

Tarrant County Master Gardener Association

Dec. 2008

Mission Statement

To provide horticultural and environmental research based information and techniques. To volunteer in area horticulture projects.

Lighting Up Your Yard

Summer heat makes being outside an early morning or evening affair for many Texans. If you save your outside time until the relative cool of the evening, it's starting to become dark, so why not add some light to your area of enjoyment?

Three types of lighting systems.

There are three types of landscape lighting systems: high-voltage, low-voltage and solar, but there are many options for fixtures and applications.

Where do you start?

Before you just jump in the car and head out to buy light fixtures and wire, there are some key questions to answer.

1. How do you use the area?
2. What paths do you travel through the yard?
3. What steps or areas are dangerous?
4. Are you going for close and intimate?
5. Do you want to make the area seem larger?
6. Is your focus on trees and structures?

Well-planned landscape lighting adds elegance and beauty to the looks of the house. Lighting can hide obvious landscape problems while highlighting the positive features by just illuminating the right thing. Spot lighting brings out textures more effectively while using different angles can be more dramatic. Landscape lighting can extend the hours to enjoy such pleasures as swimming, gardening, entertaining, reading or relaxing. Landscape lights also are attractive, help with safety and also security. Lighting in the trees helps to bring out the features against spacious skies. Sit out in your yard and really think about the area and focus on the idea of making the area a very comfortable space at night when it cools off. Sketch

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Who says landscaping and gardening work does not have it's rewards. Read about Peg Surber and her topiaries on page 5.

FROM AROUND THE CORNER



President's Notepad

Last month, I said it feels like the end of the year is coming and this month it really is. All that is left is to say my Thank Yous and install the new officers.

I am so thankful for all of you. You have given me so much. In areas where I was uncertain you have given confidence. At the beginning of my term, you gave me encouragement, and in the end you stroked my ego. You served on committees, gave suggestions, and put in extra hours when asked and even when you weren't asked. You are all the best!!! Thanks for serving MG and our community.

This year has been a very pleasing experience. One thing that I knew all along was definitely reinforced. It is often in giving that we receive the most. By serving as President, I received far more than I gave.

Thank you all so much,

—Tammy Edwards

December 4, 2008 Holiday Luncheon & Awards

As the leaves are tumbling down in mass, how much fun it was to look to next year and think about roses with our new friend, local rosarian Claude Graves, at our November meeting. I only have antique roses in my own yard, but I do love to look at, think about and enjoy the many roses with which we are blessed!

On December 4th, we will wrap up the calendar year with our traditional 'holiday luncheon'. It is my sincere desire that you will all join us in a casual atmosphere to share a nice meal and celebrate our accomplishments. We will honor those whom you have nominated and recognized as going above and beyond the call of duty. But, may I also verbally ask you to give yourself a hardy pat on the back and a 'job well done'. Each of us, doing our part, makes our association annually recognized as one of the best and most active in the state.

So now – on to the holiday luncheon. Details are below. Directions are elsewhere in the newsletter. **One favor please** – if you do not make a reservation to attend, please do not just show up assuming there will be room. If it is past Nov 27th and you decide you can come – contact Joy Lease, who will keep a 'waiting list' for those who would like to substitute for anyone dropping out.

No promises, but she will try to get you in. Last month I said 'bring on the cold weather'. All I got was a sea of leaves! Hope to see you all on December 4th!

LOCATION AND DATE

Thursday, December 4, 2008 11:00 – 1:00
Texas Star Golf and Conference Center -
1400 Texas Star Parkway Euless, Tx 76040

— Susan Stanek, 1st VP - Programs

Tarrant County Master Gardener Meeting Minutes November 6, 2008

The meeting was called to order at 11:00 a.m. at the Resource Connection by President Tammy Edwards. 162 members and interns were in attendance.

The minutes of the October 2008 meeting were approved as published in the Sharecropper.

Treasurer Carl Trehus gave the Treasurer's Report as follows:

Assets of \$32,759.73, which include \$10,251.82 in checking and \$22,007.91 in a Money market fund.

