

Tarrant County Master Gardeners



TEXAS A & M AGRILIFE EXTENSION SERVICE

Volume 2, Issue 4

April 2018

Native Plant Demonstration Garden at Southwest Regional Library

By Char McMarrow and Theresa Kay Thomas, Co-Chairs

In 1997 the North Central Chapter of the Texas Native Plant Society of Texas had Jim Leavy, a NPSOT member, design the garden. It was installed then dedicated on April 5, 1997. The design of the demonstration garden is to educate by example: by saving water, using no fertilizers or pesticides and provide a habitat for birds, shelter for wildlife and nectar for all pollinators including hummingbirds, native bees, butterflies and moths. In 2004 the garden became a Master Garden Project. The garden is now a Monarch Waystation Station. The garden itself is approx. 5000 sq. ft.

In 2017 the beds around the library building became part of the project. They are still a work in progress and we hope to complete them in 2018. We are excited that we are currently changing the sprinkler system to drip irrigation under the direction of Dotty Woodson, Water Resources Specialist For Texas A&M at the Dallas Extension Center.

Below, a view of the Native Plant Demonstration Garden at Southwest Regional Library

Continued on page two.



4100 Library Lane
at the corner of Library Lane &
Briarhaven,
block west of Hulen Street
Fort Worth, Texas

Tarrant County Master Gardeners

Native Plant Demonstration Garden continued

The plants, shrubs and trees are all native plants for the North Central area with a few wildflowers sprinkled about in different areas in the demonstration garden. In the beds around the library building we are inserting native plants where common exotics had once been. It is our goal to replace all non-native plants around the library building.

Workdays are the second and fourth Thursday on each month from 8:30 am to 12:30 pm. Saturday workdays are available on request. The garden is a hidden jewel that Master Gardeners, Master Naturalists, and NPSOT members can come, work and get their certify hours. Every workday seems to be a learning experience. We have a great group that joins us when they can to help maintain the garden. We have occasional programs. Please come and be a part of our workdays.

Please come by anytime and tour the garden or just sit under one of the beautiful trees and enjoy the songs of the birds, buzzing of the bees, fluttering of butterflies and all the beautiful flowers.

Char McMorrow and Theresa Kay Thomas, Co-Chairs



President's Corner April 2018

I can't believe it's April, but the signs are here. Many of my smaller jonquils have bloomed, as well as the snowdrops. The Saucer Magnolia (Tulip Tree) is in full bloom, the Red Buds, Peach and Apple trees, too. I love Spring when there is still just a bit of the chill in the air, but Spring means it's time to get busy cleaning up the flower beds and picking up and trimming branches from the ice storm.

Spring is a busy time for our projects, too. I know many of you have been busy tidying up the gardens. There is always a lot of work and a need for volunteers in many areas.

One of our projects is in great need of volunteers....our Demonstration Garden at the Resource Connection. Robert and Harold sure could use your help. This is our garden and it may be a drive for some, but it's one of our requirements for re-certification. There are maybe 5-10 who are very supportive in volunteering at the garden, but the need is great and our two chairs are working several days a week at this garden and other projects. If we could have a big crew to get it going after the winter, maintaining is only a bit easier. I know Robert and Harold could use some folks who could form a team for weed eating and mowing. Are you willing to make a commitment for that task? Call, step up to the plate and help us show the pride we share in our garden. Many will say "I can't lift, bend or be in the heat", but you can get tools and water for the folks working and work when it's cooler. Teamwork is always more fun than working alone.

I challenge you to come out and work with me. I plan to commit myself to 3 hours after the Monthly Meeting and after the Board meeting for the remainder of the year, at least 44 hours. Sounds like a lot, well there is much to do. Yes, sometimes I will be unable to because of travel or commitments, but that means I must find a time to make it up. Like when I miss because of the meeting to go to the State Conference....I'll see you the 2nd week.

We just completed another Propagation Specialist Class. Congratulations to all the participants and a big THANK YOU to those who were teachers and volunteered. Wherever you volunteering for our association, I am grateful for your dedication.

What's coming up?

4/3-7 State MG Conference at TAMU

4/5 Monthly Meeting

4/12 Peter Rabbit Players at Durham Elementary

4/19 Advisory-Executive Board Meeting

4/20 Oakhurst Pen Pals at the Demo Garden

4/27 Clifford Davis 3rd grade at the Demo Garden

4/28 TCMGA Plant Sale at Six Stones

Continued on next page



Tarrant County Master Gardeners

President's Corner continued

There are many other events as well as speakers presentations throughout the month. Read your Newsletter and thank you to our Chair, Lorie Grandclair-Diaz and Co-Chair, Theresa Thomas for a job well done. Don't forget the E-blast and thank you Margaret Shuping for keeping us well informed.

