Luncheon, Graduation & Awards

The April MG meeting is always special. First of all, we and our invited guests, will gather to eat. The barbeque is furnished and the members get to furnish the rest including salads, casseroles and deserts. Don’t forget to bring a spoon or serving utensil, since these things are seldom finger food. Mark your utensil so that those left behind can be identified.

Class XIV, having successfully completed their training exam, will be recognized and begin their intern year. Class XIII will graduate and become certified Master Gardeners. The highlight of the day will be recognition of achievement by Master Gardeners during the past year. Keith Hansen and Andie Rathbone will be passing awards, including Master Gardener of the year. Congratulations to all.

Reservations have already been made and we know that a large crowd is expected.

After Luncheon Garden Tour

After the April awards luncheon we are visiting the garden of Ted and Maxine Fisher at 1510 Royal Oak Dr. in Hollytree. He was hired right out of graduate school in 1969 as the first Extension Horticulturist for Travis County (Austin) and in 2000 retired and moved to Tyler. You may remember Ted as our afternoon moderator at the Spring Garden Conference.

He is not a plant collector like most of us tend to be. His yard is the epitome of neat and formal. It is small, in that the drive takes up most of the backyard. He has done wonders since moving in when this yard was the blight of the neighborhood.

See - Tour - continued on page 2

SCMG Trip to Metro Maples

There are still spaces available for the SCMG trip to Metro Maples in Ft. Worth on Friday, May 4th. We will be traveling to one of the premier suppliers of Japanese Maples in Texas where we will be able to see over 60 varieties of Japanese Maples as well as their propagation sheds. From Metro Maples we will go to the Ft. Worth Botanical Gardens where we will have lunch and then take a tour of the Japanese Gardens with docents. The cost of the tour is $10.00 and includes the admission to the Japanese Gardens. The cost of lunch is each member’s responsibility.

We will be leaving by bus from the parking lot of the Tyler Rose Garden on Friday morning. The bus will be there for boarding at 7:00 AM and will leave promptly at 7:30 AM. If you are planning on purchasing a Japanese Maple you should bring a large trash bag that ties at the top & a label so you can mark your purchase. Everything that is purchased will be stored in the luggage compartment of the bus. If you would like to take the trip with the group, please give your check for $10.00 to Susan Holloway at the awards luncheon on April 5th, or mail it to her at: 3110 Belmead Lane, Tyler, TX 75701.

Remember June Parker

June Parker who was 86, passed away on March 19th. Mrs. Parker was a member of Class 7, certified in 2000, which means she did her internship at age 80! Due to advancing age and health problems she had not been active in recent years, but all who knew her will remember her distinctive Massachusetts accent. We extend our condolences to her family.
Spring has arrived! Cooler weather slowed down the azalea blooms this year, but not spring fever. As gardening activity gets into full swing, so do gardener’s questions like “how do I.....”, “what kind of ....” and “when do I....” ??? This is also the time of year Master Gardener educational program activities get into high gear.

Thanks to Bob Leffingwell and the other Master Gardeners who helped the Habitat For Humanity homeowners in the Gaston Road area with their lawns and gardens on Saturday morning, March 24. Also to Tim Krizan and Carrol Hardin for educating lots and lots folks (about 300 or 400) on poisonous plants at Caldwell Zoo. (They decided they need a living example of poison ivy to show kids and adults what it looks like).

Thanks to all the Master Gardeners who came out to help mulch the IDEA and Heritage Gardens, getting them ready for spring and the Azalea Society of America tour. Master Gardeners are ready to lead this group of azalea lovers around the Tyler Rose Garden at the end of March as these conventioneers enjoy Tyler as an official Azalea City. The same weekend is the first Tyler Flower Market with our educational booth and selling EarthKind roses as a fund raiser. Work days at Overton are in full swing, and there are lots of other Master Gardener activities afoot.

Lots of wonderful and productive educational activities are scheduled, like Tyler Rose Garden tours, educational booths, Earth Day events, speaker’s bureau, and so on. Keep up the good work! Remember to wear your name badge when you are working with the public as a Master Gardener, and identify yourself as part of Texas Cooperative Extension.

