



As the Garden Grows

A Publication of the Gonzales Master Gardeners Gonzales, Texas February 2018 Volume 8, Issue 2

Congratulations Dwight Sexton!

AgriLife Extension employees in South Central Texas earn top agency award

January 10, 2018

Superior Service Award garnered by personnel in Bexar, Gonzales, Uvalde, Wilson counties

BRYAN — Employees of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service serving the South Central Texas area were recognized by the agency's top recognition – the Superior Service Award – during a ceremony held Jan. 9 in Bryan.



The award recognizes AgriLife Extension personnel who provide outstanding performance in education or other outstanding service to the organization and Texans.

"These award winners are to be commended for the exemplary work they do each day in helping Texans better their lives through continuing education that helps meet society's challenges," said Dr. Doug Steele, agency director.

Dwight Sexton, AgriLife Extension agriculture and natural resources agent for Gonzales County was presented a Superior Service Award in the county agent category. Sexton, who has served in that capacity for more than 18 years, provides information and technical assistance to county residents in the areas of beef cattle, forage, pecans,

horticulture and natural resources education. In his award nomination, he was cited for his work in

improving forage production through educational programming as well as his work supporting the Luling Foundation, Gonzales County Hay Show, Gonzales County Beef and Forage Committee, Gonzales County Master Gardener and Junior Master Gardener programs, along with youth water fairs and agricultural literacy programs.

Read the full article at AgriLife Today at https://today.agrilife.org

Pruning Your Oak Trees-Is it too Late?

(Submitted by Fran Saliger)

Oak wilt is an extremely serious fungal disease that attacks red oaks and live oaks across significant parts of our state. The spread of the disease is mainly due to improper trimming and timing.

According Dr. Calvin Finch, retired Texas A&M horticulturist, there are a number of effective measures that can be taken to minimize the threat of oak wilt.

- OAKS ARE SAFEST IF PRUNED IN THE WINTER OR LATE SUMMER. Any wound on an
 oak tree, when the bark beetle is active, is likely to get visited by the beetle. If the wound and
 the visit occur during the period of early February through May, when the fungus is also active,
 there is a chance that the tree will be inoculated with the disease. Prune unsafe branches as
 they occur.
- COVER ALL WOUNDS ON OAKS WITH PRUNING PAINT. The period of susceptibility is very short, perhaps only three days after the wound occurs, but it is safest to get in the habit of covering the wounds. Remember that pruning is only one of the ways trees get wounded. Automobile bumps, lawn mowers, string trimmers, wind and ice breakage, and bulldozer damage on roots are other common examples of wounds.
- MANAGE FIREWOOD TO AVOID INFECTION. It is not necessary to reduce the use of the
 fireplace in order to stop the spread of oak wilt. Smoke from infected wood burning is NOT a
 threat! The fungus is destroyed by heat and will not even survive in dry firewood. If you utilize
 red oak firewood, try to purchase wood from trees that have not been infected or killed from
 oak wilt. Only wood that has been cured for an entire summer should be stored in the vicinity
 of uninfected red or live oaks. If you bought oak firewood for this winter and are unsure of its
 age or origins, use it up before spring.
- DIVERSIFY YOUR SHADE TREE PLANTINGS. Large blocks of red and live oaks are susceptible to the spread of the disease. Plant cedar elm, chinquapin oak, bur oak, Chinese pastiche, and bald cypress in addition to red and live oak.

Consult https://plantanswers.com for more questions and answers about Oak Wilt.

Or https://texasforestservice.tamu.edu/OakWiltFAQS/

Root-knot nematodes in gardens

From www.plantanswers.com

Root-knot nematodes are microscopic worms that can infect vegetable roots causing serious symptoms and producing galls or knots on the roots. The nematodes impede the flow of water and nutrients to the plant.



Symptoms



Foliage damage and reduced production on nematode infected plant...

- Plants can be less vigorous, stunted, chlorotic and can wilt easily in the heat of summer, grow more slowly and produce less and smaller fruits.
- The root-knot nematode has a very wide host range (more than 2,000 hosts) and thus can reproduce on most plants. Broccoli and cauliflower are two nonhosts.

