January Meeting Program

The IDEA Garden was a good idea from its inception and as it matures it continues to be the source of ideas for many in the community. As each season changes to the next, the garden’s appearance changes too.

Join us for Keith Hansen’s presentation showing the garden from the winter season and progressing through the year of color and beauty.

Your recently elected officers for 2007 will be installed. They are: President - Andie Rathbone; V.P./President Elect - John Brasher; Recording/Corresponding Secretary- Scherel Carver; Treasurer - Susan Holloway; Historian - Kathy Wright; At-Large Executive Committee Members - Martin Davis & Ed McGee; State Director (Two Year Term) - Bob Leffingwell; Alternate State Director (Two Year Term) - Carolyn Bonifay; Current State Director (2nd yr. Two Year Term) - Sue Clark; Current Alternate State Director (2nd yr. Two Year Term) - Ann Kelley.

Dues for 2007 are due. Bring your check for $12, made out to SCMG and give it to Sue Holloway. Start Sue’s year out right!

Plant Swap

Mary Hamlin has a seed pod on her orchid (Cattleya?) and wants to know if anyone would like seeds to try. It is a 4” bloom which is purple with a yellow throat and fragrant. Contact her at mhamlin@flash.net if you would like to try raising orchids from seed. Kathy Moore has purple bearded iris and strawberry begonia, which makes a good ground cover in our area. Contact her at kmor_45@yahoo.com to arrange a time to dig them.

Heritage and IDEA Garden

By Sue Adee

As 2006 comes to an end, Dee, Ann, and I would like to say a BIG THANK YOU to everyone who helped in the Heritage and IDEA Garden this year.

It seems every year has its challenges when gardening, either with it being too cold or too hot, to wet or to dry, but this year was especially challenging with both to hot and to dry. It was a learning experience. We saw more leaf diseases than in years past and tropicaals and heat loving plants that should have performed well just sat there neither growing or blooming while other tropicaals and heat loving plants flourished. In spite of it all, the gardens have never looked better.

The Way to a Happy New Year

To leave the old with a burst of song;
To recall the right and forgive the wrong;
To forget the things that bind you fast
To the vain regrets of the year that’s past;
To have the strength to let go your hold
Of the not worth while of the days grown old;
To dare go forth with a purpose true,
To the unknown task of the year that’s new;
To help your brother along the road,
To do his work and lift his load;
To add your gift to the world’s good cheer,
Is to have and to give a Happy New Year.

Author Unknown

Need a new MG Badge?

Contact Keith Hansen at once. He will be ordering new badge right after the first of January 2007.
As 2006 draws to a close, I'd like to thank each and every one of you for your interest in the Master Gardener program, and your support of Texas Cooperative Extension and the horticulture education program. Your participation is invaluable and makes a tremendous difference in the delivery of our educational programs, reaching more and more people of the county, and beyond. You volunteered over 9000 hours this year, bringing gardening information to youth and adults in many different ways. I look forward to working together with you in 2007, making an even greater impact in the lives of those around us, helping make the hobby of gardening even more enjoyable by helping folks be more successful.

The 2007 Spring Landscape & Garden Conference will feature one of our own - Patsy Besch will talk about herbs for landscaping and cooking. Other topics on the February 10 program will include growing azaleas, birds and butterflies, protecting trees, and rainwater harvesting. This last topic I think you will find really interesting, and should stimulate a new way of thinking about watering our landscape (especially in light of the drought these last 2 years). There will be several rainwater harvesting Master Gardener Advanced Trainings in Texas next year, and you might want to think about attending one to learn more about this trend in landscaping.