Enjoy the month, get busy in the garden. Until next month...

Hugs and happiness,
Judy

The Plant Sale is Coming!



Plant sale committee:
Debra Rosenthal &
Lorie Grandclair-Diaz, Co-Chairs
Margaret Shuping—plant budget
Rene Muhl—marketing
Berry Bock — educational speakers
Marie Josie Smith
Janice Penwarden
Nancy Taylor

Thanks for all of the hard work!

The 2018 Tarrant County Master Gardeners Plant Sale is rapidly approaching! Co-Chairs Debra Rosenthal and Lorie Grandclair-Diaz have a wonderful committee that is working hard to bring the community a high quality event, and hopefully make lots of money for our projects!

We are working in conjunction with 6 Stones/Bedford Urban Farm and the City of Bedford Beautification Commission. Both groups have been extremely generous with their help and time. The City of Bedford is providing us with tables, tents and chairs, so we will

be able to get our plants off of the ground and do a better job of engaging the community and selling.

Debra has created an online volunteer sign up that you should have received via email, or you may email either Debra or Lorie to volunteer.

Most important information of all: Saturday, April 28th, from 9am until 4pm.

Located at 6 Stones/ Bedford Urban Farm, 209 N. Industrial Blvd. (Hwy 157)

On the border of Euless and Bedford. Easily accessible parking. See you there!

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Treasurer's Report, submitted by Debby Stevenson

**Tarrant County Master Gardener
Treasurer's Report
as of February 28, 2018**

Operating Account Balance as of January 31, 2018 \$43,116

Add Deposits

Jan Meeting Raffle	122	
Dues & Background Checks	118	
Donation-Southlake Garden Club	50	
Bricks	35	
Education Fees	355	
Resource Connection Plot Rent	650	
Succulent Sales	213	
Logo Wear	1,834	
Fertilizer Sales	340	
Caladium Sales	1,572	
Hospitality -Hot Dogs	166	
TRWS for 1801	<u>2,167</u>	7,621

Less Checks

Logo Wear	1,014	
Hospitality	12	
Formstack	29	
Telephone Duty Software	132	
Home & Garden Show Parking	9	
Garden Club Dues	836	
Rent on 1801	2,310	
Resource Connection Demo Garden	69	
FWBG Perennial Garden	44	
Propagation Books	620	
Agriculture License	110	
Education Supplies (to be Reimbursed)	2,513	
Program Speaker	100	
Lauren LeBar Memorial	<u>600</u>	<u>(8,398)</u>

Operating Account Balance as of February 28, 2018 \$42,339

Money Market Account Balance as of January 31, 2018 15,367

Add deposits 0.00 1

Less withdrawals 0.00

Money Market Account Balance as of February 28, 2018 15,368

Total Cash in Bank as of February 28, 2018 **57,707**

Balance per Operating Account Checkbook 42,339

Balance per Money Market1 15,368

Total Cash per Bank Statement **\$57,707**

Tarrant County Master Gardeners

Ways and Means Report by Sue Kelley

Spring is definitely a busy season for the various **Ways and Means** activities!

Donna Detzel and Diane Cauwels have directed a very successful **caladium bulb sale** again this year. The bulbs will be available for pick up at the April 5th Master Gardener meeting. They will be distributed from the Water Works Learning Center, 1801 Circle Drive. Please make arrangements for pick up if you are unable to attend the April meeting.

Fertilizer and mushroom compost will also be available at the April meeting. These items will be distributed from 2300 Circle Drive – just outside the gym where the meeting is held. Many thanks to Dave Wilson and Marilyn Satterfield for coordinating this activity! Again, please make arrangements for pick up if you are unable to attend the April meeting.

The Cookbook Committee, chaired by Rocky Deutscher, is hard at work compiling recipes and information for the **cook book**, however, your recipes are needed! The goal is a recipe from every Tarrant County Master Gardener. So....decide on your favorites and send to the committee member according to the category.

Appetizers, Beverages and Sauces:

Peggy Crist	Michele Elekes
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Judy Ratzlaff

Soups and Salads:

Ginny Schmidt	Mercy Kettler
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Dena Harrison	Sharon Nice
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Main Dishes:

Susan Houston	Rocky Deutscher
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Judy Ratzlaff

Sharon Hidden	Cheri Mills
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Valerie Stowe

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Vegetables and Side Dishes:

Lena Goff

Dorothy Hildebrand

Sharon Hidden

Valerie Stowe

Breads and Rolls:

Lena Goff

Dorothy Hildebrand

Peggy Crist

Cakes, Pies and Miscellaneous Desserts:

Debbie Rosenthal

Camille Eckersley

Judy Ratzlaff

Sharon Nice

Dena Harrison

Cookies and Candies:

Sue Kelley

Betty Story

Theresa Thomas

This and That:

Rocky Deutscher

Dorothy Hildebrand

Ginny Schmidt

Be certain your name, email address and telephone number are included with your recipe submission. Any special comments may be added as well – gluten free, vegan – and “this was my grandmother’s favorite.”