Root-knot is usually not a problem in colder climates because the winter temperatures are too cold for them to survive. A week of subzero temperatures with no snow on the ground could freeze the soil down deep enough to eliminate this pest.

Root-knot is easily diagnosed by simply looking at the roots of plants. Gently pull or dig up roots and look for galls or knots on the roots. These galls vary in size from a few centimeters up to an inch in diameter. If found, note which parts of the garden are infected. Care should be taken not to spread the nematode from infested areas to non-infested areas.



Nematode-free or normal tomato root system



Nematodes and knots on tomato roots

How did it get there?

 Root-knot nematodes predominately are introduced into gardens by infected soil or plant roots, infected vegetable transplants, dirty garden tools (including tillers or tractors) with infested soil, muddy boots, vehicle tires, or improperly or incompletely composted material. Thousands of rootknot nematode eggs or worms might be present in a tablespoon of soil.

Can root-knot nematode infestation be controlled in a garden? Yes, but not easily.

- If no galls or knots are found on the roots of your garden plants in the fall, great care should be taken not to introduce a carrier. Good garden sanitation will keep the root-knot nematode out. Always clean garden equipment if it has been used in another garden. Buy garden transplants from a reputable dealer. Do not add compost or soil to your garden unless you are sure that it is not infested with root-knot nematodes.
- If galls or knots are found on your plant roots, remove as much of this root material as possible from the garden. These roots should not be composted. They can be dried and burned or bagged and disposed of properly.
- An infested garden should be kept clean of grass or garden debris to allow the cold winter temperatures to penetrate the soil. Winter tilling (if possible) could help facilitate the penetration of cold temperatures by turning over and loosening the soil. A winter cover crop of rye when plowed in March and allowed to decompose before planting has been known to produce a substance that is toxic to nematodes.
- Since the root-knot nematode does not become active until the soil temperature reached 64
 degrees F, early spring vegetables may avoid damage. Also, planting summer vegetables as early
 as possible will give them a good start to establish larger root systems before the root-knot
 nematode becomes active.
- Soil polarization is another way to reduce root-knot nematode populations. Soil temperatures that
 reach 125 degrees F for 30 minutes can kill root-knot nematodes. The garden section to be treated
 should first be tilled and moistened. Then it should be covered with clear plastic (2 to 4 millimeters)
 for the months of June to August.

Use of Resistant Varieties

Resistant varieties offer the easiest, least expensive, and most effective method of controlling

nematodes in the home garden. Nematodes are unable to feed on a resistant variety, resulting in a population decline over time due to starvation (as long as weed hosts of the nematodes are also eliminated). Planting nematode resistant plants (VFN) is a good way of controlling root-knot nematodes, especially if their numbers have not become excessive. There are many varieties of resistant tomatoes, but not many choices with other vegetables. After two years of resistant plants, the number of root-knot nematodes should be low enough to plant a susceptible variety again. A season of susceptible plants, though, will allow the root-knot population to again become high. The best nematode resistant varieties for this area are 'Valley Cat', 'Tycoon' and 'Celebrity' for large fruit and 'BHN 968' ('Dwarf Cherry Surprise') for a cherry tomato. There are no Heirloom varieties that are nematode and/or disease resistant.

In the home landscape, some bedding plants are resistant to root-knot nematodes including zinnia, salvia and marigold. Some damage may occur to snapdragons and pansies, especially when plants are stressed. Begonias, coleus and impatiens are most likely to be damaged in areas where root-knot nematodes are a problem.

Rotate the Garden to a New Location: This method will help to prevent nematodes and diseases from becoming established in one area. If new space is not available, rotate plants so that resistant plants are moved to an area where susceptible ones had grown previously. Usually three years of growing no susceptible plants (such as asparagus, corn, onions, garlic and strawberries) in a particular garden space is needed to reduce nematode populations.

Fallow Period With Summer Tilling: The population of root-knot nematodes can be reduced significantly in one season by repeated tilling (every 10 days) of the garden soil during the hot, dry summer, to bring the nematodes to the surface to be killed by the drying of the sun. The fallow section must be kept free of weeds and old roots to be effective. Covering the fallow section between tilling with black plastic may help.

