winter months. It is a popular gift and is readily available during the holiday season, either pre-planted or in a kit.

Amaryllis is a real show off, producing impressive blooms that are up to 8 inches across on stalks up to 2 feet tall. The blooms have a range of colors: spectacular shades of red, pink, salmon, and orange, as well as white. These giant-flowered bulbs actually are in the *Hippeastrum* genus, but are commonly referred to as amaryllis.

Native to the tropics, the holiday amaryllis is bred in the Netherlands and Africa for container culture. The bulbs are triggered to bloom in winter, rather than their usual spring bloom: they require no more initial effort than simply watering to begin growth. The anticipation of watching the impressive stalks shooting upward and then such fabulous flowers appear is an experience. As a result, this bulb makes a memorable gift.

Getting Started

Plant the bulb in a pot using a good quality potting soil that drains well, leaving the neck of the bulb above the soil. The container should have drainage holes and be slightly larger in diameter than the bulb. Place the pot indoors in a location that's 70-75 degrees Fahrenheit. Water the soil until moderately moist and avoid getting water on the nose of the bulb. A simple watering method is to set the container in a pan of water for a few minutes to allow the soil to draw water up through the base of the container.

Once it's growing

When new growth begins, place the plant in a well lighted area with at least four hours of bright sunlight daily. As the flower stalk begins to lengthen, rotate the plant every few days so the stalk grows straight. In 6 to 8 weeks the amaryllis will have sent up a 16 to 24 inch flower stalk, with flower buds beginning to open. The stalk may require support as it grows and the buds open. Place a sturdy support in the container, making sure not to push it through the bulb. Keep the plant evenly moist and enjoy the fabulous display of blooms.

After flowering

After the flowers fade, cut off the flower stalk. If leaves have not emerged they will, so continue to keep soil moderately moist. Transplant the bulb into the garden after all danger of frost is past (mid March in our area) so that amaryllis' beautiful blooms will grace your garden spring after spring. They do well in any reasonably good, well-draining garden soil. When planting, leave the neck of the bulb just above ground level. A sunny location that receives some afternoon shade is ideal. During this time, the leaves are re-energizing the bulb to bloom again, so fertilize with a timed release product or all purpose fertilizer. Apply mulch to protect the bulb. Watch for snails and slugs because they can damage the foliage quickly.

The “DIG”

Submitted by Suzanne Milstead, Brazos County Master Gardener

There's the 'Big DIG' in Boston and now we have our own! Exciting things are taking place next to the Cooperative Extension Office on Hwy 21! A complete renovation of the existing Demonstration Garden. This called for a name renovation also. “DIG” or Design Idea Garden is the new name that better fits the concept of the garden. The Brazos County Master Gardener membership was surveyed on what components should be included in the garden and a committee used those ideas in planning. Master Gardener, Barbara Thornton applied her skills as a landscape designer to bring it all together in a unique working plan for the expanded and extensive gardens. Headed by committee chairman, Lyndon Almand, the renovations have taken off.

First, the removal of old beds and plants took place with many master gardeners volunteering their time to accomplish this hot, backbreaking task. Some plants were relocated to the front of the Extension office building and new ones were added, including the Knock Out roses that have bloomed continuously. All these plants are labeled so that visitors can plant the same in their home gardens. The Earthkind Rose Trial at the front of the gardens remains, as this is a research test garden and information gathered is shared within a state and national data base.

The Brazos County Road and Bridge personnel came in to help lay base material and relocate the existing shed. The construction of the pavilion was the first new addition to the D.I.G. The pavilion's purpose is for events, lectures, and Saturday clinics on gardening. When the concrete was poured, impressions of ferns, leaves, and branches were made to add a natural look to an otherwise flat surface. Later, a volunteer team built a strong, wooden structure and Aggie members from Omega Delta Phi assisted with the installation of the pavilion roof.



(Omega Delta Phi helps with laying the metal roof.)

Lyndon says that benches will be added along with a long bed of shade plants on the back side as soil needs to be added to reinforce the steep slope in that area.

While not 100% complete, Saturday, October 13 marked the first time that the pavilion was used. Master Gardener, Pat Patterson gave a talk and guided tour on the data collected associated with the Earthkind rose trial to participants from the Earth Kind Symposium. Dr. Steve George, professor and landscape horticulture specialist from the Texas Cooperative Extension and Texas A&M praised the efforts of Pat and his team.