There will also be a box at the April Master Gardener meeting to drop off your recipes. Many thanks for your participation!

Thank you!

Sue Kelley

Tarrant County Master Gardeners

Native Plant of the Month

Blackfoot Daisy

Melampodium leucanthum

Asteraceae (Aster Family)

This is a low, round, bushy plant with **flower** heads of 8-10 broad white rays surrounding a small yellow central disk. It has narrow leaves and 1 inch wide white daisy-like flowers. The white rays are **toothed** at the tips and surround yellow disk flowers. These honey-scented **flower** heads are **solitary** and terminal on slender stalks.

It is a perennial. These honey-scented flower grow about 6 inches in height and in clumps about 1-2 feet across. Blackfoot daisy likes dry, rocky, calcareous soils. They bloom for March - November. They are heat and drought tolerant, sun to part-shade. In the fall they can be cut back half-way to keep them compact. Rich soil and abundant water will likely produce many more flowers in the short-term, but may consequently shorten the lifespan.

Benefits: They are showy and long-blooming. Nectar for Bees, Butterflies, insects and seeds for granivorous birds.

Submitted by Theresa Thomas, gleaned from the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Website



And just for a giggle...Who
ate their Wheaties?

Gardening Usurped (Rats in the Attic) by Nora Coalson, 2014 MG From the Sharecropper March/April 2016 Issue

Just when mild January weather beckoned me outside for work on an outdoor to-do list which included cutting back my still-blooming lantana, a trip back indoors brought me up short. An unpleasant odor emanated from an overhead vent in the master bedroom. OK, how bad could this be? Something dead in the attic. Call someone to get it out, pay the worth-every-penny price, and move on.

Yep. Did all that. The dead thing turned out to be a rat. Now I'm not rat phobic. An early pre-career job involved working with them in a medical research lab. Those mild mannered caged creatures, however, did not make tunnels in attic insulation, chew wires, and die in inconvenient spots in my home. I liked them caged just fine. Free roaming in my attic – not so much.

The sympathetic fellow who removed the first offender, patched up one obvious source of ingress, and tossed coyote urine-soaked cotton balls in my attic, suggested traps. I hoped the problem was an isolated one and we would not need them. You probably already know that this is not a problem for which the ostrich approach works well. That very night I heard a loud and persistent scratching sound coming from the attic, followed by the scampering sounds of little clawed feet.

As luck would have it, I had MG telephone duty the next morning. This was mid-January and unlikely to be busy, so I anticipated researching the rat problem on aggie-horticulture, following whatever directions were given, and solving the problem pronto. Would you be surprised to learn that there are critters called ROOF RATS? Not only are they twinkle-toed high wire walkers (think power lines, fence tops, vines on walls), they can also squeeze into an area no larger than one half inch in diameter. Heck - the buggers could walk in under my front door if that is the case.

Turns out that it is no easy task to get rid of rats in the attic. Those who have dealt with the problem are happy to relate their horror stories. One poor fellow described several weeks' worth of do-it-yourself rat removal efforts followed by a professional exterminator's plan which included tenting the entire house and pumping it full of toxic fumes, which then necessitated a week-long stay in a hotel. I began to have visions of our retirement account being drained not by Wall Street downturns but by exterminator bills and attic repair.

Aggie-horticulture gave me more information than I ever wanted to know about how to identify what type of critter had taken up residence in my attic. Since I already knew from the dead critter removed that it was a rat, I skated over

the information about shapes of critter poop and went straight for the HOW-DO-I-KILL-THEM info. Neither was I particularly interested in identifying whether my attic rat was of the Norway Rat (*Rattus norvegicus*) or the Roof Rat (*Rattus rattus*) species. Should you really want to know, be advised that the Norway Rat has a blunt muzzle and is described as large and robust, where the Roof Rat has a pointed muzzle and is sleek and graceful. I had no intention of such close examination and doubted that I would describe anything in this species as graceful.

Our first attempt at killing the attic rat was to use the recommended spring trap. They're cheap. Work great in cartoons. How could we miss? We baited them with aggieh advised peanut butter, crunchy because it's my husband's favorite. (No analogy here; I was just feeling magnanimous.) We also put rat bait boxes around the house and cautioned our outdoor cats to stay away from them. Three days of these efforts resulted in much cursing, near amputation of several fingers, and NO DEAD RATS. No way to tell if

the bait boxes were effective, but the traps were not. The clever little buggers could rob the trap of bait and not spring it. I was ready to consider my husband's suggestion to starve our outdoor cats and lock them in the attic. They were definitely not earning their keep outside.

