Photographing Flowers

The program for the June meeting will be presented by Bill Kelldorf, Nathan Greene and Martin Davis. These three men have been the leaders for a Camera Club which has been meeting for several years at the TASCA building. Their presentation will include basic techniques which may be helpful to those who wish to use their digital cameras to photograph flowers in their garden. Need help with your camera? Bring it the meeting. Ask the experts.

After Meeting Garden Tour

After hearing about rainwater harvesting at the Spring Garden Conference, Sue Clark went to Ft. Worth for the Rainwater Specialist training. She convinced her husband Bob of the benefits of rainwater harvesting and he has installed gutters on one part of the house to catch the water in barrels. In a recent ½ inch rain they collected 85 gallons of water.

With very short notice, Sue Clark has invited the MGs to visit her garden following the June SCMG meeting. To get to 408 Cumberland Road, go south on Broadway to Cumberland Road, turn left and the Clark residence is the 2nd house on the left after passing the church. You can park in the circle drive or you may parallel park on the side along Cumberland Road.

A New Baby is Born

Last month, in his column, Keith Hansen mentioned that the prototype Smith County web site was a “work-in-process.” The process has been completed and the debut of the new site can be announced. Even if you already have done so, go to http://grovesite.com/mg/smg and take another look. The team who worked together to decide what should be there included: Andie Rathbone, John Brasher, Mary Hamlin, Martin Davis and Keith Hansen. Mary, Martin and Keith are primarily responsible for putting the information on the site and Martin will be keeping it up-to-date in the future.

There is considerable information there and we ask that you look it over carefully. Those of you who are project leaders may wish to read about your project and if you find incorrect information or notice something left out, let Martin know. We doubt that there are many misspelled words, but if you spot any, again tell Martin.

This is SCMG official site and we no longer will be relying on Keith Hansen to keep it fresh and useful. Your participation is encouraged and your input is requested. We want to keep the site simple to navigate and at the same time we want it to include a complete representation of the activities of the Smith County Master Gardeners in the community. We want the visitor, whether it be one of you or someone from another town, or state or even another country to be aware of the activities in Tyler and Smith County of the Master Gardeners and at the same time find useful information.
What a difference a year makes. All this rain is wonderful, even if it means more fungal diseases on various plants! Blackspot will be more prevalent this year on roses, and I’ve gotten calls on entomosporium leaf spot on red tips. Oak leaf blister seems to be bad on a lot of oaks this year.

Right now, the spots will appear as puckered, blister like spots on the foliage of several different species of oaks, including live and water oak. Later, the spots will turn brown, and if more than 75% of the leaf surface is infected, the leaf will fall off. Folks should not be alarmed, realizing that the tree might regrow new leaves this summer, and for sure will be okay in the long term. People usually are concerned if it will kill their trees - it will not! Because the oak leaf blister fungus infects the leaves at bud break, there is no treatment once the spots develop.

Speaking of oaks, it is not uncommon when a problem on an oak tree develops, folks, including Master Gardeners, will start doing research either on the internet or using other printed resources. One of the most devastating diseases of oaks is Oak Wilt, and often people conclude that their wilting, browning, dying tree might be infected with this disease. Keep the following in mind: Oak Wilt has not been diagnosed, to my knowledge, east of the Trinity River in Texas, meaning we have not had Oak wilt in east Texas. It is severe in Central Texas, and has been found in the Metroplex due to people transporting infected firewood in from Central Texas. So, this disease should not be considered a primary suspect when trying to diagnose oak problems in our area. Remember to ask lots and lots of questions, trying to get as much background information as possible before offering diagnoses. Sometimes the answer as to what killed my tree will only be apparent from a home visit.

I wanted to let you know about a couple of great resources on the Master Gardener computer in the Extension office. The first is an up-to-date compilation of all of the Texas Extension Entomology fact sheets available. There is a link to the publications on the desktop called TAMU Insect Publications, and which takes you to the 2007 Insect Pest Management CD that has been copied to the hard drive. If you think you are dealing with an insect problem, this would be the first resource to turn to for a couple of reasons: It is current, having the most up-to-date pesticide recommendations, and, the information is geared for Texas. The *Ortho Problem Solver* is a good resource for various plant problems, but it also covers a national area, so there will be many things in there that are not applicable to our region; plus, the product recommendations are limited to Ortho products, which we cannot make as sole recommendations.

The second resource is a compilation of Extension gardening and related publications, compiled by the folks in the Tarrant County Extension office. There are 1043 publications, organized into 136 folders by subject area!! This is probably the most comprehensive collection of Extension gardening publications in one place. Karen Miller, my secretary, opened every file, recorded the titles, and created a table of contents for each of the subject folders. That Table of Contents is located in a 3-ring notebook beside the Master Gardener computer. This is the same Extension resource the Tarrant County Master Gardener phone help desk uses. Be sure to check out these resources next time you are in the office. Have a great June!!

**Question of the Month**

A man from Chandler who is a former MG from Lamar County called the office and said in his entire life he had not seen anything like it.

