



As the Garden Grows

A Publication of the Gonzales Master Gardeners

Gonzales, Texas

September 2011 Volume 1, Issue 4

It's Official!!

Congratulations Juliana Hennig, the winner of our "Name the Newsletter" contest.

The three finalists were "Come & Take It" submitted by Alan Marek, "Gardener's Gab" and "As the Garden Grows" both submitted by Juliana.

Thanks to everyone who participated in the contest.

Drought

Okay, there it is. We said it. How can we have a newsletter and not say anything about the single most challenging thing that a gardener has to deal with. We have all heard a lot about it. It's the hottest, driest summer in Texas history. Well, is it really? Or is it just the worst drought in the time frame that the record keeping people that arrived after Columbus have records of? I suspect it's the later. Texas is very old and she has, no doubt, been through worse. There have been worse drought and worse fires. We are grateful that those "worses" are not now—not while we are here. In the past, entire civilizations collapsed because of drought—which brought famine and disease. So while this is not fun, let us be thankful that we have the means to get through it—and let us extend our hands to those that have suffered this summer and continue to do so. There are those who have lost their homes, their herds, and some, even their lives. Drought. Only people who have lived it will ever understand it.

What is Earth-Kind® Landscaping?

Earth-Kind Landscaping uses research-proven techniques to provide maximum garden and landscape enjoyment while preserving and protecting the environment. The objective of Earth-Kind Landscaping is to combine the best of organic and traditional gardening and landscaping principles to create a horticultural system based on real world effectiveness and environmental responsibility. Earth-Kind Landscaping Encourages water conservation, reduction of fertilizer and pesticide use, energy conservation and a reduction of landscape waste entering the landfills.

Fall is an excellent time of the year for a variety of Earth-Kind landscaping activities.

Consider some of the following tips:

- ❖ Fall is great time to plant because of cooler temperatures and a better chance for rain. Check out the Earth Kind Plant Selector to determine what works best for your landscape.

- ❖ Fertilization is commonly done in the fall. Have a soil test performed to determine the correct nutrients that the landscape needs.
- ❖ Mulching is important as it adds valuable soil moisture to the landscape, reduces weeds, moderates the soil temperature and provides good winter protection for the plants
- ❖ Leaf Management is a great way to keep leaves from ending up in the landfills. Consider mowing and shredding a light covering of leaves and leaving them on the ground. Use the leaves as mulch for the vegetable garden, flower beds, shrubs and trees. This is a very effective way to recycle the organic matter and improve the soil. Work the collected leaves directly into the existing soils to improve aeration and drainage. Use the leaves in the compost pile. Composted material is a great way to improve soil conditions.

Is your landscape contributing to a healthy and sustainable environment? Take the Earth-Kind challenge. [Go to http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/earthkind](http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/earthkind) for more information on the challenge and the above information.

September 1, 2011 Master Gardener Meeting Notes

At the monthly meeting on September 1, 2011, Jim Johnson reviewed the association's finances with the members and talked about the costs associated with holding a class. Even though the enrollment was smaller than last year, and the Association may have to subsidize the expense, the members decided to go ahead with the class.

David and Gail made the Association's "Radio Debut" with Egan Barthels to talk about the new fall class and doing a radio program. The members talked about doing a monthly Garden Tip. The program, which would probably be 15 minutes, could address a timely topic and be prerecorded so that the station can use it where needed. It would be a great way to serve a need in the community for timely information.

Juliana and Fran are busy planning the Rummage sale October 22. Fundraisers like this and the Spring Plant Sale are the source of funds that allow the association the latitude to hold a class that is not quite full and fund projects like the Eggleston Garden. Juliana asked that everyone clean out those store rooms and support this sale.

Bob and David reported that they have submitted a grant application for half of the funds needed for the renovation of the Fair Street Building. The association has received funds/commitments for just over \$10,000 in money and in kind donations already and so prospects for the Fair Street Exploratorium look good. David circulated the letters of support from local agencies and civic groups that were submitted with the grant application.

The Hospital Meditation Garden is waiting for final plant selection and a good planting time. Kudos to Polly for her exceptional leadership on this project. The Fitness Center is on hold waiting for a break in the weather to allow planting; and so is the Eggleston Garden. Junior Master Gardeners in-service is being rescheduled due to a schedule "flub" at the university.

Juliana won the name the newsletter contest and got the \$25 gift certificate prize.

Bob gave a presentation on the Beautification Committee's long term project list. He said the Committee has order 50 trees to be planted around the City of Gonzales and David added that the City has agreed to install a water line in Independence Park so that trees can be watered.

