

# Tarrant County Master Gardener Association

Nov 2008

## Mission Statement

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

## FALL CLEANUP FOR TOOLS

**L**awn and garden tools need to be of good quality and in good shape. Just as a carpenter would never use a broken hammer or poorly functioning tools, a gardener keeps and maintains lawn and garden tools in good working order. I have tools that have survived many years of use.

Fall is the time of the year to clean up our tools and put our gardens to bed for the winter. That means inspection and end of year care.

Cold weather is setting in so its time to make the rounds on trees and shrubs to see what needs pruned. Repeat blooming rose bushes can be trimmed back and dead wood removed. Rose plants need pruning to tidy up their appearance; control size; and improve their vigor, growing habits and bloom. Pruning methods vary according to the type of rose plant. Old fashion or antique roses require much less pruning than modern roses.

Now that the leaves have fallen off most trees you can see better which obtrusive branches need to be removed that are interfering with air circulation. Cut back the pampas grass and clear out the ivy that is over-running everything.

Now that you have trimmed, bagged, and placed all the debris at the curb let's turn to the tools.

### What you need:

- Scraper
- Garden hose sprayer
- File or grinder
- Wiping rags
- Spray lubricant and 3-in-1 oil

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### What do you do with your tools for the winter?

**Bang 'em and hang 'em**  
**Spray 'em and store 'em**  
**Hose 'em and dry 'em**  
**Maybe our lead article will help.**

## FROM AROUND THE CORNER



### President's Notepad

Hi All,

Well the year is winding down. We can tell because suddenly there is a lot of talk about getting our hours in, next year's budget, and new officers. All time has to be reported by October 31. Carl is working on the budget and we just elected the new officers. Yep, I'd say the year is winding down.

In case you didn't know, even though next year's officers aren't officers yet they have to start planning and working on events and administration for next year now. You should be thinking about next year too. If you want to work on a committee or be a chair you should discuss this with Susan Stanek; soon. Eleanor Tuck has already started working on ideas for the programs and has a few people who have volunteered to help her. Bill Hall and Carl Trehus are staying on in their same positions and are carrying on business as usual. Dottie Bucy has started sitting in on meetings to get a feel for her position next year. By the way, poor Susan thought she didn't have to take over President until January 1, 2009; she and all new officers actually take position at the end of the business meeting in December. Poor Susan.

I don't know if it is the cooler weather, the beautiful fall gardens, timesheets, budgeting, or new officers but I do feel excited about the year winding down.

—Tammy Edwards



### November 6, 2008 Monthly Program

Wasn't it good to be back at the Resource Connection for our meeting, even if the sound wasn't quite right yet due to a hasty reassembly after the Hurricane Ike volunteers left the gymnasium? Many thanks again for your flexibility.

What fun it was to hear Laura Miller speak last month and get to know her. I, for one, now feel that Laura is my new best gardening friend and I can call on her for help if I get a commercial horticulture question. What a great resource she is for Tarrant County!

This month's speaker is will be Claude Graves of the Dallas Rose Society. Claude will speak about his journey to becoming a rose expert, how to use roses in the landscape, and he will focus on roses that grow successfully in our area. You will be in for a treat with his beautiful Powerpoint of roses. A practical presentation – and he loves to answer questions!

Our schedule will be:

- 9:30-10:00 Sign in and coffee
- 10:00-11:00 Claude Graves - Roses
- 11:00-12:00 Business meeting and snack lunch
- 12:00-1:00 Claude Graves – More Roses

REMINDER!! Don't forget to make your reservations for our holiday luncheon, scheduled for December 4<sup>th</sup> at Texas Star in Euless. Tickets, at \$20 per person, will be on sale at the meeting.

—Susan Stanek, 1<sup>st</sup> VP - Programs

## Tarrant County Master Gardener Meeting Minutes October 2, 2008

Following the first half of the program "Perennials" by Laura Miller, the business meeting was called to order by President Tammy Edwards at 11:00 AM at the Resource Connection with 170 members in attendance.

