MG Meeting Speaker

We welcome Temple McKennon, Project Manager for the East Texas region of the Texas Water Development Board. Her presentation will address “Water Supply Issues for East Texas.”

On its website, the Texas Water Development Board indicates its job is, “To provide leadership, planning, financial assistance, information and education for the conservation and responsible development of Water for Texas.”

Junior MG Wildlife Gardening

In early June 2007 the Smith County Master Gardeners, as part of its Junior Master Gardener program, began its first Wildlife Gardener class with seven students. A variety of wildlife subjects will be taught which, upon completion of the program, the student will be recognized as a Certified Wildlife Gardener by the National Junior Master Gardener Program.

As Wildlife Gardeners, children will: Gain a greater understanding and strengthen appreciation for the wildlife that is part of their local community; enjoy novel, hands-on project-based learning as they have fun gardening for wildlife; building components of wildlife garden habitat; while taking part in an integrated curriculum that will strengthen skills in math, science, language and social studies.

Habitat for Humanity

On Saturday morning, June 23 we helped two Habitat families address specific situations with their yards. Other Habitat families participated in the work day and everyone pitched in to help with the weeding and trimming, and pruning activities that needed to be performed. These maintenance activities really enhanced the appearance of the two yards and gave the homeowners a renewed sense of pride in their homes. Hopefully they will now be able to keep on top of the weekly things that they need to do on a regular basis to keep their landscape looking nice.

Master Gardener volunteers included Anne Brown, Cindy Harrington, Bob Leffingwell, Lynne Merryfield, Rhonda Rholes, and John Woolverton.

Tyler Day Nursery

The Tyler Day Nursery (a United Way agency) is dedicated to the physical, mental, and social development of children who might otherwise be left in unsatisfactory circumstances without the opportunity for quality childcare and preschool education. Many of the parents of these “at risk” children could not remain employed or attend school and would be forced into seeking public assistance without the benefit of the Nursery.

Every week MG Joann Adair works with the kids at TDN, growing vegetables, reading stories about hummingbirds, butterflies and tadpoles. They plant, weed and check the growth of their plants. They pick flowers and harvest the vegetables. Thanks Joann.
I have had a couple of requests to hold a training on creating PowerPoint presentations. I am working on the details, but tentatively plan on holding it at Texas A&M at Overton, using their laptop computers, in the next month or three. If you are seriously interested, please drop me an email so I can gauge the interest in such a training. Seating will most likely be limited due to the availability of computers. More on this later.

On a related note, if you are interested in presentation software, but don’t have either MS Office (which has PowerPoint) or WordPerfect Office (which has Presentations), there is a FREE office product that apparently is also compatible with Office products. I have not used it, but am downloading it as I write to test it out later. It has a presentation software called Impress that can open PowerPoint files and also save new presentations as PowerPoint. The web site for this free software program is: http://www.openoffice.org

Jean Watson continues to do a great job of coordinating our MG Rose Garden tours as they are received in Craig Reiland’s office. We would like to increase the number of docents or tour guides available to lead tours of groups through the Rose Garden’s various sections. Many of the tour requests are for the IDEA Garden and Heritage Garden, so ya’ll already have familiarity with these. Our training will familiarize you with the Rose Garden, its history, the various sections within the Garden and prepare you for leading groups on informal tours. If you missed last year’s training, and are interested in becoming a tour guide, please contact either me or Jean for more information. The training will be sometime this fall.

Have you noticed Bradford Pears around town that look like it’s already fall? Maybe you have one in your yard, or your neighbor’s yard? The burgundy fall foliage indicates that the tree is under stress, and almost certainly the source is underground in the root system. Of course saturated soil conditions can cause root distress. However, I have looked at a few of these trees where I had access to them, and found on several of them girdling roots constricting the trunk. If you remember way back to your training, girdling roots arise particularly when container-grown tree roots encircle container, and if they are not cut, over the years continue to grow in diameter along with the trunk, eventually meeting and cutting off the vascular system at or below ground level.