He also reported that as of November 7th, all but 24 members had paid their dues. A total of 304 members have paid. The new procedure of mailing a dues reminder with a return envelope appears to have been a success. Unpaid members were reminded that a \$4 late fee will now be required in addition to the normal dues. Carl advised Project Leaders and Chairs that they have until the end of December to spend their monies and turn in receipts. Carl requested that they now wait until the end of December, but PLEASE do this by the first week of December so he can close out the books. Laura Hunter presented to the organization a plaque from Historic Ft. Worth. This plaque was presented to the TCMGA volunteers at Thistle Hill for their efforts in creating a sensory garden to benefit children at Cooks Children Hospital. This garden was dedicated on October 15th and is being utilized by the patients of the hospital. An appropriate place will be determined for the displaying of the plaque. Laura further noted that the sensory garden is now at its peak and members were invited to visit the garden.

Sue Ellen Schlitzer asked that any corrections to members addresses, phone nos. or e-mail addresses be provided to her ASAP. This will help ensure a correct 2009 Directory.

The following announcements were made:

1. Bill Hall is recuperating from surgery for pneumonia.
2. Hester Schwarzer advised that Mr. Mitchell at Morningside Elementary School needs volunteers to teach about house plants.
3. Project leaders were requested to advise of any changes in work day dates.
4. The new webmaster, Kate Kilmurray, was introduced.
5. Nancy Dozier's sister, Terry Shaw, donated a painting and 50 note cards to the organization. The Advisory Board will discuss suggestions for what to do with the painting and cards.

—Submitted by Judy Butler for Secretary Joyce Quam

LEADERSHIP

President—Tammy Edwards
tammy.edwards@gmail.com

1st VPresident—Susan Stanek
slstanek@charter.net

2nd VPresident—Bill Hall

Secretary—Joyce Quam
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Directory changes and
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s.schlitzer@sbcglobal.net

Steve Chaney
s-chaney@tamu.edu

TCMGA Web site
<http://www.tcmga.org>

TCMGA office 817-884-1944

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the layout on a large sheet of paper. You don't have to be a professional designer or cartographer to do this, but be sure to include all trees, bushes and flowerbeds.

Types of landscape lighting

1. IN-GROUND ACCENT LIGHTS are recessed in the ground near a tree or house.
2. FLOODLIGHTS create a widespread distribution of light, suitable for illuminating a wall, sign or large object.
3. PATH LIGHTS are small down-lighting element on a thin stem, 12" to 36" high.
4. DECK LIGHTS typically mount to the outside of home or to the railing around the deck.
5. STEP LIGHTS are recessed into walls and stairs so they illuminate the treads or pathways adjacent to the home.

What's best for your yard?

If you want to install a lighting system on your own, low-voltage or solar-powered lights are probably the best and safest.

Solar lights do not require any wire. Instead, individual fixtures are just stuck in the ground where needed. These are normally used for pathway lighting and highlighting flowerbeds. Batteries provide the electricity to illuminate the solar landscape lights after nightfall. Solar-powered lights cost \$20-\$80 and are sold individually or in sets and setup time is pretty quick.

Low-voltage lights use a transformer plugged into an electrical socket and 12v lighting and you have to run wires to the lights. Low voltage systems are more appropriate in residential settings. Low-voltage light systems come with four to 20 lights in a box and cost \$20 to \$250. A transformer and wire are needed and usually included.

High-voltage lighting requires a separate circuit in your house's electrical system and hiring a licensed electrician. You can also visit the Web sites of companies like Lowe's and Home Depot that provide step-by-step guides. Lowe's has "How To Install Landscape Lighting" on CD Rom for \$2.97. To read a detailed article on installing landscape lighting visit <http://www.grreatideas.com>, click on **Monologues** and follow the link.



—by Derald Freeman

Master Gardener Tries Topiary For Pain

Working with topiary seems to be a physical and very time consuming pass-time, but as it turned out it became therapy for Peg Surber who is a Tarrant County Master Gardener.



