



MG Grapevine

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MG Association Meeting

Meeting

March 1st 11:30 AM
Rose Garden Center

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Ronny's Comments

I would like to thank all the MG's that attended the Spring Landscape and Garden Conference. Our organization was well represented. Everyone who worked did an outstanding job. The calendars, books,



SCMG President

and bluebird houses sold well. I know the bluebird houses did well because I brought seven and all seven were sold before 9 a.m. That alone meant \$140 for the organization. Great job everyone.

Our winter has been so mild that it seems as though spring is here already. However, I know that if I go out and plant my tomatoes, a cold snap will arrive. Since I have several extra tomato plants in my green house, I am going to plant some and give those six walls of water gizmos that I bought three years ago a test. The planting guide says mid-March is the time to plant tomato plants out. That makes sense because our last average frost date is March 15th.

Dave Pierson has a good program lined up for the March MG meeting for this time of year to get everyone in the planting mood. He has a representative from Breedlove Nursery to speak to us about what plants are available that do well in this area.

Hope to see you at the meeting.

Ronny Duncan

Monthly Meeting Notes

Paul Breedlove, owner of Breedlove Nursery, will give us a presentation on the best plants for our area and when we should start putting them in the ground. He will also give us some hints on how to get the most from our efforts. Paul has a Bachelor of Science degree in Horticulture from A&M, class of '78.

First Tuesday in the Gardens

As sure as the change of season's approaches the 1st Tuesday lectures will be on the schedule.

The schedule includes:

- March 6 - Texas SuperStars Beat the Odds
- April 3 – Bring the Tropics to Tyler
- May 1 – A Rose is a Rose....
- June 5 – Herbs for the Garden & Table
- September 4 – Design a Garden Path
- October 2 – Textures & Variation in the Garden
- November 6 – Trees for Every Yard

The lectures will be at noon at the IDEA Garden (weather permitting).

Work Days in the Gardens



Effective March 6th and each Tuesday thereafter, the scheduled work day returns to a 10 AM start.



In case you have not seen or heard, the USDA has published an updated Plant Hardiness Zone Map (PHZM). This map has been in the works for several years, and reflects a lot of input not

only from weather stations, but also from folks in the industry. The last time the USDA PHZM map was updated was in 1990, and prior to that 1960, which was the first time the USDA produced a map. Arnold Arboretum has also produced cold hardiness zone maps. The 1990 map only used a data set of 13 years of observations, while the new map uses a 30 year data set, with many more reporting stations, which makes it more accurate and representative than the 1990 map.

As you might expect, the cold hardiness zones have shifted warmer. For the Tyler area, we moved from being on the border of 7b/8a (approximately 10 degrees average minimum temperature) to the border of 8a/8b (approximately 15 degrees average minimum temperature). Since I have lived in Tyler, I would say that 15 degrees is a lot closer to reality than 10 degrees.

The new online map on the USDA web site has several cool features, including being interactive, where you can zoom in to street level to see the climate zone, and is searchable by zip code. The PHZM web site is: <http://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/PHZMWeb/>. Keep in mind that average minimum cold temperature tells only one part of the story on plant hardiness. Here are a couple of very good discussions on the maps, plant hardiness and other factors that influence a plant's adaptability to thrive in any given location. Tony Avent, owner of Plant Delight's Nursery in North Carolina, has a good article on cold hardiness maps, written prior to the release of the newest map, where he talks about the various things that are involved in a plant's ability to not just survive but thrive.

Read it here: <http://www.plantdelights.com/Plant-Hardiness-and-Hardiness-Maps/products/525/>. Avent, who has a unique perspective on the new map since he was on the technical review committee that advised researchers concerning the new map, also recently wrote in his January 2012 online newsletter about the new hardiness zone map right after it was published: <http://www.plantdelights.com/January/products/877/>

The average last freeze for our area is mid-March, still several weeks away, and this mild weather has a bunch of stuff popping out. Don't let your guard down – I saw a

weather forecast that is predicting below freezing temperatures for next Monday, February 27, and heard on the radio we may get close to freezing this weekend. Winter is not over yet. Remember it snowing in April??

While the recent rains are quite welcome, and tremendously helpful in replenishing depleted soil moisture, we must remain vigilant since drought conditions that affect our vegetation can be different than municipal water supply from lakes and reservoirs. Because of the uncertainty of summer condition and the lower lake levels, Tyler and many other municipalities are still on mandatory water conservation status. This is an opportunity for us as educators to help people manage their plants better and save water at the same time.



The Executive Committee met on January 26th discussed and considered the following:

The Sign Committee had met and reported that the first phase will be to print oversized informational business cards to be placed in protective acrylic holders in the Garden. Ann Kelly is designing the cards. QR codes will be used to provide further information. The second phase will be seven signs to be designed and maintained by SCMG in each of the gardens.

The Calendar Committee reported that 367 calendars have been sold and that is enough to cover the original cost. They will continue to be sold at events where MG speakers appear and at the Spring Landscape and Garden Conference.

Joanie Matthews advised that nine award submissions have been sent to the state. Awards will be made at the State Convention. Those submitted and their writers are: Publications, Home tour Booklet - Scherel Carver; Graphics, Four Seasons in the IDEA Garden - Anne Pattullo; Mass Media, First Tuesday in the Garden - Anne Brown; Education, AgriWorld - Jean Smith; Home Tour - Clayton and Pat Turner; Newsletter - Martin Davis; Website Education - Martin Davis; Individual MG, Pat Welch - Bibi Blonn; Association - Jim Powell; Educational Exhibit - Jean Smith. Mary Hamlin was the proof reader.