I am looking for a couple of people to help me video tape the Master Gardener training these next 3 months (and the Spring Landscape Conference). If you have an interest, we have the equipment - contact me ASAP so we can work on the details. Speaking of the training, we have 27 applicants - come by and meet the new class, consider being a mentor to one or 2 of them. As always, you can earn CE's for auditing the classes as a refresher. The schedule is posted on the Smith Co. Master Gardener web site. See you in 2007. Keith

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North Texas Trials Winners

We would like to announce the winners of our North Texas Winners Circle Awards for the 2006 trial season. Please check out the current and past winners on our newly overhauled website at http://overton.tamu.edu/flowers/. I would like to wish everyone a great Holiday Season and a Happy New Year! Brent Pemberton

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Winter in the Garden

by Dee Bishop

Winter is officially here now. The days will now begin to lengthen; oh but ever so slowly at first. My wonderfully faithful old quince is blooming now and has been since Thanksgiving. It has never started to early, but I have no complaints. I have some old paperwhites blooming also and they are such a joy this time of year. My Chinese snowball has buds on it. It bloomed all winter last year and on into the summer. I hope it intends to do so this year too. I planted some little pansies purple top petals and yellow faces. They are so cheerful and heavy bloomers. I pick them regurly and put them in an old blue bottle. Such a sweet and jaunty little nosegay.

Mike and I raked leaves last week and he cut them up for me. I will use them for mulch this spring once everything is up and going. I did that last year and it really improved my beds. It seems that the wet winter we were hoping for may not happen after all. If we do have another dry winter and spring, we will be in serious trouble come summer. I do not plan to plant a single perennial, shrub, or tree until this drought is over. I will mulch, mulch, mulch.

Have you all had goldfinches yet? I haven't seen a one since Thanksgiving when I saw about a half dozen. I have my feeders out but so far nothing. I am so disappointed. It seems that every year there are less of our little songbirds.

I have several big pots of pansies, snapdragons, viola, stock, etc. out on my deck where I have so much sun and they are worth their weight in gold. I can look out my kitchen window and enjoy all the beautiful colors all winter. I also bring in little bouquets and put them in all the rooms I occupy during the day. I love to see fresh flowers all throughout the house. I have many pretty little old bottles, all colors, that I use for vases. Sometimes I use several mini bouquets grouped together. If you have winter flowers, bring some indoors, after all, that's where we spend most of our time.

Have a Merry, Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year.
Rathbone's Ramblings

Happy New Year! A new year is like a blank page in a notebook just waiting to be filled with new plans and new projects. The new Master Gardening class will start on January 9 and I would encourage you all to get to know the members of the new class and encourage them to get involved in our group’s many projects. The Spring home Landscape and Garden Conference will be held at the Rose Center on Saturday, February 10. Keith’s Horticultural Committee has come up with a great group of speakers that will make the Conference lively and informative. Plan to come to this month’s Master Gardening meeting to hear more about this event and how you can help to make it a great success. And finally, the 1st Tuesday in the Garden talks will begin again in March. Many thanks to the Master Gardeners who have agreed to be speakers for this informative program. January also has a lot of us making resolutions for the New Year. I know the health clubs are crowded with new members vowing to improve their health and fitness, as well as working off pounds added over the holiday season. My thoughts, however, turn to resolutions for my garden, and surveying the remnants left over from last summer, I know there is a lot of room for me to improve.

This year I’m vowing not to go on vacation in the spring. Losing a week or two in the garden at this critical time will set me back for the whole season. I’m also promising to get my mulch down early this year and to keep on top of the weeds as they start to come up. Last year my beds could have won the weediest garden award, and that is an honor I don’t want to be eligible for again. And finally, I won’t buy another tree or shrub until the ones that have been living in pots for the past year (or two) have found a home in the ground. And when I go to nurseries or plant sales, I’ll try to remember how easy it is to buy too much and not let my eyes get bigger than my gardening spade.

For my Master Gardening resolutions, I will try to remember that Martin Davis does the work of 10 people putting out the newsletter and keeping track of everyone’s hours, so I’ll get my Grapevine assignments in by the deadlines and turn in my hours promptly every month. (Ed. Note - Bless you!) I’m wishing you all a healthy and happy 2007. May your gardens all be weed free and full of blooms.