Plant Certified Disease-Free Transplants & Seed Potatoes: All plants brought to the garden should be examined carefully for signs of very tiny knots on roots. Avoid planting any plants that look suspicious. On Irish potatoes, small bumps on the surface may indicate infection by nematodes.

Remove All Plants Immediately After Harvest: Destroy plants and plant roots by pulling up immediately after harvest. Do not let stalks stand through the winter. Work the soil two to four times in winter, allowing the sun and weather to exert their killing effect.

Establish a Rotation System: Research has shown that root-knot nematode populations can be reduced in soils that have been previously planted with French or French dwarf-type marigolds. There are some biofumigant plants, such as French marigolds and mustards, whose roots produce a biochemical substance that can be toxic to and kill root-knot nematodes. However, not all mustard and marigold varieties act as a biofumigant. Some varieties that do are: bonita mixed, gypsy sunshine, scarlet Sophia, single gold, petite harmony, petite gold, tangerine, crackerjack and flor de muerto marigolds. Use French dwarf-type marigolds, such as 'Petite Gold' or 'Petite Harmony.' 'Tangerine', 'Single Gold' (sold as 'Nema-gone'), and 'Lemon Drop' are also good choices. For the first year, plant marigolds in spots where the greatest amount of nematode damage has occurred, or plant marigolds in strips several feet wide across the garden to establish a rotation scheme. Marigolds must be planted as a solid planting, no more than 7-inches apart. They must be grown for at least two months, and then turned under. Keep marigolds free of grass and weeds to prevent nematodes from feeding on roots other than marigolds. Plant vegetables sensitive to root-knot nematodes — such as tomatoes, okra, lima beans, beans and others — in the marigold area the following spring. Rotate marigolds to the same area at least every other year, as long as nematode

problems exist. Planting these marigolds mixed in with susceptible garden vegetables is not very effective.



Closely planted marigolds for several months reduce nematode numbers...

Soil Amendments: The addition of any organic matter to the garden will improve soil health, and will increase microbial activity in general, which will have the benefit of improving plant health.

South Texas Home, Garden and Environmental Show

Join Gonzales Master Gardeners at the South Texas Home, Garden and Environmental Show in Floresville, TX on March 3 & 4. There will be plenty to see and do for the whole family. Come by the "Old Fashion and Modern Roses" booth and purchase some roses, learn about the Gonzales Master Gardeners program and buy a chance to win a custom-built hummingbird and butterfly garden.

Event Date:

Sat, 03/03/2018 - Sun, 03/04/2018

Location: Floresville Event Center. New this year: Devine Fall Festival Reptile Team -Back this year by popular demand: Last Chance Forever

Contact Name: Calvin Finch

Contact Number:

210-382-4455

Contact Email:

calvinrfinch@gmail.com

Location

Lauro G. Deleon Floresville Event Center 600 State Highway 97 W Floresville, 78114 United States

https://www.facebook.com/sthges

NOTE: See January's issue of "As the Garden Grows" for more detailed information. Go to www.gonzalesmastergardeners.org.

Home, Garden & Environmental Show

while supplies last

March 3 & 4

Sat. 9-4 · Sun. 10-3

FREE Admission Both Days!

South Texas Landscape School
Sun., Mar. 4, 9 am-3 pm
Tuition for one - \$25
Tuition for two in same family - \$40

Floresville Event Center

600 Hwy 97 W, Floresville

Gardening South Texas Radio Show

- Noon-2 p.m. Sat. & Sun. Ask Calvin Finch and Jerry Parsons gardening questions in person

- · Reptile Display Both days
- · Last Chance Forever Raptor Show -1pm-2pm Both days
- Plant Exchange- Saturday 9am-4pm
- Drama Kids Performance- Saturday 2pm

Youth Activities - Both days

Home Depot Kids Toolboxes Drama Mama Gardens Family Easter Photos Master Gardening Class Forming!