We are getting ready to put in a major research EarthKind Rose trial, planting 30 varieties of roses that are being tested throughout the United States for hardiness to disease, cold and other factors. The trial consists of 3 replicates of these 30 roses, meaning 90 roses in all will be randomly planted so results can be statistically analyzed. The site is a highly visible area right off of Spur 364 at Lindsey Park which is being prepared for planting by the Tyler Parks & Rec. Dept. The trial calls for soils to be amended with only finished compost, and mulched with 3 inches of bark or leaf mulch to suppress weeds and maintain moisture. During the minimum 3-year trial period, the roses are never to be sprayed, pruned or fertilized. Only the mulch layer needs to be maintained, water and weeded as needed. Evaluations will begin in year 2 and 3. So, later on, we’ll be calling “all-hands on deck” to help plant these roses.

I look forward to seeing everybody on the 5th at our annual graduation and awards luncheon.

**WHY DO WE NEED LANDSCAPING?**

By Dee Bishop

There are several reasons we need a good landscape job. I can think of five and there are probably more. The five I have always considered important are:

1. To define activity areas. These areas usually are considered ‘rooms’ where play, cooking and eating, gardening clutter, shop, or resting. You plan these areas according to your personal family needs.

2. To delineate traffic areas. Whether they are for people, pets, service calls or other, pathways and sometimes need to be of different materials and sometimes even strategic shrubbery to hide an area or beckon one to come on. Pets, I must add, dogs at least make trails and insist on following them so you may as well make them out of something that keeps paws as clean as possible.

3. To screen or protect given areas. Sometimes we have to put up with ugly things, (airconditioner units, garbage cans, ugly fences etc.) or our own cluttered space (my potting area is never nice and neat like Kathy Moore's). Sometimes our neighbors are noisy or have 'gosh ugly' houses, clutter etc. We can plan trellises, arbors, large plantings, and living fences to hide these unsightly places.

4. To shade an the west side or our houses or sitting space. A good shade tree not only looks beautiful, but adds value to the landscape as well as cooling shade, and more oxygen. Here in July and August, they are worth their weight in gold.

5. To enhance our property. A beautifully landscaped yard really adds value to the property and beautifies the whole neighborhood.

Plan an attractive landscape with these things in mind and enjoy it for many years.

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**Tour - continued from page 1**

Directions: Get on SW Loop 323 at Front St. And head south. Take a right onto Old Jacksonville Hwy. Take a left at the second light onto Grande Blvd. to the middle entry of Hollytree (Shady Oaks Dr.) The Fisher’s house is the one on the right at the end of this block long street. Carolyn Bonifay
Spring has definitely sprung at my house and it’s a joy to see the plants popping out of the ground and the early spring flowering trees and shrubs bursting into bloom. I’ve been busy this past month cleaning out beds and spreading a new layer of mulch down. I think my truck now has a homing device to Hughes’ Plant Farm, and as I pull in they know I’m going to tell them to pile 20 more bags into the back.

As I’ve been toting around the 80-pound bags, I’ve been thinking about how much I miss the mulch man who used to make an annual appearance at my house in St. Louis about this time every year. Every year around St. Patrick’s Day, an extended family named Bonhert would travel up to St. Louis from the boot heel of Missouri in panel trucks loaded with shredded hardwood mulch that they would sell door to door in St. Louis and its suburbs. Despite the face that these boys looked like extras from the movie “Deliverance” I always looked forward to their arrival because it meant that spring was really on the way – to say nothing of the fact that they sold their mulch for $12.00 per cubic yard. They’d dump 10 cubic yards of the wonderfully smelling stuff all along the sidewalk that ran alongside of my fence line and then trundle off to the next house and the next sale. After I had been buying from them for three or four years, they didn’t even bother to ring the doorbell when they arrived. They knew what I wanted and sometimes when I’d be out that day, I’d come home to find the mulch piled up in the backyard and a barely legible note saying they’d be back for their money.

