March MG Meeting

The program for March will be presented by Brian Triplett, County Extension Agent - Agriculture and Natural Resources. The program will be "Controlling major weeds of spring and summer".

MG Photos for the Address Book

At its meeting on January 25th, the Executive Committee approved the inclusion of photos in the MG Address Book which will be out in time for the April meeting. Sixty-five of you got your picture taken at the association meeting on February 1st, responding to the last minute e-mail notice. For all the rest of you, including those in Class 14, please be aware that pictures will again be taken before and after the March 1st meeting, beginning at 10:30AM. Please do not miss this opportunity to have your picture taken. This is your last chance to have your picture taken for inclusion in the book.

Native Plant Society

Native Plant Society of TX meets Monday March 5th, 7 P.M. in the Family Life Building of Walter Fair UMC, 1712 Old Omen Road, Tyler. The program presented by Jim Day, of Day Sculpture Studios, will be "Carving Fine Sculpture from Southern Hardwoods." Public is invited

More Winter in the Garden

Winter has been wonderful this year. Not too cold and so far no more than a few days of warm mugginess. Daffodils are popping up all around. I dig deep around the clumps with my sharp shooter spade and lift the clump into buckets. I add bark to fill around them, water and set aside until the leaves die back. They can then be shaken out of the cans and saved for fall planting. Most of the clumps have many bulbs in them and need to be separated badly anyway.

For those of you who have houseplants; you may see brown crisp tips. Tip burn can be caused by several things. Too much fertilizer, too dry growing conditions, or flouride in the water. If it is flouride, sprinkle and scratch in one teaspoon of gypsum per 6 in. size pot. According to what I read the gypsum ties up the flouride. I like to water with rainwater too.

Groundcovers are great to use to cover large areas that are otherwise hard to maintain. Choose according to your spot. If Bermuda grass becomes a problem, there are poisons for grass that won't kill your broadleaf groundcovers. You will have to dig out greenbriar and blackberry briars. Choose the proper groundcover for the amount of sun or shade, moist or dry soil that you have. There are beautiful temporary groundcovers (annuals) for use the first year or two you are waiting for your perennials to mature. For sun, try the wave petunias or ornamental sweet potato vines and for shade try some of the trailing coleus, trailing torenia, or Impatiens. (See Winter - page 4)
Let me offer Many Thanks to every Master Gardener who helped out with the 2007 East Texas Spring Landscape Garden Conference on Saturday February 10th. It is difficult to express how much I appreciate your taking the time to play a role in this important educational event, and how much it helps me knowing that all the various jobs and tasks are being taken care of.

Thanks to Charles Minatrea, Andie Rathbone, and Linda Whetsell for serving as members on the Environmental Horticulture Committee, who planned and implemented this year’s event, and who also organized the Master Gardeners into various tasks! Also, thanks to Charles Minatrea and Merlin Eck who spent their day standing up behind the video camera taping all of the talks.

Patsy Besch did a marvelous job presenting her talk on growing herbs in the garden for the kitchen, and thanks to Ragna Neil for her help with the excellent PowerPoint presentation.

So many other small and big jobs with many Master Gardeners also helped the event go smoothly, including purchasing supplies, stuffing handout folders, taking care of registration and refreshments, and creating and manning the Master Gardener exhibit table. Thanks to John Brasher for coming early and staying late to help set up and take down the big screen and equipment. Thanks also to Mary Claire Rowe for help getting the word out through her “What's Blooming in Our Garden” columns, and to Martin Davis for printing and mailing direct mail postcards.

John Brasher and Bill Kelldorf did a great job of creating and building a rain harvesting demonstration on the storage shed in the IDEA Garden, which was ready in time to compliment the rainwater harvesting talk; and if you haven’t been out to see it, you need to check it out. The 40 gallon barrel should be full of water after recent rains.

So, thanks again to everybody. It was a successful conference, and you played a major a role

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Plant Swap

Spring is coming, I can tell by renewed interest in gardening.

Anne Pattullo has the following seeds to share: Pink and white cleome, luna white and luna pink swirl hibiscus, pink hollyhock, white and yellow datura (angel's trumpet), red cardinal flower, blue pea vine, Philippine lily and pavonia (rock rose). Contact her at 903-566-0729 or gpatullo@earthlink.net.

John Arnold at 903-561-2635 or w5cud@sbcglobal.net has aquarium plants to share should anyone want to start or restock the plants in an aquarium.

Joyce Gay has loads of arugula seed (salad green) and seed for the Mexican lion's tail sage at davidandjoice60@hotmail.com.

Joanie Matthews at 903-597-8716 or joanmatthews@msn.com would like to split a sack of "slow coat" fertilizer with someone. She thinks it is about $35 for 40 lbs. and 40 lbs lasted her for three years when she previously bought a sack. This is the type of fertilizer they use at the IDEA garden.

Charlene Mizener at 903-566-1019 or mizenerjc@prodigy.net is looking for seed for purple datura (angel's trumpet).

I am looking for a few (half dozen) seeds for yellow, pear tomatoes and for seeds for the annual Salvia coccinea which is the annual red sage native to this area. _Good Gardening - Joyce Gay

New Things are Coming!

Early and preliminary plans for the 2007 Fall Conference/Bulb Sale include a display of photographs taken by Master Gardeners of flowers and/or plants.

As plans are completed, the specific plans for the show will be published in the Grapevine, so watch for the details.

In the meantime, be thinking the picture that might be worthy of display and if you have something blooming right now, go take a picture. The flowers don’t mind posing for you.

