

“As the Garden Grows”

A Publication of the Gonzales Master Gardeners, Gonzales, Texas
June, 2021, Edition

Children’s Garden Harvest Day

After a few weather delays the May 7th “harvest day” finally arrived! Master Gardener volunteers paired with each first grade team to see which veggies the kids planted from seed and transplants were ready for harvest. Finding lady beetles and a six-striped racer lizard on patrol in the greenery added to the adventure.

Smiling faces and eager hands made short work of pulling radishes, lettuce and spinach however most of the carrots and tomatoes still needed time to mature, such is gardening in Texas! Each student team gave us handmade greeting cards of appreciation – a very sweet touch indeed.

Special thanks to our May 7th GMG volunteers: Mayra G., Carolyn P., Brenda O., Marcus P., Cheryl H., Gladys B., Tommie C., our project leader, Arline R., and all who volunteered earlier for planting day and garden visits with the kids.

Gonzales County Master Gardener Class Application *(See last page of newsletter for schedule)*

Gardening (horticulture) in all its forms is more popular than ever, made so by COVID restrictions turning our attention to outdoor spaces. The Texas Master Gardener program and training classes offer research based information to enhance your gardening skills, give back to our community, and to make new gardening friends! It’s an investment that can bring enjoyment for years to come. Help spread the word!

Classes will be held on Tuesdays, beginning September 14, 2021 and ending May 4, 2022, from 8:30 am-12:30 pm. At the Plantatarium: A Center for Exploration (PACE), 623 Fair Street, Gonzales, Texas

Application deadline is 5:00 p.m., September 1, 2021

Payment of \$185.00 will be due with application. Make Checks to Gonzales Master Gardeners and deliver or mail to Gonzales Extension Office at 1709 E Sara DeWitt, Gonzales.

For a class application or more information, call Gail Johnson (830) 491-1996 or call the Gonzales County Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Office at (830) 672-8531 (d-sexton@tamu.edu)

June to Do List for Gardeners & Planting Guide

June is a very active month for gardeners, the last of the cool season veggies and flowers are fading, warm season veggies and flowers are coming into production. Lots to do in the landscape before the “dog days” arrive, for a comprehensive list see: <https://www.centraltexasgardener.org/resource/june-to-do-list/>



What's Bugging You?

Noticed grasshoppers lately? Unless you live in town away from natural areas you've probably seen a few in your landscape munching on your plants. They're not an easy pest to control. Leaf-footed bugs, stink bugs and others are a landscape plague for gardeners. This reference is geared for commercial growers however it provides more information on the insects than the usual home garden articles:

<https://extensionentomology.tamu.edu/resources/insects/field-vegetable/>

Gonzales Master Gardener Plant Updates

Artemisia

(Submitted by Barbara Scott, GMG)

My Artemisia ('Powis Castle') has survived the extreme extended cold in a 3-gallon plastic container with no cover. I was pleasantly surprised to see it leafing out in April. When out in the garden, it always catches my eye with its graceful silvery/green leaves. Photographs by Barbara Scott

Artemisia requires little from the gardener. During a drought, it might need a good drink once a week and when it's raining adequately, it doesn't need watering. It is not usually bothered by pests or diseases. In the summer it could use a trim to keep it compact and nice looking. Regular fertilizer is not necessary, but compost tea can be given in the spring. This plant should always be planted in a sunny spot with well-draining soil of any PH. Combine Artemisia with other sun-loving perennials or shrubs with similar drought tolerance.

Artemisia "ar-tem-EE-zsah" originated in Asia and grows in warm sunny climates in many parts of the world. Its name comes from Artemis the Greek Goddess of the Moon and Hunt. It has been used in Chinese traditional medicine for more than 2000 years to help heal many diseases such as malaria and for relieving pain and combating fever. Artemisia is a large diverse genus of plants between 200 to 400 species belonging to the daisy and aster family Asteraceae.

Common names for various species in the genus includes mugwort, wormwood, sagebrush, and the culinary herb Tarragon.

It is a cold hardy herbaceous plant or shrub and can be small and mounding or a 10 feet tall sagebrush. Many have feathery, silvery/green leaves with white hairs that provides visual contrast in a container or garden. Artemisia is known for the powerful chemical constituents in their essential oils. Most have strong medicinal aromas and bitter taste so are not usually eaten by deer or other browsing animals. Artemisia absinthium is poisonous and Tarragon is toxic to dogs and cats. I have grown it for 4 years and my dogs and cats have not bothered it.

It's mainly a foliage plant, but it does have small white or yellow fragrant flowers pollinated by the wind.

Larvae of the Lepidoptera (butterflies and moths) use Artemisia as food plants. It attracts butterflies and provides nesting materials and structure for native bees. Artemisia propagates easily from stem or root cuttings and/or grows from seed.

References:

<https://portlandnursery.com/perennials/artemisia/>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Artemisia_\(genus\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Artemisia_(genus))

https: www.herbsociety.org/file_download/inline/

Jubilee Watermelon

(Submitted by Mayra Guisinger, GMG)

It's time to garden, and besides planting all of our favorite vegetables and herbs, we have a bit of room left in a sunny corner for some watermelon fruit. We live in perfect watermelon growing country. After having worked my soil over the last couple of years, I have a good mix of sand, silt and organic matter to grow refreshing melons. There are many ways to get recommended watermelon seeds for our area, and I always go to the nearby Feed and Farm Store. I buy from them for every season. You have to ask them for their seeds and someone will help you, they are not out on a shelf or rack.