(Center-Pat Patterson; Dr. George to the left; Lyndon Almand in the plaid shirt.)

Saturday visitors commented on the open-air coolness underneath the pavilion and the practical use for many upcoming events.

Future efforts will be directed toward pathways and plantings including a wildflower meadow. This new “DIG” or Design Idea Garden is funded by and will be managed and maintained by the volunteers of the Brazos County Master Gardeners to provide a place for research based, horticulture information to the community. It will be a must see for all gardeners!

CONGRATULATIONS

We are very proud of Brazos County Master Gardeners, Lyndon Almand for being recognized as 2007 Volunteer of the Year for Horticulture/Natural Resources, and Elmer Krehbiel as the 2007 Friend of Extension for Brazos County. The honors were bestowed at the annual Brazos County Extension Banquet held October 30, 2007.



Fall Earthkind Practices - earthkind.tamu.edu

Fall is an excellent time of the year for a variety of Earth-Kind landscaping activities. Earth-Kind practices contribute to a healthy and sustainable environment. We encourage you to visit the Earth-Kind web site for additional ideas on how you can assist in preserving and protecting our valuable natural resources. Before beginning *your* fall projects, take a moment to review these suggestions to ensure that you are contributing to a healthy and sustainable landscape environment.

Fall Planting:

Fall is an excellent time to establish new plants in the landscape. Cooler temperatures with occasional rainfall create ideal growth conditions for a variety of trees, shrubs, annuals and perennials. The Earth-Kind Plant Selector is an excellent tool for identifying highly adapted plants for specific gardening areas throughout the state. This searchable database provides information on over 1,000 commonly used landscape plants. Those with an Earth-Kind Index value of 8 or above will significantly contribute towards creating a healthy and sustainable landscape. Visit the Earth-Kind web site for more information and access to the EK Plant Selector.

Fertilization:

Fall fertilizer applications are very common and typically recommended to prepare plants for winter. The type and amount of fertilizer to apply should be based on the results of a soil test. In the absence of this

information, 1-2 pounds of actual nitrogen per 1,000 sq. feet, from a no/low phosphorus fertilizer material, generally meets the needs of most plants. Fertilizer applications should be directed toward landscape beds and turf areas and away from streets, walks, drives and other hardscape areas. Remember, misapplication (not type or amount of fertilizer used) is the most frequent cause of surface and groundwater contamination.

Mulching:

A 2-4 inch layer of mulch is an excellent means of holding in valuable soil moisture, suppressing weed growth, moderating soil temperature and providing winter protection for tender plants. Since organic mulches break down over time, a re-application in the fall is generally required or recommended. It's usually a good idea to mulch after planting fall annuals and perennials. Mulching is a valuable Earth Kind practice that can preserve valuable natural resources and contribute to the aesthetic appearance of the landscape.

Leaf Management:

In the fall, many yards are virtually covered by leaves from deciduous trees. Disposing of these leaves can create a significant burden on landfills and municipal compost facilities. Earth-Kind leaf management practices provide the opportunity to use this valuable natural resource to improve a landscape's health and appearance. Following are some leaf management options.

Mowing/Shredding:

A light covering of leaves can be mowed, simply leaving the shredded leaves in place on the lawn. This technique is most effective when a mulching mower is used. In fact, during times of light leaf drop or if there are only a few small trees in your landscape, this technique is probably the most efficient and easiest way to manage leaf accumulation.

Mulching With Leaves:



Using leaves as a mulch is a simple and effective way to recycle this organic material and improve the landscape. Leaves can be used as a mulch in vegetable gardens, flower beds and around shrubs and trees. Apply a 3 to 6 inch layer of shredded leaves around the base of trees and shrubs. In annual and perennial flower beds, a 2 to 3 inch mulch of shredded leaves is ideal. Mulches are especially beneficial when used around newly established landscape plants, greatly increasing the likelihood of their survival.

Soil Improvement:



Leaves may be collected and worked directly into garden and flower bed soils. A 6 to 8 inch layer of leaves tilled into a heavy, clay soil will improve aeration and drainage. The same amount tilled into a light, sandy soil, will improve water and nutrient holding capacity. A recommended strategy for using leaves to improve soil in vegetable gardens and annual planting beds is to collect and work them into the soil during the fall. This allows sufficient time for the leaves to decompose prior to spring planting. Adding a little fertilizer to the soil after working in the leaves will hasten their decomposition.