LECTURE SERIES

Tomato Gardening
Old Fashioned Roses
Attracting and Producing Monarch Butterflies
Gardening Floresville Style
Texas Super Star Plants
Enjoying the San Antonio River

EXHIBITS

Arts, Crafts,
Gardening Supplies,
Environmental Agencies,
Master Gardeners

Plant Sales

Rodeo tomato, vegetables, old-fashioned roses, native plants, milkweed for butterflies, herbs and other plants! **Both Days** Music — Sat., 10-12
County Line
Community Band,
Food and Snacks
available both days

Silent Auction

Saturday at 2 pm and Sunday at 2 pm Garden items and other bargains. Bring motel receipt to receive a \$50 Gift Certificate.

SPONSORS

Wilson County News, KLUP 930 Ald radio, Milberger's Gardening South Texas, Sen Antonio River Authority, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, Gardening Volunteers of South Texas, Devine Garden Club, City of Floresville, Mester Gardeners in Guadalupe, Comet, Bezer, and Gonzales Counties, Everyreen Underground Water Conservation Dist.

Third Grade Black Walnut Tree Conservation Program



Thanks to Gail Johnson and her team of GMG, a new drip line irrigation system has been installed in hopes of getting a better germination rate for the Black Walnut Trees. GMG members gained hands on experience installing a drip irrigation system for the trees. The area on the south side of the PACE building has been set up to accommodate the 240 plus tree pots that the GISD third graders planted last December with Black Walnut seed. Each tree pot is spaced about 12 inches apart to allow for growth of the trees over the next 9-10 months. Individual drippers were installed for each pot to insure that the trees get the water needed to germinate and grow. In the fall, the trees will be available for distributed to people in Gonzales County.

A number of tree pots still remain at the south end of the Greenhouse where drip irrigation is not in place and will need monitoring after the Spring Plant Sale. If any GMG are interested in fostering some of these trees until the fall, please contact Donna Bell or Fran Saliger



Preparing the Children's Garden for Planting

Preparation of the beds at the Children's Garden is an ongoing process. Arline Schacherl, project leader, has established a maintenance schedule for upkeep of the beds. In January, mushroom compost was worked into the existing beds and weeds pulled. Several of the original beds from 2011 were replaced. In the future, some of the other beds will be replaced.

The first two classroom sessions with the first graders were held January 11 and 25. The children learned about the job of a seed and studied how a seed grows into a plant. They are very excited about coming to the gardens on **February 22** from noon until 2:00pm.to plant their vegetable garden of lettuce, spinach, carrots and radishes. Another work day is scheduled for the garden on **February 13 at 10 am**. If you want to help with this program, please contact Arline.











Plant Health and Diagnostics Educator Specialist Training Class

The first Plant Health and Diagnostics Educator Specialist Training Class was held at PACE on February 8-9. It was attended by 28 MG's from 20 counties. Dr. Kevin Ong, Director of the Texas Plant Disease Diagnostic Laboratory, Dr. Kimberly Cochran, Assistant Professor & Extension Specialist, Mr. Erfan Vafaie, Extension Program Specialist-Entomologist, and Mandy Little, Extension Assistant, provided the participants with a very informative program. Participants will be able to share their knowledge and information on plant health with other Master Gardeners and the public in their home areas.





Spring Plant Sale News!

The annual spring Plant Sale is fast approaching. The date is set for March 24, 2018 on Texas Heroes Square in downtown Gonzales. The Vegetable Grow Team is growing some great tomatoes, peppers and other vegetables. We will have some hearty roses including Peggy Martin, Red Climber, Belinda's Dream and Grandma's Yellow Rose. The Herb Grow Team is growing thyme, dill, cilantro and many others for you to purchase. There will be activities for the children at the sale with the Easter Bunny hopping around, so bring your camera and take some photos.

Gonzales Annual Spring Plant Sale

On Texas Heroes Square-Downtown Gonzales

Saturday March 24th

8:30am - 1:00pm

Presented by Gonzales Master Gardeners

- Annuals
- Perennials
- Adaptive Native plants
- Silent Auction
- Children's Booth

- Vegetables
- Herbs
- Roses
- Succulents

Plant information available!

Accepting Cash, Checks or Credit Cards

Plant Give Away Every ½ hour Starting at 11 am. Must be Present to Win!