Everyone talked about the drought and the huge challenge to our trees.

IT'S OFFICIAL—

THE FAIR STREET EXPLORATORIUM IS HERE !!!!!!!

Gonzales County Commissioners voted September 12 to approve the lease agreement between the Gonzales Independent School District and Gonzales County for a building located on Fair Street. The agreement, which runs for a five year term and can be renewed thereafter, will be administered by the TexasAgriLife Extension Service-Gonzales Office. It will give the Gonzales Master Gardeners a facility immediately adjacent to Gonzales Elementary School to support a school based education program for Gonzales children. It will also be available to other county adult and youth organizations such as 4H.

The building, which is believed to have been used in the 1940's as the school cafeteria, had been relegated to a broken down storage building when Gonzales Master Gardeners Bob Burchard and Betsy DeMent spotted it. The Gonzales Master Gardeners Association had been looking for a location where they could locate a permanent facility that could be used by Gonzales youth and Gonzales teachers to explore science, art and nutrition in a hands- on setting. The Gonzales Master Gardener's Eggleston Children's Garden has been such a huge success, the Master Gardeners wanted to expand the experience beyond the first grade classes that participate at Eggleston. The new facility will offer grades 2 through 4 a base of operations to have a similar experience at grade appropriate levels.

The building will need a major overhaul to make it a reality. Gonzales County has agreed to provide financial support for utilities and the City of Gonzales has agreed to provide in kind support by installing and connecting basic utilities. The Gonzales Master Gardeners have applied for several grants to raise the money needed to renovate and operate the building. Letters of support from local government and civic groups have been exceptional showing that the project enjoys wide community endorsement. The work will take time but will make the facility comfortable and useable for teachers and students. The Master Gardeners are pretty excited about having this opportunity to support the schools and faculty. What better way to fulfill our educational mission than to support this kind of a teaching facility?



Master Gardener's Project Report

New Class Starts

We are proud to start our SECOND Master Gardener Training Class. This class will be smaller than the first one. A lot of people are having trouble even thinking about gardening in this drought. But we have some die hards that are determined. This year, the instructors will be even better than last, with several more nationally recognized experts in their fields. And there will be a wider, deeper range of projects for students to work on. We, as Master Gardeners, are delighted to welcome our new members and we look forward to getting to know them and to working with them. If you would like to be a class assistant please contact Fran Saliger.

Congratulations, Larry and Johnnie!!!!

Congratulations to Larry Finch and Johnnie Edwards who have completed their 50 hours of service and are now Certified Texas Master Gardeners. Both Larry and Johnnie have worked a number of different projects to fulfill their requirements. He has worked on the Cemetery Cleanup, the DAR House Project, grew plants and worked at the Spring Plant Sale, pitched in at the Extension Office, worked at the Hospital Garden, set our financial records in QuickBooks and even filed our non-profit tax return with the IRS. Johnnie is our tech guru and she has put us on Facebook and now she has launched our website. Way to go, Larry and Johnnie!!!!

WIC Garden Gets Its Grant

Master Gardeners are pretty excited by the announcement this month that Cynthia Green RD/LD, IBCLC of Community Health Centers of South Central Texas WIC was successful in her grant application for a teaching garden at the WIC center. Cynthia's vision is a garden where she can teach nutrition to WIC participants by teaching them to grow wholesome food with minimal inputs and expense. Cynthia asked the Master Gardeners to partner with her in the effort. Dwight Sexton worked with Cynthia on the application.

Look for invitations to the work group meetings in your e-mail. This is a pretty unique and exciting project.

MG's Apply for Fair Street Grant

MG's Bob and David have applied for a grant for renovation of the Fair Street Exploratorium. Support for this project has been really great and MG's may be helping teachers and students explore the natural world there sooner than you think.

Hospital Garden

The Garden is looking GOOOO!!!! Final touches for plant selection are underway and Polly plans a planting party as soon as weather permits.

Are You Brave Enough for Radio?

Our local radio station is fortunate to have Egan Barthels who does a great morning show. We believe that he might be interested in some kind of short program for the morning show in the

form of some gardening "know how". He gave David and Gail a spot to talk about new fall class and the Master Gardening Program. And they said it was nearly painless. So, are you brave enough for radio? Do you have a neat idea for a 15 minute spot? Let Alan hear from you. He is the coordinator for the radio spots and he is going to be looking for you.