Peg Surber experienced a back injury in 2002 while handling large plants. When the back pain hit, she soon learned that she had three herniated disks in her spine and developed blood clots in her leg from bruises while moving the plants. Complications left her in constant pain. Physical therapy didn't improve her condition and pain medication seemed the only remedy.

She soon discovered that combining work with plants and her love of gardening became a new pass-time. She said gardening books had numerous ideas on topiaries and garden arrangements and she wanted to do something unusual and spectacular, but wondered how to accomplish it because of the radiating pain that plagued her when moving anything, digging, trimming, and even things as simple as holding a glass or coffee cup.

Peg discovered that working on arrangements distracted her from the pain. Her husband helped with digging and the heavy work. Now,

back to the topiary. She began trimming a variegated privet for the project. In two years she had accomplished what she set out to do. She create a topiary sofa of privet, with the back reaching 48 inches, and a boxwood cocktail table and the white-flowering rose of Sharon pruned to resemble torchieres. The setting is decorated with cups, saucers, and pillows. Even her cats find a pleasure in supervising and approving the project. For Peg this is the balm on the wound, the massage that soothes troubled nerves, the distraction that takes her to a higher therapeutic level to enjoy life in a different realm.



Peg says, "The garden has gotten me through all this. It gave me a reason to get up in the morning."

Credit is due to the Dallas Morning News photographer Natalie Caudill whose photos are used here. The News published a story about this on October 22, 2008.

—Derald Freeman

The Christmas Holiday Poinsettia

To this day the Poinsettia, *Euphorbia pulcherrima*, botanically speaking, has never wavered from popularity as a holiday specialty plant.

In its native habitat it was cultivated by the Aztec Indians and called "Cuetlaxochitl." Pronounced Quet-lax- o-chi- tel. The Aztecs used the sap to control fevers and the bracts (modified leaves) to make a

bright red dye in the fourteenth century. The last of the Aztec kings, Montezuma, had the Poinsettias brought in caravans to what is now Mexico City, from its native area of Taxco because the plant would not grow in high altitudes.

The Poinsettia was given its name by William Prescott, a horticulturist and historian who wrote of Joel Robert Poinsett as the man, who discovered the plant and brought the plants from South America, while serving as the first ambassador to Mexico.

DON'T EAT THE FLOWERS! Every year at this time when poinsettias are being sold and displayed some folks get worried. They want to know if poinsettias are poisonous if eaten. Some 53% believed incorrectly that the plant is poisonous to humans and animals. The U.S. Department of Agriculture and others have been unable to find substantial evidence that anyone has ever died from eating poinsettias (Iowa State IPM department). There has always been a misconception that poinsettias are poisonous. The rationale for this early belief came as a result of a death of a two-year-old, daughter of an American serviceman stationed in Hawaii in 1919. The cause of death was incorrectly assumed to be a Poinsettia leaf. However, don't take this information as absolute.



Check out the facts on your own. The milky sap can cause an allergic reaction which results in skin irritations. Still it should be kept out of reach of curious children and pets. This is the same precaution that should be taken with other plants in the home. Mistletoe and berries of the Holly do have toxic side effects. Milky sap and bracts of the poinsettias can have unpleasant side effects on dogs, cats, livestock, and humans.

Poinsettia blooms are the tiny flowers that sometimes appear yellow, pink, peach or speckled in the center of the bracts. The bracts are basically modified leaves at the end or top of the plant that take on a different color than the rest of the plant as the days grow shorter. Today these plants have been hybridized so that the leaves can be white, salmon, peach, and pink, among other colors. Sometimes poinsettias are even spray painted to form spectacular artistic colors. The natural and traditional reds are the most beautiful!

Millions of poinsettias are grown for domestic use each year in greenhouses in Arizona and California. They are distributed all around the nation during the fall and winter for the holidays. Their likeness appears in Christmas cards and the plants decorate many public establishments to invite and promote the spirit of the Christmas season.