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Daylight Time Begins Early

Please be reminded that daylight time begins on March 11th, weeks earlier than we are accustomed to. More evening hours to peruse the Azalea Trails in Tyler and Nacogdoches.

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Extension Office Phone Numbers

Phone: 903-590-2980
Fax: 903-590-2984

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I’m hoping that we’ve now finally passed the worst of winter and can look forward to warmer weather. I told Sherri Watts at the Spring Conference that I feel like I’ve been cold since New Year’s Day. The March issue of Texas Highways arrived in my mailbox to remind me that spring was on its way. It features an article about the Texas Agricultural Experimental Stations and prominently features the Overton Field trials with a great picture of a smiling Brent Pemberton standing in front of a bed of petunias. This got me thinking that although Overton’s Field Days are months away, I know that the Master Gardeners who regularly work at Overton are busy nursing seedlings that will be planted soon to be part of this year’s trials.

The Spring Conference gave me a lot of new ideas for what I want to do in my garden this year. Many thanks to all of you who helped out with stuffing conference booklets, setting up chairs, registering attendees and helping with the refreshments. As usual, the conference drew a large crowd from all over East Texas, including several large groups of Master Gardeners from other counties, and everyone seemed to enjoy the excellent speakers.

March will start our gardening work in earnest. It’s time to divide and plant perennials, and towards the end of the month it will be time to put in warm season annuals and vegetables. If you’re like me, you’ll be playing catch-up this month as it’s just been too cold to do much outdoors the past couple of months.

The First Tuesday in the Garden talks will begin on March 6 with Don Davis giving a talk on Earthkind roses. Come out and work in the gardens that day and then stay to listen to his talk on these easy care, yet beautiful roses.

Both the Tyler and the Nacogdoches Azalea Trails begin on March 17 and run through the end of the month. Both cities are looking their best at this time of the year. Spring is coming, and we’ll finally be able to get out and enjoy being out in the garden. Enjoy, and happy gardening!

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Spring Home Gardening Conference at Mineola

The Wood County Master Gardeners will hold their Spring Home Gardening Conference on Saturday, March 10 from 8:00 AM to 11:30 AM in the Oak Room of the Mineola Civic Center, 1150 North Newsom, Mineola. Admission is free and the speakers include "Native Plants," by Carol Feldman, landscape architect; "Ornamental Grasses," by Keith Mills, horticulturist, Caldwell Zoo; and "Rainwater Harvesting," by Dottie Woodson, Texas Extension Service. Admission is free.

Your IDEA Garden Questions Answered

by Sue Adee

We are frequently asked what products we use in the IDEA Garden to keep the plants healthy. Listed below is our fertilization schedule. These products are not the only products on the market but they are the ones that have produced good results for us. If you have a product you are happy with, just let us know.

The first thing we do when planting a plant is saturate the plant in a product called Superthrive. Superthrive is a form of root stimulator plus vitamins and hormones. Superthrive can be purchased at local nurseries or through many plant catalogs. Whether you prefer to use the suggested product or not, be sure the plant you are planting is saturated with water before you put it in the ground. Next we put Slo Cote (21-7-11) in the hole before we put the plant in the ground. Slo Cote is a product similar to Osmocote except it does not break down in heat. Slo Cote can also be used as a top dressing fertilizer. In the spring, around the middle of March to the first of April, we use a 3-1-2 ratio fertilizer. This gives the plants a quick green-up. Then in June we come back with a 50% sulfur coated urea, or a 50% slow release fertilizer. Again as close to a 3-1-2 ratio. This fertilization will last most of the summer. In the fall, once the nights have started cooling down, we use a winterizing fertilizer. Once every three years we use an organic fertilizer called Hu-More made by Humalfa. We do this on a rotational basis. This fertilizer has alfalfa as a nitrogen source, iron, growth enzymes and the growth stimulator Triaccontnol. We have been very pleased with the results of Hu-More.

These are products that we have found to provide good results for us in the garden. Everyone has his or her own favorite products just as he or she has their own favorite plants and shrubs and we are not saying ours is any better than the ones you are using. Just research and read labels and you decide what products you want to use to keep your plants healthy and happy.
MG's
Get your picture taken on March 1st

New E-Mail Addresses
Pat Kashouty - billk558@suddenlink.net
Martin Davis - mred2853@sbcglobal.net

New Addresses
Ann Kelley, 398 CR 4119, Jacksonville, TX 75766
Phone No. 903-658-2342 - e-mail unchanged.
Pat Welch, 19461 Sandhill Lane, Flint, TX 75762

Volunteer Hours Report Revised
Each year the report form is reviewed and appropriate changes are made. This year three new categories have been added including: Educational Exhibits, Habitat for Humanity and Rose Garden Guides.

Each of you are encouraged to use the proper code as you report your hours monthly. A copy of the form is included in this newsletter for your convenience or as reference. Copies are always available at the Extension office. If you report via e-mail there is no need to use the form, but including the proper code for the activity involved is preferred.

March Schedule of Class XIV
March 6 Composting & related programs
March 8 Nursery production field trip
March 13 Diagnosing plant problems
March 15 Field trip to SFA Mast Arboretum

WINTER - continued from page 1
By the time you read this, spring will be very near and all sorts of things will be popping in your garden. Enjoy each day to its fullest and get all you can done, because summer is lurking just around the corner!

Coming in April
April 12-14 - Texas State MG Conference at Kerrville
April 14 - Spring Garden Gala plant sale at SFA Mast Arboretum, Nacogdoches from 9AM to 2PM.
For events in other locations throughout the state see:
http://www.texasmastergardeners.com/