In his yard in two different places there were tentacles 6-8" tall growing out of what looked like vomit or diarrhea covered by thousands of maggots. At our request he e-mailed a picture. At first, Keith Hansen thought it might be dog vomit fungus, but after viewing the picture, he consulted Dr. Karl Steddom who determined it was purple squid mushroom.  (Editor’s note - picture omitted to protect the innocent.)

**New E-Mail Addresses**

Gary Graham - gary.graham2007@hotmail.com

Shirley Stephens - lakeside18780@peoplepc.com

**Plant Swap**

Debbie Hilliard has some great plants to share and lots of seeds (if you are looking for something, just ask her). In the way of plants she has: Iris, old-fashioned purple; Salvia "Indigo spires blue"; Colocasia "Yellow Splash", Banana Plant (large); Daylilies; Malabar Spinach; Phlox paniculata "John Fannick" an old-fashioned pink; and pepper plants: Jalapeno "Mucho Nacho"; Pobano "San Martin"; Anaheim "College" Sweet Banana. Her e-mail is debbieh1953@yahoo.com.

David Gay has the following plants to share:

See Plant Swap - back page
Rathbone’s Ramblings

Sometimes the best laid plans are foiled by circumstances beyond our control. I looked at my calendar and discovered that the weeks before and after Memorial Day were mercifully absent of any scheduled meetings. “Oh great!” I thought, “I can spend two whole weeks in my gardens and really get caught up on weeding and cleaning up the areas that have gotten ahead of me.” Unfortunately, there has been rain, and lots of it every day and more predicted on the way. Today, I just thought I’d get muddy and finish up one area that was driving me nuts left undone, but after hearing the ground making definite squishing sounds under my feet, I decided that I was probably doing more harm than good. I fully came to the folly of my endeavors when I was walking to dump a bucket of weeds in the burn pile and slipped on the muddy hill leading down to the pile and fell right on my butt in the mud! Gardening always manages to keep me humble. My daylilies are loving this weather, though and sending out lots of blooms. Unfortunately, the wet and humid conditions are a breeding ground for rust. I haven’t spotted it on my plants yet, but I know it’s out there. Black spot is also making its unwelcome appearance. My Winchester Cathedral, a pretty white David Austin rose, got black spot so badly that it lost every single leaf on a five foot by five foot bush in about ten days. I decided that this rose, pretty as its blooms are just wasn’t worth it, so I’ve ripped it out and replaced it with a pretty white Buck rose, Serendipity, that I bought at the Tyler Flower Market.

And speaking of Buck Roses, Keith told the Executive Committee that the area planned for the Buck Rose trial at Lindsay Park, has been sprayed once, and will need to be sprayed again before soil amendments can be added to the area and then the roses planted for the trial. Stay tuned for the call to come and help plant – probably some time next month.

Meanwhile, our group has been busy with activities. Merlin and his committee has been busy working on the fall conference and bulb sale, and the calendar committee has been busy writing the 2008 calendar that will make its debut at the Fall Conference. I’m sure the rain has played havoc with the garden work days, so if you have spare time on Tuesday mornings, come on out and lend a hand in the IDEA and Heritage Rose gardens.

As announced in this issue, we have a great new web site. Check it out at http://grovesite.com/mg/smg. The navigation has been improved and it will be much easier for people to get to information about our events and projects from this site. All project coordinators should check out the information posted about their individual projects on the new site. If the information is out of date or needs improvement, please send your copy to Martin Davis and he will get it posted to the new site.

With summer on our doorstep, remember to protect yourself from the heat and sun (and the mosquitoes that are now truly Texas-sized) when you’re working outdoors. Wear a hat and sun block and insect repellent and don’t forget to drink plenty of water. I hope all your gardens are blooming.

A WILDFLOWER SPRING
by Dee Bishop

Have you ever seen a more beautiful spring? On my recent travels to Dallas and Houston, I was thoroughly enchanted by the magnificent display of wildflowers. Some like Sabatia (prairie gentian) hasn’t shown up for several years because of drought. It needs lots of water. I saw obedient plant (Physostegia virginiana) both white and pink all in the ditches along with claping leaf coneflower, blackeyed susan, drummond phlox (still blooming) vervain, toadflax, ratibida, and miles of our beautiful east texas Echinacea pallida. I don't remember ever having seen so much. Pallida is the light pink one with the lovely drooping petals. I saw it growing in profusion between Cleveland and Lufkin and on further north. My very favorite is our own little delphinium or wild larkspur. Such a brilliant indigo blue. It has been blooming for a month and is still lovely. The ones in the Dallas area are snow white. Bluebonnets are still blooming though on the way out and coreopsis is lovely where it has survived drought and premature mowing. Winecups are so beautiful with their little red chalices greeting the sun. If you haven't already done so, get out in the countryside and go down the country roads and drown yourself in the beauty of our very own wildflowers.

Hydrangeas are absolutely gorgeous now, all of them. I never ceased to be amazed each year how each bush is so different every bloom season. One year it will be predominantly pink then blue the next or all colors at once. That is because we have neutral soils here and color is easily changed by rain or by watering. My old Annabelle is going to give me a really good show this year. I was about ready to yank her out if she didn't do something soon. My native viburnums have been lovely as well. Arrowwood is about to burst, mapleleaf has finished, and rusty blackhaw is nearly finished. I love my native viburnums......all year long.