Fall Fund Raising Event

The Fall Rummage Sale will be held on **Saturday, October 22, 2011 at the Fair Street Building next to Gonzales Elementary School**. Clean out your closets, attic, garage or shed of unwanted "stuff". Also bring whatever extra plants you may have to sell. Call Fran if you need a place to store anything before the sale. A committee will meet to set up some guidelines and discuss general information. If you want to help out contact Juliana or Fran. Look for an e-mail with more information about the plans for the event. Each person bringing items for the sale will be responsible for pricing their own items (needs to be done before the sale on Saturday morning). We will be able to bring the sale items to the Fair Street building on Friday and start setting up for the event. For more information contact Juliana Hennig (713-582-0794) or Fran Saliger (830-672-2953).



Tip of the Month

(Submitted by Carol Bond)

It's too hot to be out doors so how about taking good care of those indoor plants by 'leaching' them. Given our hard water and mineral salts building up both on the soil surface and clay pots, periodic leaching will promote the health of our indoor plants. Here's one way to do that. If the plant is small enough to move easily, take it to the sink, shower or laundry tub. Remove the saucer or ornamental basket or container, and pour lots and lots of water through the growing pot. Some folks are afraid to do this, because they've heard warnings about over watering, but this will not cause over watering if the water can drain out. You are essentially rinsing the soil and diluting the salts. Let it drain completely and don't forget to clean the saucer before putting the house plant back. If the house plant is too big to put in a sink, take it

outdoors or to the patio and rinse it down using the garden hose. If the crusty white or yellow build up is already present, scrape it off with a dish scrubber. Avoid letting the particles fall back into the soil. If there is a crust on the soil itself, scrape off the top inch of soil and add the same amount of fresh potting soil. Good Luck and stay cool.

Plant of the Month

(Submitted by Fran Saliger)

Common Name: Mexican Petunia (dwarf variety)

Scientific Name: *Ruellia brittoniana*

An excellent drought tolerant native perennial that has an upright and spreading growth habit.

Blooms: spring/summer-blue/purple to pink

Width: 10"

Height: 8-12"

Light requirement: sun/shade

Heat tolerance: high

Water requirements: low

Propagation: aggressively self-sows (seeds)



Events in the Area

(Submitted by Juliana Hening)

September 17-18, The Amazing Butterfly Exhibit kicks off it's opening at the San Antonio Botanical Garden at 555 Funston at N. New Braunfels in San Antonio and **continues through January 8, 2012**. Explore the interactive maze to learn about the incredible life cycle of butterflies and the surprising challenges they face every day. The exhibit is free with admission. Admission is \$8 adults; \$6 students, seniors, military; \$5 children age 3-13. For additional information, call 210-829-5100 or visit www.sabot.org.

September 19, Noon-3pm, **Essentials of Gardening**, San Antonio Garden Center Session, 3310 N. New Braunfels & Funston by the Botanical Gardens #1—**Orchids for Texas**, presented by Todd & Suzanne Miller, owners of Miller's Tropicals in Dripping Springs and Session #2—**Texas Wildscapes Save Time, Water & Wildlife** presented by Judit Green, Texas Parks and Wildlife.

September 24, 8am – 4pm, **It's All About Trees...and More!** will be held at the VEG Pavilion, 283 Bachelor Dr., Victoria, TX. Program topics/events include "Totally Tenacious and Texas Tough" (selected plants for the Victoria area) Plant Sale; Inviting Butterflies & Hummers to Your Gardens; Trees: Recommended Trees for Victoria area; Planting, Training, & Pruning Trees; Managing Pests; Old Plants Made New; Fall Gardening; Container Gardening: Indoors and

Outdoors; Creating Backyard Habitats for Wildlife; Xeriscape & EarthKind Gardening; and Rainwater Harvesting. Registration is \$50 per person if received by September 14th.

September 24, 9am, Drip Irrigation. Our own Jim Johnson who is also a Guadalupe County Master Gardener, will give a demonstration on how to set up a drip irrigation system at the Schertz Community Garden, 1101 Elbel Road, Schertz, TX. Learn how to set up your fall garden and landscape drip irrigation system or spend the winter prepping for next spring. It's easier than you think and the "pieces and parts" are affordable and readily available.
www.guadalupecountymastergardners.org

September 24-25, 10am-6pm, Bamboo Show & Sale, will be presented by the Texas Bamboo Society at Zilker Botanical Gardens in Austin. For more information, go to www.bamboocentral.net.