• **Minutes** of the previous meeting (September 4, 2008) were approved as printed in the *Sharecropper*.

• **Treasurer**, Carl Trehus reported the following:

> Checking	\$ 7,485.79
> Money Market	<u>\$22,449.64</u>
> Total	\$28,489.63
> Income	\$15,893.63
> Expenses	\$29,935.43

• **Election of 2009 Officers:** President Edwards thanked the Nominating Committee for their work. Nominees for 2009 TCMGA Offices are:

- **President:** Susan Stanek
- **1<sup>st</sup> Vice President Programs:** Eleanor Tuck
- **Second Vice President Ways and Means:** Bill Hall
- **Secretary:** Dottie Bucy
- **Treasurer:** Carl Trehus

Motion was made and seconded to accept by acclamation. Members approved. Nominating Committee was Ben Oefinger, Charley Shiner, Ginger Bason, Sharon Chastain, and Susan Stanek.

• **Announcements:**

1. Pat Durda is very ill and has been returned to All Saints Hospital, FW.
2. Rita Hottel requesting herbs for the Community Garden.
3. Speakers Bureau meeting will follow today's membership meeting.

4. New Texas Master Gardener website: [www.texasmastergardener.org](http://www.texasmastergardener.org)
5. International Master Gardener Conference March 22 to 26, 2009 in Las Vegas, Nv.
6. TCMGA dues for 2009 being accepted today. The item regarding donations in the statement sent to each member was meant only as a suggestion. TCMGA is a volunteer organization, not a fund-raising one.
7. 2008 Holiday Luncheon is December 4 at Texas Star in Euless, 11 AM to 1 PM at a cost of \$20 per person. Reservations may be made today and at next month's meeting. After that, remaining spaces will be made available to non-members.
8. Seeds brought today for JMG may be given to Laura Miller who will see that they get to Steve Chaney.
9. Victory Boxes - Mary Margaret Halleck is taking donations.
10. Field Trips scheduled for October 7 and October 29.
11. Peggy Falconer is taking nominees for TCMGA Awards.
12. FWBG Plant Sale October 11, 9 AM to 2 PM.

Meeting adjourned at 11:20

—Submitted by Joyce Quam, Secretary

Part 2 of Laura Miller's (new Commercial Horticulture Agent, Tarrant County) program on perennials followed today's Business Meeting.

## LEADERSHIP

President—Tammy Edwards  
tammy.edwards@gmail.com

1<sup>st</sup> VPresident—Susan Stanek  
slstanek@charter.net

2<sup>nd</sup> VPresident—Bill Hall

Secretary—Joyce Quam  
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Membership—Sue Ellen Schlitzer  
s.schlitzer@sbcglobal.net

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

TCMGA office 817-884-1944

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### General tips:

Here are some general tips on how you can make your lawn tools last longer:

1. Remove any mud or soil from your hand tools after each use using a paint stripper to scrape it off.
2. Wipe your tools dry to prevent them from rusting.
3. Sharpen your cutting tools and your mower blades every fall or spring to keep their cutting edges in perfect condition.
4. Use running water on metal tools used for herbicides and fungicides applications to reduce corrosion.
5. Always use the right tool for the job. If you don't have the tool either buy the correct tool.
6. Metal tools will rust if they are stored in dirty, damp conditions. Keep your tools cleaned and well oiled.
7. Tools with sharp edges, such as hoes and shovels, should be sharpened before hanging them up.

### Lawn mower:

A little simple maintenance during the mowing season and before winter can make the difference between carefree operation and lots of costly and stress-inducing problems.

Drain the gasoline from the mower tank. Disconnect the spark plug wire. I recommend getting a basting syringe with the squeeze bulb to suck up the gas to deposit in the gas can. Never use a siphon pump that attaches to a drill as the gas vapors from the tank and electric sparks from the drill can cause an explosion. Remember guys you are not Superman.