This year I chose "Jubilee." I planted my short mound with 6 seeds about 6 inches apart on the first day of Spring. It takes 6-8 days, water and warm temperatures to sprout the seeds, but this year they came a little later due to the cooler Spring temperatures, and now two months later I have let two vines grow. They are about two-three feet long and as of this writing have multiple blooms and some small melons forming at the base of each bloom. I fed the plant bi-monthly with composted manure, mix of Garrett's Juice and a tablespoon of Expert Gardener Vegetable Food. Watering, of course when needed it doesn't rain. I expect to have some good tasting watermelons by Thump Time- late June!



In the Veggie Garden

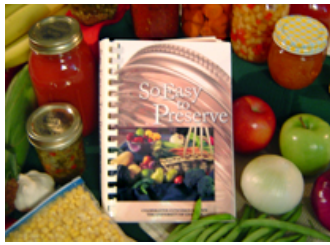
Wow! Mid-May rains brought relief from drought conditions, nothing like rainfall to spur growth, however it can contribute to fungal diseases, root rots and insect pressures. Allow plants to dry before harvesting and please don't work wet soil. Choose "least toxic" fungicides and pesticides as necessary, follow label instructions for application, and very important - days to harvest after application - self-protection, and storage. For more information on harvesting veggies at peak ripeness see:

<https://agriflifeextension.tamu.edu/library/gardening/harvesting-handling-vegetables-garden/>

Tomatoes that have reached full size and are just beginning to turn color may split open with a sudden increase of water. Best to harvest those before rain events. Allow them to ripen on the kitchen counter, shoulders up away from direct sunlight.

Planning on fall tomatoes and peppers? Nursery selections are usually slim. First of June's the time to start them from seed in order to have sizable transplants by mid-July. Choose determinate or semi-determinate small to medium fruited varieties for best results, such as Bobcat, Celerity, BHN-444, Sweet 100, Sungold & Juliet to name a few. With protection and attention to watering should get transplants off to a good start. You'll be rewarded with veggies ripening when the weather is cooling down a bit.

The Next Step – Preserving the Harvest!



Home food preservation - water bath & pressure canning, freezing and dehydration is also gaining in popularity, especially if you have a good size garden or frequent farmers markets for bulk fruit and vegetables. The best resource is the University of Georgia’s “National Center for Home Food Preservation” web site and the “So Easy to Preserve” manual, DVD and YouTube videos: <https://nchfp.uga.edu/>



Did you know Texas A&M AgriLife Extension offers on-line courses covering many topics including those of interest to gardeners? Well they certainly do! Check out the latest offerings: <https://agrilifelearn.tamu.edu/>

The gateway to “all things horticultural” is: <https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/>
Once there you can link to a wide range of information from fruit to vegetable gardening, landscaping and earth-kind gardening techniques.

Visit our web page at: <http://www.gonzalesmastergardeners.org>

We meet the first Thursday of the month at 623 N. Fair Street at 12 noon.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Office-Gonzales County

1709 E. Sarah DeWitt, Zip 78629

Phone: 830-672-8531

Web Site: <https://gonzales.agrilife.org/>

Dwight Sexton, County Extension Agent-ANR

Resources:

Vegetable Gardening Books – by Texans for Texas Gardeners, just to name a few:

THE VEGETABLE BOOK by Dr. Sam Cotner

TEXAS FRUIT & VEGETABLE GARDENING by Greg Grant

TEXAS ORGANIC VEGETABLE GARDENING by Garrett & Beck

EASY GARDENING FOR TEXAS by Joseph Masabni

TEXAS TOMATO LOVER'S HANDBOOK by William Adams

Note: Above available for ordering through www.texasgardener.com. You can find them via other on-line sources, just be sure to compare prices!

Free On-Line Vegetable Resources:

<https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/vegetable/>

When viewing YouTube videos try to find those produced by Texas A&M, Texas Master Gardeners or Horticultural Organizations knowledgeable on the subject you're researching. Recommendations for varieties and planting dates may differ from those adapted to our area of the country and state. Other videos are fun to watch, just base your decisions on those tailored to our conditions.



Proposed Gonzales Master Gardeners 2021-2022 Class Schedule

8:30am-12:30 pm. At the Plantatarium: A Center for Exploration (PACE), 623 Fair Street, in Gonzales.

- 9-14 **Introduction and Tour**
Chapter 1 –Welcome, Master Gardeners
- 9-28 **Botany**
Chapter 3 - Plant Development
- 10-5 **Plant Propagation**
Chapter 4 – Plant Propagation
- 10-12 **Plants and the Underground Economy-**
Chapter 5 - Soils Characteristics; Chapter 6 – Soil Improvement
- 10-26 **Field Trip to the San Antonio Botanical Garden**
- 11-9 **How to Plant a Tree and Tree Diseases**
- 11-16 **Greenhouses**
Compost
- 11-30 **Vegetable Gardening**
Chapter 10 – Vegetable and Herbs
- 12-14 **Fruit Production**
Chapter 11 – Fruit Trees, Berries and Pecans
Christmas Break
- 1-4 **Turf Grass**
Chapter 9 - Lawn Care
- 1-18 **Rainwater Harvesting & Water Conservation**
Chapter 7 - Water
- 2-1 **Entomology and Integrated Pest Management**
Chapter 13 & 15 – IPM & Insects
- 2-15 **Plant Pathology**
Chapter 14 – Plant Diseases
- 3-1 **Landscape Concepts and Design**
Chapter 2 – Earth-Kind Landscaping and Chapter 12 – Landscape Design
- 3-23 **Field Trip to Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center**-Austin- Tour and Native Plants in Landscape Design
- 4-6 **Pollinators and Other Garden Residents – Dr. Chris Nice, PhD, Professor,**
Dept Of Biology, Texas State University
- 4-20 **Field Trip to Luling Foundation, Agricultural Demonstration Farm**
- 5-4 **Field Trip and Class Graduation**