See Wildflower - back page
The Shirts are Available
For those who ordered shirts with the SCMG logo on them, they are ready. They will be brought to the June 7th meeting for pickup. After that, they will be in the MG office area at the Extension office.

Plant Swap - from page 2
Murraya paniculata (cape jasmine); Curly Willow; Boysenberry (yes, it grows great and produces well here); and, since our house is for sale, we will welcome any MG's to come visit us and take cuttings before the place sells. Our email is davidandjoyce60@hotmail.com.
Ann Smith has Datura and Castor Bean plants to share and would like Hydrangea cuttings from anyone who is willing to trust her to try again to grow them. Email: smithvae@aol.com.
Monica Klein would like to get some sweet potato vine; John Fannick phlox and some purple Coneflowers. If you have some to share, her email is klein556@peoplepc.com.

Wildflowers - from page 3
Remember to dry some hydrangeas to enjoy all year. Make wreaths, bouquets, or floral pictures from the lovely dried blooms. The oakleafs dry beautifully too. Pick them when they turn pink and they will stay pink. If your hydrangeas need shaping or shearing, the time is right after the blooms fade. Do it now so they have time to regrow and bud for next year. Enjoy the last month of spring for summer is a-coming!

First Tuesday in the Garden
The series continues on June 5th with Anne Brown presenting “Firewise Gardening” at 12 noon in the IDEA Garden.

Field Day at Overton
The annual Horticulture Field Day is scheduled for June 28th with registration scheduled for 8:30 AM at the Horticulture Field at Texas A&M Overton Research Center. This field day is the culmination of the Bedding Plant Pack & Garden Trials project headed by Dr. Brent Pemberton. These trials are designed to generate information on greenhouse and field performance of bedding plants for both industry and consumers.

The Smith Co. MGs are a major part of this program, with the project being one of the largest in terms of volunteer hours each year. For more information, go to http://overton.tamu.edu/flowers/index.htm.

Texas A&M Scholarships
The Smith Co. MGs offer three scholarships at A&M and all three were recently awarded. The recipients have written letters of thanks and excerpts from those letters, along with their pictures may be found at http://grovesite.com/mg/smg. Click on “Scholarships” to read about them. We’re proud to be a part of their future.
**Rose Garden Docents**

The Tyler Rose Garden Tour Guide Program Docents have completed a busy three months.

On March 30th, the Azalea Society of America, a group of 100, plus people toured the gardens with special interest in the IDEA Garden, Azaleas, and the Japanese Maples. SCMG Docents Andie Rathbone, Tamara Listiak, Cindy Harrington, and Ann Kelly, along with Sue Adee and Anne Brown enriched the tour with information about the various plantings.

Docents scheduled for April included Tamara Listiak, Susan Holloway, Ragna Neil, and Jean Watson. Keith Hansen, Sue Adee, Anne Brown, and Craig Reiland participated also.

The month of April proved to be busy as docents had three scheduled tours with a myriad of interests to be addressed.

On April 10th, the Wood Co. Master Gardening class visited the IDEA and Heritage Gardens as part of their class.

April 17th brought the Tulsa, Oklahoma Rose Society to the rose gardens. This group of 38-40 rose admirers spent the afternoon enjoying their tour with the docents.

A scheduled tour on April 26th involved the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitation Services group of 10-15 visually impaired clients and staff. This tour challenged the docents to emphasize their knowledge from a sensory perspective. Tactile characteristics of plants like Lambs Ear in the IDEA Garden, the more fragrant species of roses, sounds of the fountains, coolness of the Meditation Garden were all brought into play. Navigating the Rose Garden's steps, and hills also tested the groups independence skills. Docents received many comments and compliments on how wonderful the garden time was to them. It was a time truly enjoyed by all.

Docents scheduled for May were Janice Suggs, and Carolyn Bonifay. Two other of our docents were out with surgery so Doris Waits, and Ragna Neil, Jean Watson and Ann Kelley substituted as needed. Anne Brown, Sue Adee, Keith Hansen, and Craig Reiland lent their expertise during the tours.

May 10th found the Organic Gardening Friends from Hillsboro, a group of 10-15 people visiting the Rose Garden.

On May 17th the Dallas Master Gardeners (pictured above) spent the afternoon visiting the IDEA and Heritage Gardens. This group of 65 MGs took many notes on the annuals and perennials they found in the gardens. Many compliments were heard by the docents, Sue and Anne in appreciation. Blue Moon Nursery was next on their schedule and seeing the gardens gave them information as to the combinations of perennials and annuals to look for.

So far the next scheduled tours will start in October. Docents scheduled for the summer months will be called upon then. A brochure for the Rose Gardens is near completion. Many thanks to Anne Brown, Sue Adee, Andie Rathbone, Craig Reiland, and Keith Hansen for brainstorming with me to put it together.

Jean Watson

*Editors note: This information, supplied by Jean Watson, was gratefully accepted. Similar stories by other project leaders is encouraged.*