Year-end Chores

As the end of the year approaches we try to wrap things up so that we can make a clean start on the new year. This is especially true for the record keeping activities associated with the Master Gardener program. As Keith reported in his column, we have volunteered over 9,000 hours in 2006 and all of those are a matter of record. Does the total include all of your hours?

In order to close out the 2006 records and start a new spreadsheet for 2007, we would encourage you to report any unreported activity by January 15th, latest. Don’t miss out on being re-certified because you forgot to make a report. And for 2007, be it resolved that you report each month, without fail!

New Class MG Classes Begin January 9th

The new class begins with 27 hopefuls all set to soak up copious amounts of gardening information.

The schedule for January includes:

- Jan. 9 - Reg., Pruning Trees & Shrubs - Keith Hansen
- Jan. 11 - Botany - Keith Hansen
- Jan. 16 - TX. MG program, Environmental Landscaping, Dr. Doug Welsh - Class at Overton
- Jan. 18 - Landscape Plants - Keith Hansen & Linda Sargent
- Jan. 23 - Plant Diseases - Dr. Karl Steddom - At Overton
- Jan. 25 - Perennials & Roses - Dr. William Welch
- Jan. 30 - Entomology - Dr. Karl Steddom - At Overton

All classes are from 1:00 to 5:00 PM and held at the Smith Co. Extension office, except for those held at the TAMU Overton, as noted.

For a complete list of the entire schedule through March, go to http://easttexasgardening.tamu.edu/mg/mg.html.

New E-Mail Addresses

- Dee Bishop - dbishop48@suddenlink.net
- Sue Clark - sbclark1@suddenlink.net
- Frieda Colfelt - friedandbill@suddenlink.net
- Bob Ellis - bobellis@suddenlink.net
- Connie Farrar - cfarrar@suddenlink.net
- Sue Holloway - susanah@suddenlink.net
- Charles & Lynda Minatrea - charlyn@suddenlink.net
- Sharon Nelson - sijnkg@suddenlink.net
- Kathy Nelte - kathy-n@suddenlink.net
- Linda Sargent - silverset@suddenlink.net
- B. J. Thornhill - bjt96@suddenlink.net

All of the changes above and others made recently will be included in the Address Book which will be out at the end of March 2007.
An Invitation

All Master Gardeners and friends are invited to the Monday, January 8th program of the Tyler Chapter of the Native Plant Society.

Carol Feldman, Landscape Architect of Feldman Design Studios, Dallas, will give a presentation on "Design Techniques in Natural Landscapes".

This presentation will focus on how to use plants to create accents, textures, and other design elements into natural and native landscape.

Meeting: Monday, Jan. 8th at 7 p.m. at Walter Fair UMC Fellowship Building, 1712 Old Omen Road, Tyler

All are welcome. Jim Showen

Local Events in February

Feb. 1 - E. T. Turfgrass Conference - TAMU Center at Overton
Feb. 10 - Spring Landscape & Garden Conference - Tyler Rose Garden Center.
Feb. 20 - E. T. Fruit & Vegetable Conference

For more information go to: http://easttexasgardening.tamu.edu/programs/programs.html

Happy New Year

Landscape Design Study Course

Dr. Bill Welch wishes to announce the latest in the Landscape Design Study Courses: Number IV, Series XX February 19-20, 2007.

The courses are held in College Station, TX., and are co-sponsored by Texas Garden Clubs, Inc. and Texas Cooperative Extension, TexasA&MUniversity. They have been attended by many Master Gardeners in the past. It is an opportunity for more in-depth training in landscape design than we normally include in the Master Gardener curriculum. Each course has been approved to qualify for 12 hours of Continuing Education. Further information may be found at http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/southerngarden/slganl/dex2.html.

This is the fourth course in a four-part series, although participants can begin with any of the four. The program is nationally accredited by the National Council of State Garden Clubs and offered at approximately six month intervals here in the Bryan-College Station area. An evaluation of public and private landscapes is a popular part of this particular course. Each of the courses offers an outside lecture. We are pleased to have Dr. Wayne Mackay for this presentation, who will speak on Water Efficient Plants.