Composting:



To prepare compost, organic material, microorganisms, air, water and a small amount of nitrogen are needed. Micro-organisms break down the organic material. The nitrogen, air and water provide a favorable environment for the micro-organisms to decompose the organic materials and make compost. Air is the only ingredient which cannot be added in excess. A lack of nitrogen to "feed" the microorganisms will greatly slow the process, while an excessive amount is wasteful and can kill the microorganisms. Too much water limits the amount of air (oxygen) available to the micro-organisms, greatly inhibiting their activity. As composting occurs, heat is generated, often causing temperatures to rise to 140 degrees F.

“REAL PUMPKIN” BREAD

Contributed from the Murray Family Recipe File



When to start: This will be determined by your personal Halloween tradition. If you carve your Jack-o-lantern then you will need to begin Nov 1, do not dawdle; it may already be too late. However if the pumpkin is left unscathed, prep time may begin whenever you are ready.

Items needed for Preparation:

Pumpkin	Big Pot
Sharp Knife and Bandages or	Water
Less than Sharp Knife and Gloves/Bandages	Potato Masher

Cut the pumpkin into strips. Cut away the slimy string and seed innards and remove the outer skin. Skin is a deceptive term; it will be as hard as a leather bone chew toy for the dog. If you have a really sharp knife you will cut yourself, thus the bandages. If you do not do well with sharp things, put on the gloves and your dull knife will, in time, whittle away the peel. If you did not believe the “items needed” list and have no gloves, you will have blisters that will require the bandages. Is it worth it-YES!

Now you are on easy street. Cube the pumpkin, boil in water in the big pot. I cook about half a pumpkin at a time, depends on your idea of a big pot. When it stabs easily, drain and mash with a potato masher. Don't use a food processor, blender, or mixer. You don't want to lose the texture of the “real pumpkin” that you have labored so hard to get. A medium sized pumpkin will make about 12 small loaves and 1 pie. I divide it out like this because one pumpkin pie a year is all anyone needs.

Ingredients:

3 Cups Flour	2 Cups Cooked Pumpkin (canned may be substituted but do not refer to the result as “real pumpkin” bread)
3 Cups Sugar	
1 teaspoon each of	1 Cup Vegetable Oil
Ginger	4 Eggs
Cinnamon	5/8 Cup (1/2 cup + 1 tablespoon) Water
Nutmeg	
Allspice	
1 ½ teaspoon Salt	
2 teaspoons Baking Soda	

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease and flour 2 (9x5x3 in) loaf pans or 3 (6x3x3 in) pans.

Combine all of the dry ingredients and make a well in the center of the mixture. Add all the wet stuff-everything left on the ingredient list that you haven't used so far.

Mix it up, mix it up, put it in the pans (accompanying tune and dance steps are optional).

Bake 1 hour at 350. Cool slightly and remove from pans. When you make 12 loaves, refrigerate it and give it away quick, or freeze it. If you get tired of baking, freeze the cooked pumpkin in 2-cup lots. **DO NOT** attempt to keep it in the fridge thinking you'll use it tomorrow. Believe me, this never works out and the next week you will need to throw the whole bowl away. Don't open and smell the contents, just throw it away.

WARNING: Once you have savored the flavor and texture of “real pumpkin” bread you will be enlightened. You cannot return to the before, where so-called pumpkin bread will do. The same is true of “real pumpkin” pie.

UPCOMING EVENTS

November 6th 6:30 pm, Brazos Center, Bryan

Special Double Feature

(proceeds benefit William Welch TAMU Horticulture Scholarship & Brazos County MG Demonstration Garden)

BCMG will host a program featuring **CHRIS WEISINGER**, founder of *The Southern Bulb Company*, affectionately known as "The Bulb Hunter", will talk about bulbs which naturalize in the South. You will be entertained with Chris' latest adventures and learn the "how-to" on bulbs for Southern climates. Several bulb selections will be available for sale.

In addition, there will be a reception for **DR. DOUG WELSH**, Extension Horticulturist, to introduce his new book, "*Doug Welsh's Texas Garden Almanac*", which will be available for sale. Come meet Dr. Doug and he can sign your new book!

January & February 2008, 6:30-8:30 pm

Bryan Public Library

Gardening 101

Master Gardener's will present four individual program sessions on basic gardening and landscape management. Ideal for beginning gardeners and homeowners looking for answers to gardening questions in the Brazos Valley. Pre-registration is required.