Tank empty? Don't start the mower yet. Turn the mower on its side, remove the blade, sharpen the blade or go buy a new one. They're cheap. Put the blade back on, hose off the accumulated grass clippings from the underside. Dry off the blade and spray with lubricant to keep away rust. Reconnect the spark plug wire. NOW, start up the mower and run it until the tank is dry. There was some logic to that, right? Remove the spark plug and check the electrode gap and condition of the plug. Buy a new one if necessary. Put a few drops of oil in the spark plug hole and replace the spark plug. Replace or clean the air filter. Leave the gas tank empty until spring. Replace that kinked throttle cable that has bothered you all summer.

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### **Weed eater:**

The procedure for the weed eater is much like the lawn mower. Remove the gas, remove and sharpen the edger blade attachment, hose off, and run engine until dry. Remove the spark plug as described above. Put a few drops of oil in the spark plug hold and replace the spark plug. This lubricates the cylinder walls.

### **Chain saw:**

Inspect the chain. If you have used it much sawing hard wood or hit nails now is a good time to sharpen the chain. You have more free time now so get out the owners manual and get to work. Oh, drain the gas on this too.



### **Pruners:**

Most pruners disassemble by removing the nut from a bolt. Pay close attention to how the parts are fitting together. Remember, you have to put it back together. Once apart, file or grind the cutting blade so that a piece of paper cuts easily being pulled across the edge. Remove burrs that form on the backside while grinding or filing. Oil all parts and reassembly.



### **Wheelbarrow:**

Remove the axle on the wheel and grease the bearings if you can get to them. Oil is not permanent enough; you need grease. Check the condition of the wheelbarrow. Winter prices are better now if you have to replace it.

### **Hand tools:**

Don't forget shovels, rakes, bypass pruners, hedge shears, post hold diggers and anything else you used this summer. Clean them with a paint scraper, hose them off, dry them and spray with lubricant. Never leave unfinished metal to oxidize in the garage.

—by Derald Freeman

## **TCMGA Community/Demo Garden**

I was surprised to hear some members of our Association still ask, "What is the community garden, where is it, and what is its purpose". So I would like to explain about the community/demo garden at the Resource Connection. It is located on a two-acre site west of building 2300 where our monthly meetings are held. In just two years the garden that was an expanse of grass and a few trees in 2006 is now a place where one can take a pleasant stroll or just sit on a bench and enjoy the surrounding beauty provided by Master Gardener volunteers working at the garden.

Before you enter the front gate, you will want to stroll around the wagon wheel path that leads you through the Herb Garden that Rita Hottel and her committee of volunteers are developing. They planted a kitchen garden of herbs used for cooking and also gray and silver herbs. If you have an herb garden and would like to share with Rita, please give her a call.

Uh oh! What's the tall grass across the walk behind the Rosemary? Why it's the perennial garden being developed by Ginger Bason and Jo Ann Hahn to demonstrate native and drought tolerant plants for this area. The garden runs along the outside of the fence, and while you are walking along admiring the beautiful blooms, be sure to stroll around and through the beautiful Earth Kind Rose garden tended by Karen Kologe and Nan Garvin. The Griffith Buck rose bed is just past the perennial garden. Thanks Ginger, Jo Ann, Karen and Nan for the beauty of your gardens.

Don't miss the pergola constructed by Ken Knect. It stands majestically at the gate that leads into the area to be developed as a children's garden thanks to Ken's hard work.

Before entering the main garden, check out the fruit trees and vines in the orchard.

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**TCMGA Community/Demo Garden (continued from page 5)**

Renee Beckum began developing the orchard early this year and planted peach, apple, pear, and plum trees along with grape and blackberry vines. She hopes to have an arbor next year for the grape vines to run on and a shade area in the center of the orchard. Water for the orchard is provided by a drip irrigation system installed by Renee. Thanks Renee for a job well done.