If you find a Bradford pear that has both the bronzing or burgundy color, and can also see a root wrapping around the trunk, please give me a call or email. I’d like to try to document how common this may be.

Girdling roots can kill trees and also make them very unstable. Here is an example of what can happen after several years. It is usually hidden underground, and often only manifests itself once the damage has been done.

**Rose Garden Docent Classes**

Rose Garden Docent classes for new members are currently being discussed. They would be held in the fall. If you are interested please contact Keith Hansen at the extension office or by email k-hansen2@tamu.edu or contact Jean Watson 903-877-2524 or by email to her at jeanwatson_is@peoplepc.com. Thank you, Jean Watson

**Monarch Waystation Sign**

The Monarch Waystation sign has arrived and will soon be on display in the IDEA Garden. Look for it.

**Overton Field Day Report**

Howdy! The 2007 Field Day at Overton was a great success. We had over 240 people. As we have done in the past, the participants were allowed to vote with red flags and the results are in.

The 2007 Peoples Choices (each receiving at least 6 votes) were: Purslane Rio Scarlet, Cascadia Bicolor Fantasy, Perilla Magilla Purple, Coleus Electric Lime, Coleus Big Red Judy, Impatiens Fusion Glow, Improved Ornamental- Pepper Black Pearl, Anagallis Angie Blue, Gomphrena- All Around Purple, Hibiscus Copper King, New Guinea Impatiens Riviera Orange, Euphoria Burgundy Wine, Rudbeckia Autumn Sun Thunbergia battescombei, Trailing Petunia Opera Supreme Pink Morning, Dorotheanthus Mezoo Trailing Red, Gold Star Jatropha gossypifolia, Trailing Petunia- Baby Duck Yellow and Vinca Nirvana Cascade- Pink Splash.

I wanted again to thank to the Smith County Master Gardeners. These volunteers put in hundreds of hours of seed planting, transplanting, field planting, weeding, and etc. which make the trials possible. We couldn’t do it without them! Brent Pemberton
When I lived up north, February was my least favorite month. The holidays were long gone, I was sick to death of winter, and it seemed that the ugliest snow and ice storms always happened in that month. Its only saving grace was that it only had 28 days. Now that I live in the south, August has replaced February as the month I can most do without. August here is usually hot and dry and gives true meaning to the old saying “the dog days of summer.” This year, however, I have had a hard time believing that August is almost here. With all the rain, and temperatures that have hardly been out of the 80’s, I’m having a hard time believing that we’re really having a summer this year. This year, unlike the past few, it’s been the rain, not the heat, that has kept me out of my garden and as I took a little tour this morning, I was dismayed to see the weeds not so slowly starting to take over some of my beds. I know I’m not alone in this dilemma, and I silently thank Mary Claire Rowe every time I read her complaining about the weeds in her garden in her newspaper column. It’s nice to know that I’m not alone with this perennial problem.

After a little mini-vacation, our Master Gardener meetings start up again this month. Even though there wasn’t a general meeting in July, I know that the folks involved in Master Gardener projects have been hard at work. Merlin Eck and his committee have been working hard on the Fall Conference and Bulb Sale. You all should have gotten an email outlining volunteer opportunities connected with that event, and I hope you have all contacted Anne Patullo saying you can help. This is one of those events where we need the help of all Master Gardeners.

The 2008 East Texas Calendar and Gardening Guide is going to the printers next week. It will be as informative as ever and will be available for sale at the Fall Conference. Besides monthly lists of gardening activities and FAQ's, this year’s edition will feature Salivas as the plants of the month, and full page articles on Rainwater Harvesting, Poisonous Plants, Container Gardening and Accessible Gardening. We’re looking forward to another great year with the calendar.

Gardening clubs are now calling me looking for speakers for their upcoming year of programs. Master Gardeners are always in demand for garden talks. If any of you would like to be included in this project, please let me know. We are always looking for more speakers.