September 24, 9am-noon, Rain Barrel Workshop, will be held at the San Antonio Botanical Garden. Join County Extension Agent Bryan Davis, and Master Gardeners Lou Kellogg and Mary Fernandez to learn about rainwater collection for the home and landscape and make your own rain barrel to take home. Limit 30. Please RSVP by Wednesday, September 21, 2011. Fee: \$55. Please make your check payable to Bexar County Master Gardeners. To register, please contact programregistrar@sabot.org or Sasha Kodet at [210-207-3270](tel:210-207-3270) or sasha.kodet@sanantonio.gov. Master Gardeners will be awarded 3 CEU's

September 26 & 27, Landscape Design Study, Course III, will be held at Christ United Methodist Church, College Station, TX. This is the third in the latest Landscape Design Study Course series which is offered in four separate schools, approximately six months apart, in the Bryan-College Station area. Participants may take the four courses in any sequence. Additional information and a registration form is located at <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/southern-garden/LDSep2011/>.

September 27, 2-4pm, 30 Bugs Every Gardener Should Know, will be held at the Bexar County Extension Office, 3355 Cherry Ridge, Suite 208. Learn about the good, the bad, and the ugly bugs you'll come in contact with if you spend any time outside. This program will cover how to identify them (pictures and actual specimens will be shown), if they are bad, the damage they do, and how to manage or encourage them. Please call or email Molly (210-467-6575, mekeck@ag.tamu.edu) so she can get a head-count.

October 1, Watersaver Landscape Tour, sponsored by San Antonio Water System, San Antonio River Authority and Edwards Aquifer Authority and Gardening Volunteers of South Texas. There will be six yards on the tour with a "suburban/urban" theme. Three of the yards are north of 410, and three are in King William/Southtown. All of them are very unique. More information is available at WatersaverLandscapeTour.org.

October 5, 10am, What Makes Heirloom Plants So Great, will be held at the San Antonio Garden Center, 3310 N. New Braunfels & Funston by the Botanical Gardens and presented by Judy Barrett, the founding Editor & Publisher of "Homegrown: Good Sense Organic Living for Texas". For more information, contact Sagc2004@sbcglobal.net or call Rachel at 210-824-0435.

October 14-16 Texas Gourd Festival, Fredericksburg Gillespie Co. Fairgrounds
<http://www.visitfredericksburgtx.com/>

October 15, 9am-4pm, 20 Herbs to Remember, will be presented by noted herbalist, writer and culinary educator Susan Belsinger at the San Antonio Herb Market at the Pearl Brewery near Broadway & Josephine. With cooking demos, lectures, shopping and activities for the children, the herb market is free and open to the public. This is a great event that our Gail recommends. It's a Go Texan Event affiliated with the Texas Dept. of Agriculture.

October 22, 9am to 4 pm. Mitchell Lake Audubon Center 7th Fall Wildlife Festival and Plant Sale, 10750 Pleasanton Road San Antonio, Texas. This FREE event features a day of nature activities for all ages: Hayrides, butterfly walks, kids' activities, SAWS Conservation information, area exhibitors and vendors, Raptor show, native & drought tolerant plant sale & MORE!

October 22, 10am-2pm, Heart O' Texas Orchid Society's New Growers Seminar, Exhibit & Plant Sale, will be held at Zilker Botanical Gardens.

October 22, 2:30-4:30pm, Central Texas Trees and Oak Wilt FAQ, will be presented by the Travis County Master Gardener's Association at the Old Quarry Oaks Public Library, 7051 Village Center Dr., Austin. Come join master gardener Jerry Naiser and learn all about how to do right by your trees. Learn what varieties to select for your Central Texas landscape and gain a higher level of success by choosing those that enjoy our native soils and tough climate. Learn how to care for and prune your tree for long-term health and during times of stress such as construction or drought. For more information, go to www.tcmastergardeners.org.

WOW!!!

Monthly Meeting Reminder

Gonzales Master Gardeners Association next monthly meeting will be October 6, 2011. The meeting is held from noon until 1:00 pm at 1405 Conway St. (Odd Fellows Lodge). Bring a bag lunch, drinks provided.



PLEASE GET THOSE VOLUNTEER HOURS IN BY THE END OF EACH MONTH!!!!

PLEASE E-MAIL THEM TO GAIL JOHNSON-THANK YOU

Gonzales Master Gardeners are people who love gardening and want to learn more about horticulture. Master Gardeners enjoy sharing their plant knowledge with others and promoting the love of gardening. What really sets Master Gardeners apart from other home gardeners is their special training in horticulture. In exchange for their training, persons who become Master Gardeners contribute time as volunteers, working through the Texas AgriLife Extension office to provide horticulture-related information to the community.

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