Session I Jan 15: "Soils" & "Design Principals for Urban Landscapes"

Session II Jan 29: "Vegetable Gardening"

Session III Feb 2: "Lawn Care-the Earth-Kind Way"

Session IV Feb 19: "Trees & Shrubs" & "Monthly Landscape Management"

For additional information email us at brazosmg@ag.tamu.edu or call 823-0129, Brazos County Extension office.

February 9th, 2008, Saturday

9 am to Noon

Brazos Center Bryan

Tom Leroy, Montgomery County Horticulture Agent, will speak on fruit production in the home garden. Also, **Dave Whittinger** of Dave's Garden, will speak about heirloom

vegetables. At the conclusion, Brazos County Master Gardener's will have fruit trees and heirloom vegetable plants for sale.

ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS NOW FOR:

**BRAZOS COUNTY 2008 MASTER GARDENER
VOLUNTEER TRAINING COURSE**

We are seeking residents of Brazos County, with experience in gardening, who desire advanced training in horticulture. Applicants should have a desire to volunteer in the community and to share their knowledge with others.

Class begins Thursday, January 17 and meets weekly thru May 8, 2008

Application deadline: January 3, 2008

For an application or more information call the Texas Cooperative Extension, Brazos County office at **823-0129**

Application available at <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/brazos>

Extension programs serve people of all ages regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, religion, disability or national origin. The Texas A&M University System, U. S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating.

IN THE GARDEN

Word Search Puzzle

R W F S N E S T S T T S H R D
 H A A E N I V E R T R R E S R
 C T L I L S A O K O A Z S R A
 N E L L A M W H L A I H P E G
 E R E F I E W O T L T O R W O
 B R S R L P C I I A P S I O N
 T E T E E B R T N R B E N L F
 S R N T U T R E O D S D G F L
 H U E T P E N P T B C E R V Y
 O T C U F S A I H T L H E I P
 V A S B E G N O W R A O I D B
 E N W E A R E M M U S C O M S
 L O R T E N I H S N U S J M E
 M T E X T U R E S E V O L G S
 T R A N S P L A N T B U L B S

ART	BEE
BENCH	BIRDBATH
BLOOMS	BULBS
BUTTERFLIES	CATTERPILLAR
COLORS	DRAGONFLY
FALL	FERTILIZER
FLOWERS	GLOVES
HAT	HOE
HOSE	MOW
NATURE	NESTS
PROPAGATE	SCENTS
SEEDS	SHOVEL
SPRING	STAKES
SUMMER	SUNSHINE
TEXTURE	TRANSPLANT
TREES	TRELLIS
TRIM	TROWEL
VINE	WATER
WINDCHIME	WINTER

Contributed by Cindy Bengs, Brazos County Master Gardener



Brazos County Master Gardeners Great Gifts What we'd like Santa to bring



- ❖ A greenhouse-this was listed by several folks and bigger is always better
- ❖ Another rain barrel and worms for my worm bin
- ❖ Garden tub-a bath tub in the garden, not to plant in, to bath in-delicious
- ❖ Potting shed
- ❖ Rose gloves-don't look for gloves made from roses, but ones stout enough to handle the rose thorns
- ❖ A way to protect my hands yet feel the earth, same invention could allow me to go barefooted and not get stickers
- ❖ Birdhouses, lots of birdhouses
- ❖ A rear tine tiller-the front tine one I have, rattles my teeth but has yet to shake loose an ounce of fat.
- ❖ Martha's Bloomers gift card

- ❖ Smith & Hawkins shoes-perfect for mucking about
- ❖ Screech owl house
- ❖ Funding to enable retirement . This would allow me to garden uninterrupted by the annoyance of earning a living.

Brazos County Master Gardener
Association
Officers 2006-2007

Donna Murray, Ex-Officio
Bill Lyles, President
Cindy Bengs, Vice President
Redith Kiser, Recording Secretary
Gary Williamson, Corresponding Secretary
Janet Hayes, Treasurer
Debbie Nelson, Assistant Treasurer

If you are interested in sharing our newsletter with a friend or subscribing to the e-newsletter, contact us at brazosmg@ag.tamu.edu

Brazos County Master Gardeners is a program of Texas Cooperative Extension. Extension programs serve people of all ages regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, religion, disability or national origin. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas cooperating.