Lastly, rainy days make weeds grow and that means that help is always needed in the IDEA and Heritage Gardens. If you have a few hours to spare on Tuesday morning, please come to the Rose Garden and help out in these gardens.

I hope that you all have been enjoying the summer. Stay cool and stay dry and Happy Gardening!

Oh, Ain't It Purddy?
By Dee Bishop

I heard those words so many times growing up. Grandma and Bigmomma both were always gesticulating with one hand and looking at whatever plant was ‘purddy’ at the time. Grandma would bend over and pet a flower and talk to it and tell it that it was, "sooo purddy". She would be in awe of the crape myrtles right now. I thought they never would bloom, but they are making up for lost time. So many things are late this summer and so many things are bigger than ever before. Some of my hydrangea blooms are just unbelievable. Amazing what rain in quantities will do!

I know some of you are having all sorts of problems with wet soil, mildew, and fungi of all kinds, but this is my best year to date. I have the best drained and dry hillside in Tyler, I guess, and this is the first year I have seen my plants really out perform themselves. I haven't had to water yet!

One thing I have noticed is how lush and huge the ragweed is already and can imagine how productive it will be and how miserable allergy sufferers will be this fall.

In case anyone needs a cute little trellis for a vine, use an upside down tomato cage. Pull the ends together and either tie them together with raffia or use a large metal nut, or a round wood ball into which is drilled a hole big enough for those wires to fit into. It can fit into a pot really well or will work in a bed as well. You can weave some honeysuckle vines around it for added appeal, but a vine will cover it soon. Cypress vines are especially pretty this way. Just be sure to put the pot on some concrete or you will have cypress vines coming up everywhere next year, same for black-eyed susan vine.

I hope you are all enjoying the wettest, coolest, most humid summer in history!

New E-Mail Addresses
John Woolverton - gardenguy07@gmail.com
Virginia Young - virginia-young@sbcglobal.net
Jean Watson - jeanwatson_is@peoplepc.com
Keith Smith - ksmith@wildblue.net (Correction)

New Addresses & Phone Number
Virginia Young, 901 Wicket Ct., Tyler, TX 75703
Phone No. 903-939-3743
MG Rainwater Specialists

MG Specialist training continues to be an important part of the Master Gardener program. At this time, Rainwater Harvesting courses are being offered with increasing frequency. Just returning from training, expressing how good the experience was is Keith Smith, our newest Rainwater Harvesting Specialist.

Keith Hansen reports that we now have our very own rainfall simulator. Keith says, “We think we’ll use it at the ET State Fair, one way or the other. We’ll try to come up with some graphics and signage to use with it so it will tell a story, even if we are not actively staffing it.”

There is considerable interest in Rainwater Harvesting in that just last week, the Dallas Morning News had an unusually long article on the subject.

One More Specialist

Tamara Listiak was overlooked last month in the article about MG Specialists. She is a Master Composter who also helped teach the course in Midland/Ector counties in 1997.

Fall Garden Conference & Bulb Sale

The committee has been at work for many weeks on the conference and bulb sale. There will be a number of new innovations, not the least of which is the location of the Bulb Sale, which will be in Harvey Hall. There will be raffle of selected items, some of which will be displayed at the August MG meeting.

All MGs who have e-mail recently received an e-mail which listed the opportunities to volunteer to help. For those who have not already volunteered, the lists will be at the August 2nd meeting.

There will be about 8,000 heirloom bulbs at the sale, plus semi-hardy potted bulbs and other potted plants.

Enclosed in this newsletter please find complete information on the conference, the bulb sale and the Garden Photography Exhibit.

The schedule for the conference is as follows:

Conference at the Rose Garden Center

- Doors open for registration - 7:30am
- Conference - 8:30 - 11:30am

Plant Sale at Harvey Convention Center
- Plant sale and expo - 11:30 - 3:00pm