New Gonzales Master Gardener class starting in September 2018

www.gonzalesmastergardeners.org

Nancy Foster is helping Gail Johnson update the fruit tree information on the GMG web page, and would love input from other GMG members! All suggestions are welcome, such as how best to add liquid fertilizer (pre-water without fertilizer, so the fertilizer/water won't burn the tree because it is absorbed too quickly). Any notable experiences you would like to share, such as tree/fruit species, pest control, watering practices, or microclimate (is it possible to minimize the impact of short or longer term freezes?) would be greatly appreciated! Nancy's email is: nmlfone1@gmail.com.

Thanks Volunteers!

What a great start to the New Year. Twenty four MG reported 343 volunteer hours and 55 CEUs for January 2018. Everyone has been very busy this month. Opportunities included the Children's Garden in the class room and maintenance work at the gardens, installation of the drip irrigation systems in the Greenhouse and Walnut Tree area, growing plants for the SPS and much more. The MG training classes offered some great information with instructors, Dr. Calvin Finch, Dr. Bill Welch and David Dement in January and February. Gail Johnson and team worked diligently on having a successful Plant Health and Diagnostics Educator Specialist Training Class on February 8 & 9.

Thanks for everything you do for our organization from Fran Saliger

Area Events

San Antonio: Saturday, February 17 – "Pruning—A Most Important Yearly Practice" Shades of Green Nursery, San Antonio, 9:45am - 10:45am Free www.shadesofgreensa.com

San Antonio: Sunday February 18 – "Beginner Wildscaping for Your Garden", Mitchell Lake Audubon Center, San Antonio, 9am - 11am. Fee \$5. http://mitchelllake.audubon.org/events

San Antonio: Monday, February 19 – "Mulching Your Garden Beds" -- GVST Essentials of Gardening Classes, San Antonio Garden Center, 12pm - 3pm. Free. info@gardeningvolunteers.org

New Braunfels: Tuesday, February 20 – "I'm Being Invaded! What Can I Do?" NPSOT Lindheimer Chapter (Comal County), GVTC Auditorium, New Braunfels, 6:30pm - 7:30pm Free

Cedar Creek: February 19 – 20: All day MG Earth-Kind Specialist Training, McKinney Roughs Nature Park, Cedar Creek. For more information, call the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension-Bastrop County Office 512-581-7186 or Bastrop County Master Gardeners 512-957-1443. Registration deadline February 9, 2018.

San Antonio: Saturday, February 24 – "Weed Control and General Landscape Maintenance" -- Shades of Green Nursery, San Antonio 9:45am - 10:45am Free. www.shadesofgreensa.com

College Station: February 26 – 27: Landscape Design School Series XXV, Course IV, George H.W. Bush Presidential Library, College Station 8:45am to 4:00pm. The Schools are sponsored by Texas Garden Clubs, Inc. and the Texas AgriLife Extension Service, Texas A&M University. This course is popular with Texas Master Gardeners and can now be utilized by them for continuing education credit. Texas Garden Club Inc. and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service have sponsored this series from the 1960's onward. Mrs. Diane Perez of Texas Garden Clubs, Inc. and Dr. William C. Welch, Texas AgriLife Extension Service announce the fourth in the current series which is offered in four separate schools, approximately six months apart, each with 10 hours of instruction, in the Bryan-College Station area. These courses offer an opportunity to learn from professional landscape architects and horticulturists about how successful landscapes are designed. Fee \$165

Austin: The annual plant sale/fundraiser for Sunshine Community Gardens, 4814 Sunshine Drive, Austin, will be held **March 3**, 9:00 a.m.- 2 p.m. Sunshine Community Gardens are the largest community garden in Austin with the largest community garden plant sale. Available will be organically grown tomatoes (126 varieties), peppers (80 varieties), eggplants, tomatillos, herbs, natives and ornamentals, plus compost to help them all be healthy and happy. For more information, visit sunshinecommunitygardens.org.