Ken Stegall has resigned from his position as State Director due to health issues. The vacancy will be referred to the Nominating committee for consideration.

Pat Welch will attend the Director's meeting at the State Conference.

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Has Spring Come?

By Dee Bishop

Did we have winter? Another typical Texas season is all I can say. We have gotten some rain, but not nearly enough. We have had many wonderful days to work in the yard to move plants, amend the soil, replace dead plants, and to study our landscapes to see how we can improve them. I have had a hard time getting enthused enough to plant anything new because I feel deep down in my bones that the drought is not over. I refuse to let it bother me though. I will enjoy what I have even more.



Every year I enjoy my old heritage plants more and more. They have been around for ages and are accustomed to anything the weather dishes out. I also cherish the natives for the same reason and find that even though many are common; they are steadfast, remaining in spite of nature's tantrums. I love the steady progression of bloom these plants provide, with or without care.

Color begins in the gloomiest winter with winter honeysuckle followed by flowering quince, camellias, jonquils and other spring bulbs, pearl bush, forsythia and bridal wreath, tulip magnolia, azaleas, hydrangeas, deutzia, hibiscus, althea, Turk's cap, Anisicanthus w. or hummingbird bush, salvias, summer bulbs, daylilies, and on and on. These old beauties have given Texans joy for eons of time and will ever continue. I try to soak them well once or twice a month and mulch them heavily and they endure the worst.

I once had a yard full of wonderful little perennials that required tons of water. After last summer, I am back to tried and true and 'hope' I can remain that way. I will enjoy those delicate things when I visit other areas where they grow well. I will enjoy what grows well and performs without coddling. Color is what I love and color, I have.

Home Garden Tour



The garden tour committee has selected five gardens to feature in the 2012 Home Garden Tour set for Saturday, April 28, 2012, 9am – 4 pm. The gardens vary from a stunning backyard garden with a formal setting to an informal garden created around the natural surroundings. Each garden is sure to inspire with their different styles.

For locations of the gardens and the advanced tickets locations, go to: <http://scmg.tamu.edu/coming-events/>

Plants From Around the World

By Jim Powell

The **Tiger Lily** produces a stunning spectacle with its fiery bright orange flowers spotted with black dots across the petals. The name Tiger probably refers to its spots. It grows to around four feet tall and its bloom is lightly scented. According to various cultures in both eastern and western civilizations, orange symbolizes energy, balance and enthusiasm of man. Tiger lilies are native to northern and eastern Asia, but have spread rapidly to the United States and Canada.



There are two varieties of the Tiger Lily:

1) The **oriental variety** that is native to China, Korea and Japan. It propagates through bulbs that form at leaf axils. It is presented in Buddhism and other religions as a flower of mercy and compassion. In China, they are grown as an edible vegetable. The bulb when cooked is reminiscent of turnips. Also in China, the flower buds are eaten raw or cooked although the pollen may be toxic.

2) The **common wildflower variety** propagates by tuberous roots. This beautiful "native" plant is sometimes called "red lily" and "ditch lily." It has a huge range, being found in grasslands and sometimes in ditches in Canada and southward into our northern states.

The Tiger Lily has significant medicinal uses for humans; however, it has some toxic effects on cats.

The **Cashmere Bouquet** plant *Clerodendrum bungei* is a native of China. Some think it was named after Colgate's Cashmere Bouquet sweet smelling soap, but it was actually named for Professor Alexander von Bunge a 19th Century Ukrainian botanist.

The plant is also known as Rose Glory Bower, Mexicali Rose, Glory Tree and Mexican Hydrangea.



This deciduous perennial shrub is a member of the mint family. Most consider that it has its good and bad features. First, it grows to heights of 4' to 5', has beautiful pink sweetly fragrant flowers in 6" tight clusters and dark green heart-shaped foliage. Its mass of pink flowers attracts butterflies. Deadheading throughout the summer helps maintain a display of blooms. The plant's main negative point is that it propagates itself with underground runners that pop up throughout your yard and can be hard to control. Also, the plant's foliage has an offensive odor when touched.

The Cashmere Bouquet is deer resistant; however, ants seem to love it. Division can achieve propagation, but pulling up a young plant is the best solution.

Coming Events

- March 6 – 1st Tuesday in the Garden,
IDEA Garden-Noon
- March 7 – EarthKind Landscape,
Sulphur Springs-Noon-4PM
- March 10 – Spring Conference,
Mineola Civic Ctr. 8:30 AM
- March 23-April 8 – Tyler Azalea Trails
- March 30-31 – Main Street Flower Market,
Goodman Museum – Tyler 10AM to 5PM
- April 28 – Spring Garden Gala Plant Sale,
SFA Nacogdoches
- May 1-4 – Southern Region MG Conf., Natchez, MS
- May 3-5 – TX State MG Conference, San Antonio
- June 28 – Horticulture Field Day – Overton A&M Research

For details go to: <http://scmg.tamu.edu/coming-events/>.

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The Project Leaders/Chairpersons will be reviewed and changed as required for 2012.

Joanie Matthews suggested the purchase of the book *Easy Gardens for North Central Texas* by Steve Huddleston for donation to the SCMG library in memory of Sue Clark, Sam Blackbird, Mary Claire Rowe's grandson, Jim Powell's daughter and Pat Welch's mother.

The Fall Conference/Bulb Sale was discussed with suggestions of possible changes to include having exhibitors, short demonstrations by various speakers, plant sales as well as bulbs, etc. A meeting is planned to continue the discussion.



Pictures from the Spring Garden & Landscape Conference on February 4, 2012
Photos by Susan Linnard and Craig Reiland