At a second visit by our friendly exterminator, the man told us to forget the peanut butter. Turns out (according to him, not aggie-horticulture) that rats prefer different foods at different times of the year. Winter diet preferences require something with more fat. "Use fried chicken skin instead," he said. My husband was all over that one and volunteered immediately to run to KFC. I headed for Home Depot where I found a new and improved re-usable mouse trap guaranteed to kill them. At \$17.95, it was priced as the Rolls Royce of rat killing devices. So what if it was made in New Zealand. How different could our rats be? I bought one. While the exterminator closed off quite a few more potential roof-top in-and-out points for critters, my husband and I rebaited the traps. I proudly placed my Rolls Royce, feeling hopeful.

The next morning my husband greeted me with a cup of coffee and patted the seat beside him. "We need to talk." He wasn't smiling. Uh oh. His story: Turning on the kitchen light that morning, he had been startled by the sight of our rat running along the kitchen countertop behind the coffee pot. So, he reckoned that our sealing up the attic holes had been so effective that Mr. Rattus rattus, as we had taken to calling him, had moved his operations downstairs.

An hour and a half later, after having tossed that first proffered cup out and Cloroxed every conceivable surface in the kitchen, including the coffee pot (inside & out), I sat down to enjoy my first cup of coffee. Grossed out and really pissed, I reread all the advice from TAMU. In a nutshell here it is:

- The obvious – don't buy a mouse trap (small) to catch a rat (large). Not everyone carries the larger spring traps.
- Don't put the traps closer together than 3 feet. Apparently rats learn that spring traps can kill and will avoid them if they see cousin Pete get trapped.
- Don't use rodenticides (poison) in your attic – if you can possibly avoid it. (Trust me when I say that you will probably ignore this advice if your rat problem persists for more than a week.)
- Don't believe anyone who tells you that rat bait (poison) makes them thirsty, so they will go outside to die. More likely they will fall dead between your walls creating a stench you will have to live with for a week or more.
- Forget sound producing repellent devices. There is no supportive data that they work.
- Do not use glue boards for rats. They're OK for mice, if you don't mind picking them up with a still-alive wriggly mouse attached and then have to figure out how to humanely kill it.
- Do NOT trap and release rats or mice. They are considered pests in every sense of the word. I'm thinking even Albert Schweitzer would have killed them.
- Do hire someone to seal up all possible entry points on your roof using low expansion/expanding foam and brass or stainless steel wool. Since this requires much roof scrambling, it's simply not do-it-yourself work.

As for the end of the story, we capitulated to fears of rats gnawing on us in our sleep and bought more poisoned bait, which we then placed under every sink, in every bathtub, and in the attic. I bought the pest control expanding spray foam and squirted it in every under-the-sink opening I could find and around all of our outdoor faucets. And because fear short circuits reason, I purchased those supposedly ineffective sound-emitting rodent repellent thingies, plugged three of them into our bedroom and bathroom sockets, and then barricaded our bedroom door from possible invasion by tucking a towel under the closed door. For three nights we got little sleep and prepared ourselves to search for a dead rat. Never before have I delighted at the smell of decay. I'd taken to covering the coffee pot with plastic bags

duct-taped to the countertop. It made for a torturous start to the day, but one free of images of rats crawling on my exposed brewing machine. Fresh coffee in hand, I bent down to toss a spoon in the dishwasher, and that's when I got it – just a whiff of something dead. On hands and knees I peered under the dishwasher. The smell was definitely stronger, but I couldn't see *Rattus rattus*. I just smiled, took my coffee into the living room to enjoy with the morning paper and waited for hubby to wake up. My husband greeted the news with a grin and responded, "We'll have to pull the dishwasher to get him out. I've done this before. No sweat." The thought of a dead rat made me agreeable, so I put on scuzzy clothes, gathered up rubber gloves, donned a mask and prepared to assist the project lead. All went well until we started pulling the washer out, it got hung up on something, and water started pouring out onto the floor. Water mopped and hot water turned off to stop the leak, I noticed a kick plate screwed to the bottom of the washer. With that removed, sure enough, there lay a dead rat. Nearby was one of the blocks of bait he had dragged under the dishwasher with him. Since we had been living with a dishwasher which had a broken latch and one which was now forever tainted by a dead rat found underneath, my husband sent me to search for a new one. This was a gift horse if ever I saw one. Three days later a new stainless steel dishwasher was installed. Thank you Mr. *Rattus rattus*.