After the season they can be replanted in a cool dark place where they will perform again for years or outside on a southwest exposure in your landscape. There are many interesting web sites to guide you in the growth and care of the Poinsettia. For example, visit this link at: http://www.plantanswers.com/garden_column/120101/120101.htm

—Derald Freeman

The November Mystery Plant Confederate Rose *Hibiscus mutabilis*

The common name for this beautiful shrub comes from where it thrives – that area of the South that calls the battles that occurred in the U.S. from 1861-1865 by the name of “War of Northern Aggression”. The Confederate States of America claimed this unusual showy shrub as their own, even though it is neither a rose nor U.S. native, as it comes from China.



Photo by Marilyn Sallee

Confederate Rose flowers open white and gradually turn pink to deep rose as they age.

This hibiscus displays a large number of showy blooms at any one time, adding a wonderful splash of color to the landscape from summer through fall. The blooms can be four to six inches in diameter, with the individual petals displaying a delicate, billowing appearance.

The blossom has the unusual property of changing color as it ages. The bloom opens in the morning as a beautiful white or a subtle pink, and gradually darkens during the course of the next few days to a deep rose-red as it folds and collapses upon itself.

This was once a very common plant throughout the South; an old-fashioned perennial or shrub hibiscus that likes full sun or partial shade, and rich, well-drained, slightly acid soil. It grows as a multi-branched shrub or a small deciduous tree in Zones 8 and 10, with low branches which can get up to 12 feet tall and wide when it does not freeze; however, a multi-trunk bush 6 to 8 feet tall is more typical in our area. It will die back with the first hard freeze and return in the spring, getting larger each year.

It propagates quite easily by cuttings that root easiest in early spring, but cuttings can be taken at almost any time. A popular way is to cut foot-long pieces of the stem in the fall before a freeze, and store them in a bucket of water until roots appear, to plant the next spring.

-- by Marilyn Sallee

Holiday Luncheon Directions

Texas Star Golf Course
1400 Texas Star Parkway
Euless, Texas 76040
817-685-7888

DIRECTIONS

From North of 183.....

Navigate south to 183 and proceed east on 183. Pick up remaining directions below.....

From West of Loop 820

Navigate to 183 and proceed east on 183. Pick up remaining directions below....

From South of 183.....

Navigate north to 183 and proceed east on 183. Pick up remaining directions below....