New Braunfels: Friday, March 9: Spring Gardening Seminar on Native Plants and Their Pollinators, Comal County Master Gardeners, McKenna Event Center, New Braunfels, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm Fee \$55. Registration deadline February 22, 2018. For more information http://txmg.org/comal/event/seminar/

Victoria: Lunch and Learn with the Masters. Once again this year, certified master gardeners and the Victoria County Extension Agent will present programs on the second Monday of the month (except in May - on the first Monday) from noon to 1 p.m. at the Dr. Pattie Dodson Public Health Center, 2805 N. Navarro St., in Victoria. Bring a lunch and drink if you wish.

- March 12 "Keyhole Gardening: Innovative Raised Vegetable Beds" will bring to you information on a unique, raised bed system that originated in Africa. Presenter Brian Serold has built several keyhole gardens in Victoria and Bloomington to support the Healthy South Texas Initiative that Texas A&M AgriLife Extension has rolled out in South Texas. Learn how you can build a keyhole garden on your property. Sandi Coleman, another presenter, is a vegetable specialist and will share how she has incorporated the keyhole garden in the Victoria Educational Gardens (VEG) vegetable area.
- April 9 Lupe Cook will present "Plant Propagation." Lupe has been instrumental in growing new plants in the VEG greenhouse for our plant sales for several years and has been a propagation instructor for several of the master gardener training classes. She will share some specialized techniques she has experienced in her years of plant propagation, especially the "what-to-dos" and "what-not-to-dos."

Seguin: March Monthly Meeting. Thursday, March 15, 2018 at 7:00pm. Phytonutrient Gardening

Presented by Joe Ulbach. Everyone is welcome, and it's Free! Monthly meetings start with a Social at 6:15, Speaker at 7:00, and a Business Meeting at 8:00. Meetings are held in the Guadalupe County AgriLife Extension Building, 210 East Live Oak, Seguin. Public is welcome.

Ft. Worth: March 22-23: Plant Propagation Specialist Course, Tarrant County Master Gardener Association, Fort Worth. Fee \$225. Registration is limited to two MGs per county. The registration form, schedule and hotel information are available on the Texas Master Garden website, www.txmg.org. Registration Deadline February 26, 2018.

College Station: April 4 – 6: Texas Master Gardener Annual Conference, Texas A&M, College Station.

Schertz: Schertz Lunch & Learns. **Monday, April 9, 2018**. "House Plants that Clean Contaminants From Indoor Air" presented by Marvin Borth Master Gardener. Guadalupe County Annex Building, 1101 Elbel Road, Schertz, Texas. All Programs are from 12-1 PM. Free to the Public. Bring your own lunch

Check out www.txmg.org for events around the state

New Braunfels area: http://txmg.org/comal/events Austin Area: http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/travis/

San Antonio, Texas- http://www.bexarcountymastergardeners.org



DATES TO REMEMBER: (Check elsewhere in newsletter for details)

Unless otherwise noted, all meetings/classes are at 623 N. Fair Street (Plantatarium: A Center for Exploration-aka PACE)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
FEBRUARY 11	12	13 Children's Garden Workday 10 am	14	15	16	17
18	19	20 MG Class 8:30-12:30	21	22 Children's Garden- Planting-Noon Board Mtg. 9:30 am	23	24
25	26	27	28 Volunteer Hours Due	March 1 Noon MG Lunch Mtg	2	3 STHGES event Floresville
4 STHGES event Floresville	5	6 MG Class Turf Grass - Dennis Hale 8:30-12:30	7	8	9	10
11	12 GISD Spring Break week	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20 MG Class 8:30-12:30	21	22	23 SPS Set Up 8:30 till finished	24 SPS 8:30 am- 1:00 pm
25	26	27	28	29 Board Mtg. 9:30 am	30	31 Volunteer hours due
April 1	2	3 MG Class 8:30-12:30	4	5 Noon MG Lunch Mtg	6	7

Editors:

Fran Saliger fsaliger@gvec.net Charlotte Knox lotteknox@aol.com

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Office

1709 E. Sarah DeWitt Drive Gonzales, TX 78629 Phone: 830-672-8531

Fax: 830-672-8532

E-mail: gonzales@ag.tamu.edu

Web pages:

http://gonzalesmastergardeners.org

http://gonzales.agrilife.org





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