When I moved to Dallas I had a rude shock. When the landscaper from North Haven Gardens gave me his itemized bid to amend the soil & put in the hardscaping and trees on my little 1/16th acre lot, I was shocked to see that the price for the mulch was $800! When I expressed that shock to the designer, he just looked at me and said, “Well drive out into the country around here and see how many trees you find.” He had a point.

Now that I’m living behind the Pine Curtain, as one of my friends calls East Texas, the mulch prices have become much more reasonable. Still I miss those mulch men showing up every year and dumping all I needed into my yard.

I hope you’re all enjoying our beautiful weather and working in your gardens. The azaleas are finally starting to bloom and driving the Azalea Trails in town is an absolute joy. We’ll be busy this last week of March taking members of the National Azalea Society on tours of the Rose Garden as well as selling roses at the Main Street Flower Market.

Then April will kick off with our annual graduation and awards luncheon. I’m looking forward to welcoming the new class as Interns and the current class of Interns as new certified Master Gardeners.

**New Address Books**

The new address books for SCMG will be available at the April MG meeting. Since most of you had your pictures taken for the book, you already know that we will, for the first time in the history of the SCMG association, include photos. There will be pictures of 124 of the total 151 people listed in the book. Both Bill Kelldorf and I wish to thank all of you who worked with us to have your picture taken. While neither of us want to start a new career as portrait photographers, we did enjoy shooting each of you.

This year was unusual in the number of changes, especially with e-mail addresses. While I believe that correct information is included, please check your data when you get the book and let me know of any errors, so that we may put the changes in the next Grapevine.

Thank you, Martin Davis.

**Fall Conference/Bulb Sale**

Save your one-gallon plant containers. Take them to the IDEA Garden and place them behind the storage shed. They will be used by the committee.

**Garden Work Scheduling Change**

A decision has been made to not cancel any more workdays due to the forecast of rain. (Recent forecasts have been more often wrong that correct, rainfall can be spotty and short-lived). The new policy is: **If it is not raining at the garden 30 minutes before starting time, we will work in the Gardens.** Even if it is raining at your house, it is possible it may not be raining at the Garden. When in doubt, call one of the Garden Coordinators (Sue Adee, Sue Clark, Cindy Harrington, or Anne Brown), or call the Extension office.

**Speaker’s Bureau Facts**

Sometimes only a few realize that there are MGs out there giving presentations to a variety of interested groups. During February the following people gave talks to several garden clubs: Anne Brown, Ina Brundrett, Wince Caskey and Carl Caskey. In total, there were almost 100 people who benefited from their appearance. Topics included Waterwise Gardening, Building Birdhouses, Growing Iris, Grooming Flowers and Pollination. Thank you.
Texas State Master Gardener Conference
April 12-14, 2007 • Kerrville, Texas

While reservations for the conference may still be made, please be aware that many of the tours are already full. For up-to-date information go to the internet and check at: http://www.hillcountrymastergardeners.org/

SFA Hosts 2007 Spring Plant Sale

The annual Spring Garden Gala plant sale at Stephen F. Austin State University’s Mast Arboretum will be from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, April 14, at the intramural field on Wilson Drive.

Proceeds from the plant sale help support the SFA Mast Arboretum, the Ruby Mize Azalea Garden, the Pineywoods Native Plant Center and educational programs. For more information, call (936) 468-4404 or visit the Web site at: http://arboretum.sfasu.edu/

Water Wise Landscape Conference

Hunt County hosts the conference in Greenville on April 20th from 9 AM to 4 PM. For more information contact Texas Cooperative Extension at 903-455-9885.

During the Azalea Trails, Tyler will be holding a "Main Street Flower Market" on the grounds of the Goodman Museum from 10 AM to 6 PM on Friday, March 30 and Saturday, March 31. The goal of this event is to bring together vendors of bedding plants, fresh cut flowers, yard art and pottery into a fun outdoor market.

The SCMG will be participating, passing out educational materials and selling EarthKind Roses.

Stop by and help make this first time event a success as Tyler’s Azalea Trails draws to a close.