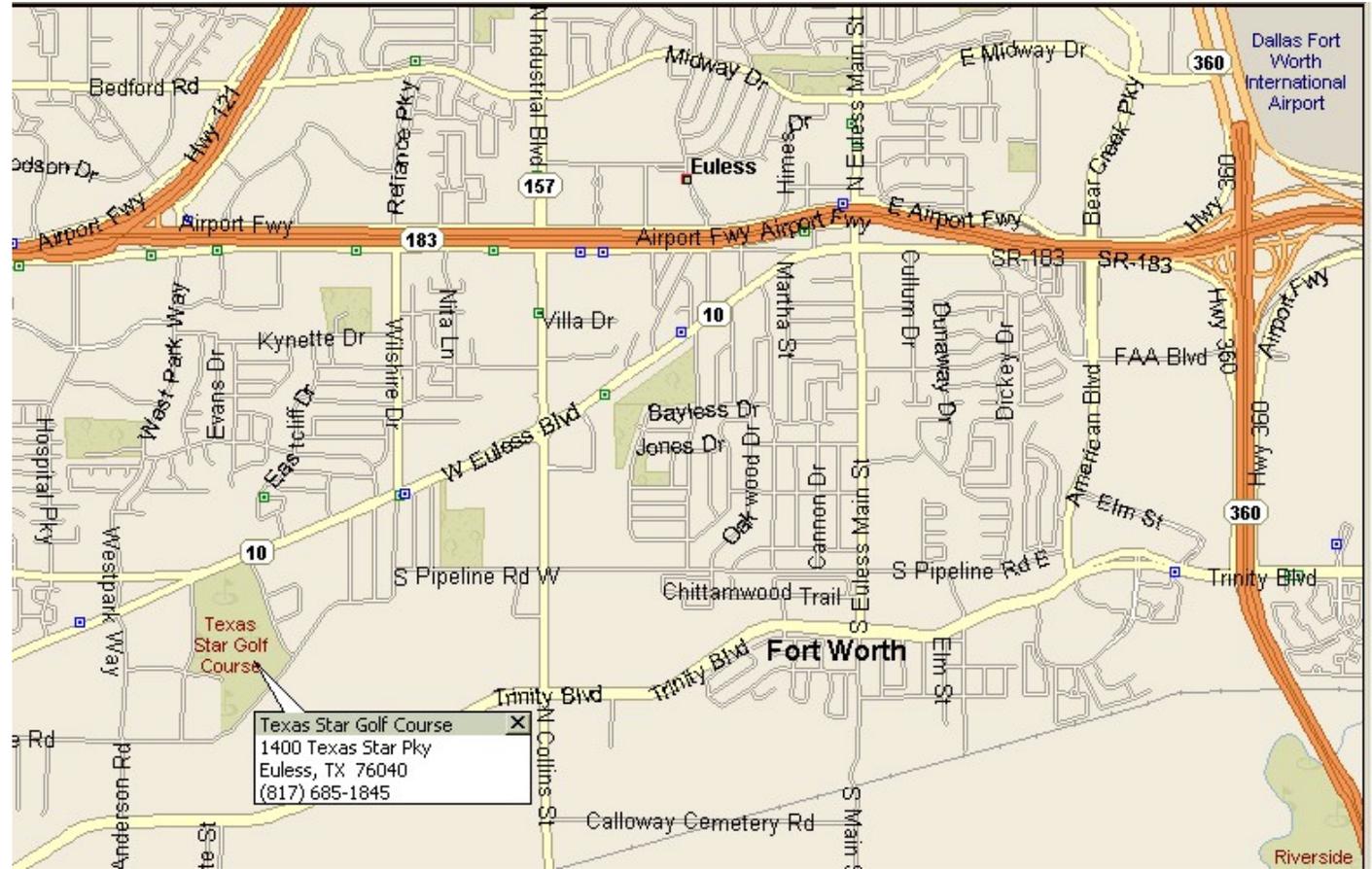
Once on 183 heading west, continue west past Loop 820.

Exit at 157 / S. Industrial and turn right/south. Continue 2.6 miles, turn right onto W Euless Blvd/TX-10 W.

Continue 1 mile, turn left onto Texas Star Pkwy.

Continue .3 miles and the Conference Center is on your left.

- Susan Stanek, 1st VP - Programs



EMERITUS NOMINATIONS

I have been hearing a lot of questions concerning Emeritus status. How does someone get Emeritus status? Is being a Master Gardener a long time the requirement? How do I nominate someone? Can I nominate myself? These are all good questions and I shall do my best to answer them for everyone.

First, according to the State Management Guide, Emeritus status is an honorary title that is earned by a Master Gardener that is retired and has served with distinction. There are several key words in this sentence: **honorary**, **earned**, **retired**, and **distinction**.

The simple explanation of how to receive Emeritus(a) status is first to be nominated, then approved by the Agent and MG board. All paperwork is then sent to the state co-coordinator at A&M for approval and finally once a year, in December, Emeritus(a) status is bestowed on approved nominees.

Anyone can nominate a Master Gardener for Emeritus(a) status so long as the nominee Master Gardener is retired from Master Gardeners. Yes, you can nominate yourself. To nominate someone, you should make sure they are retired. Then you should look at the Master Gardener State website to review the seven MGs in the state who have received this honorary status and the State Management Guide. (Links to these are included at the end of this article.) It is your responsibility as the nominator to document all of the information to support your nominee to receive this status.

Being nominated is not the same as being granted.

Don't forget the key words: honorary, earned, retired, and distinction. This status is not a right; it has to be earned. The nominee has to be retired or retiring the same year. If I am a MG for 20 years and put in 100 hours each year that does not mean I deserve this honor. This is not distinction because many of our members put in 100 hours or more every year. If I do one great thing while I am a MG that doesn't necessarily mean I served with distinction over a period of time.

—Submitted by Tammy Edwards

List of the seven retired state master gardeners that have received Emeritus status:
<http://grovesite.com/page.asp?o=mg&s=mga&p=267295>

Granting Master Gardener Emeritus(a) as included in the State Management Guide:
<http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/mastergd/tmgmga1.html#emeritus>

CHRISTMAS-TIME



Anywhere you go you can find Christmas celebrations. In Hershey, Pennsylvania enjoy the candy lane, a chocolate spa, and waves of snow.

New York City hosts many Christmas shows and events throughout the season including the Radio City Christmas spectacular plays and events

The Walt Disney World Christmas Day Parade on ABC television network is taped inside the Magic Kingdom theme park at Walt Disney World Resort in Orlando, Florida. The 'Let it Snow' Christmas Parade is a parade at Hong Kong Disneyland. The Adelaide Christmas Pageant parade is held in the South Australian capital of Adelaide and is the largest event of its kind in the world. The annual Hollywood Christmas Parade down Hollywood Boulevard has achieved worldwide recognition.

Historically this winter festival was traditionally the most popular festival of the year in many cultures. Reasons included less agricultural work needing to be done during the winter, as well as people expecting longer days and shorter nights after the winter solstice in the Northern Hemisphere.

The modern Christmas with pagan customs include: gift-giving and merrymaking; greenery, lights, and charity from the Roman New Year; and Yule logs and various foods from Teutonic feasts. The earliest reference affixing December 25 as Christmas was in 354 AD in Rome.



The origin of Santa Claus is from the Western culture, where the holiday is characterized by the exchange of gifts among friends and family members, some of the gifts are attributed to a character called Santa Claus (also known as Father Christmas, Saint Nicholas or St. Nikolaus, Sinterklaas, Kris Kringle, Père Noël, Weihnachtsmann, and Father Frost).

The popular image of Santa Claus was created by the German-American cartoonist Thomas Nast (1840–1902), who drew a new image annually, beginning in 1863. By the 1880s, Nast's Santa had evolved into the form we now recognize. The image was standardized by advertisers in the 1920s. So much for history.

So, no matter where you are or what you are doing you can enjoy the Christmas spirit.

- Smile to strangers and you will usually get a smile back.
- Do something friendly or considerate and make another person happy.
- Open the door for a person laden with packages.

A special effort can make the stressful day of another person a little nicer.

—the editor

HOSPITALITY COMMITTEE HAS A BIG 'THANK YOU'!



The Hospitality Committee would like to thank all the Master Gardeners who provide food for each of the monthly meetings. Many of you sign up the month before to bring that one special dish you have been wanting to try out. Others are always very faithful to bring a dish even if they didn't sign up to bring food. All in all, a lot of different cuisines are brought to the meetings. I would like to thank Demetra Larremore, Susan Houston, Linda Winn, Nancy Jarrett and Carol Lally, for serving faithfully each month to make sure the food is out and ready to go.

If you are interested in volunteering with the Hospitality Committee, email me at rreed@sbcglobal.net. So remember when you see the sign up sheets pass by, please take the opportunity to volunteer to bring something to share with your fellow Master Gardeners.

—Johnna Reed

RAFFLE COMMITTEE CORNER

Are you longing for an opportunity to belong to a FUN and exciting TCMGA committee? Then here's an opportunity. The Raffle Committee is now accepting new members for our very small committee!

Benefits include: guaranteed seating, first in line at lunch plus people are always giving you \$\$\$!

Email or call Sandy Johnson 817-280-0052 or sjohnson1220@hotmail.com.

THISTLE HILL RECEIVES COVETED AWARD

For the last several months our Thistle Hill volunteers have been extremely busy creating "The Children's Sensory Garden", an organic garden. This was made possible by the generosity of the Morris Foundation, Tarrant County Master Gardeners Association and the FWISD Applied Learning Academy. We will be working with Cook Children's hospital staff to provide a garden where a Sense of Smell, Sense of Touch, Sense of Sight and Sense of Hearing is a valuable tool.

Thistle Hill has provided a brochure with pictures and a legend of plants that are within the Garden.



The Tarrant County Master Gardeners Association was acknowledged with a framed certificate in honor for 15 years of service and dedication for recreating the historic heirloom gardens at Thistle Hill. Historic Fort Worth, Inc. proudly presented the award on October 15, 2008.

Many thanks to all of you who have participated and supported this project.

—by Emily Ward

Volunteer Opportunities for TCMGA

<u>Project Code & Name</u>	<u>Work Days/Times</u>	<u>Project Manager</u>	<u>Phone</u>
301 BRIT Activities	Call chairman	Kay Yount	817-292-7690
311 BG Perennial Garden	9:00 a.m., Weds.	Cindy Woelke	817-366-4436
312 BG Trial Garden	Tues. 8:30-11:30 a.m.	Susan Miller	817-261-1420
313 BG Cottage Garden	Tues. 9-11:30 a.m.	Janet Riley	817-732-7837
321 Thistle Hill	1 st , 3 rd Weds. 9:30 a.m.	Emily Ward	817-281-5925
322 Union Gospel Mission	10 a.m., 2nd-4th Mon.	Gay Larson	817-441-6560
323 Grapevine Botanic Garden	Call coordinator	Shari Stanfield	817-685-9990
326 Teen Challenge	Every Wed. 9 a.m.	Debbie Bollinger	817-498-1508
328 Community Garden	(Contact project leaders below)		
Barn beds:	Charlotte Berck, wrberck@peoplepc.com		817-426-6417
Compost:	Charles Shiner, mcshiner@sbcglobal.net		817-488-6123
Enabling beds:	Tom Scott, trutexen@aol.com		940-433-2601
Greenhouse:	Nancy Curl, nl_curl@yahoo.com		817-319-1795
Herb Garden:	Rita Hottel, aescom@charter.net		817-295-2883
Mowing/Edging:	Jerry Sorenson, jerryasorenson@charter.net		817-427-9009
Orchard and Berry	Renee Beckum jrbeckum@sbcglobal.net		214-914-6597
Perennial beds: (developing)	Joann Hahn, joannhahn@att.net		817-923-9250
	Ginger Bason, gbason@hotmail.com		817-838-7321
Roses:	Karen Kologe, kpk@charter.net		817-924-6449
TCU students:	Pat Higgins, Ragdollpatb@sbcglobal.net		817-294-2414
401 Composting Demo	1 st Sat.	Don Graves	817-465-1667
	2 nd Sat.	Charlie Shiner	817-448-6123
403 FW Library at Hulen St.	4 th Thurs, 10:00 a.m.	Evaline Woodrey	817-295-4683
	3 rd Sat, 10:00 a.m.	ewoodrey@sbcglobal.net	
404 SW Sub-Courthouse	2 nd Sat, last Wed.	Gailon Hardin	817-475-0923
405 Liberty Garden	Call chairman	Wendi Carlucci	817-488-5640
	2nd Tues, 8-11 a.m.		
406 Veterans Park-Wildscape	Tues 9-12 p.m.	Nancy Swan	817-535-9991
	1st Sat, 9-12 p.m.		
<u>School Gardens</u>			
601 Alice Carlson	Mon/Thurs 8:30 a.m.	Sharon Chastain	817-926-2575
604 Fitzgerald	Wed. 3:15 p.m.	Leeann Rosenthal	817-237-7180
611 BG-Children's Garden	Wed. 9-11:30 a.m.	Mary McCoy	817-561-0598

**Tarrant County Master Gardener Association
200 Taylor St., Suite 500
Fort Worth, Texas 76102-7308**

Calendar of Upcoming Events



Dec 4 Holiday Luncheon at Texas Star in Euless - 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

**January monthly meeting date will be the second Thursday,
on January 8, 2009**

Steve Chaney—For up-to-the-minute
More state news: www.tcmga.org



TCMGA news visit: www.tcmga.org
texasmastergardeners.com