As you enter the main garden's front gate, you will pass through the Enabling Garden area designed by intern Sandy Landry in front of the red barn. The intern class of 2008 began building the beds in the spring under the direction of Tom Scott, project chairman, and Lance Jepson, head intern. It is a demonstration garden and will eventually be used by gardeners that may not be able to bend over or get down on their knees to work in the soil. They can stand and lean against the beds or sit on a bench beside the bed as they work. The interns built a pergola in the center for shade, and all the beds have drip irrigation for easy watering. A great big thank you to the interns for all their handiwork. And they're not finished yet. There's more to come.

As you move out of the Enabling garden you will probably want to walk among the raised beds to view the vegetables. Eleven of the beds nearest the barn are demonstration beds planted by Master Gardeners and TCU students. This summer and fall the volunteers have left the garden with bags of potatoes, black-eyed peas, beans, tomatoes, onions, squash, okra, or peppers. Staff and agency clients of the Resource Connection such as Senior Citizens and New Lives students plant the remaining beds. Visitors can see several different materials that can be used to construct raised beds and ways to build trellises in the beds for vines. At the back of the garden is a composting area for demonstrating and making compost for the beds. We have a rainwater

harvesting system set up in the garden that is a great demonstration for visitors to the garden and for rainwater harvesting classes.

Charlotte Berck is in the process of planting the beds around the barn with Texas Super Star plants. She needs lots more plants to complete her garden, so if you have plants to share, call Charlotte to see if they are on her list. Thanks Charlotte for your work in making a beautiful learning garden.

At the far end of the garden is the greenhouse area. Nancy Curl and her greenhouse management volunteers are completing a greenhouse that was donated to the garden in 2006 by an elementary school in Tarrant County. They are also completing the three hoop house frames built by the Greenhouse Management Specialist classes. Plans for the greenhouse include teaching plant propagation headed up by Pat Lovejoy, misting and drip irrigation systems and maybe a few fun things like making concrete leaves, bird baths or gourd bird houses.

Last but certainly not least a huge thank you to Avis and Jerry Sorenson for making the whole garden a manicured place of beauty by edging, trimming and mowing.

There are numerous other volunteers that deserve thanks for working at the TCMGA Community/Demo Garden, but I don't have room to list them all. They know who they are. Thanks so very much to everyone.

Visitors come to the garden because they have seen it on TV, read about it in the newspaper, heard about it from an employee or client of the Resource Connection or from some other source. Hopefully this explains a little about the community/demo garden and inspires you to come visit or volunteer to work in the garden. We have many areas, so there's a place for any Master Gardener that wants to help.

—Pat Higgins

**Beijing Olympic Garden Pictures**  
(from Suzanne Mills and Tammy Edwards)



## Backyard Composting Or “Let It Rot”

In nature there is a cycle of life, death, decay and growth. Plants draw their needed nutrients from the soil and the air around them. As a plant dies, it falls to the ground where microorganisms decompose it (compost) and release the nutrients back into the soil where they will be available for other plants to use. Compost is the finest of all soil amendments.

The modern practice of composting is a little more than speeding up and intensifying natural processes—and that’s all it is. Finished compost is no more than predigested (rotted) organic material which has undergone a natural heating process and which is very valuable “stuff” to incorporate into your garden’s soil. Successful home composting is more art than science—it is not rocket science!

There can be as many as 900 billion microorganisms in a pound of soil and these soil microorganisms are what start the decomposition process. To grow and multiply, these microorganisms need four main things.

1. A food source for energy—carbon or brown “stuff”.
2. A protein source for growth—nitrogen or green “stuff”.
3. Water
4. Air



Scientists have determined that the ideal compost pile mixture of carbon materials to nitrogen materials is 30 parts of carbon to one part of nitrogen. All living things contain carbon and nitrogen in some ratio so don’t be concerned about whether you have obtained this ideal ratio because you will never know exactly what you have in your compost pile.

**Water**—From start to finish your compost pile should have the consistency of a wrung out sponge. Not enough water is the biggest problem in our area.

**Air**—You cannot have too much air. One of the advantages of turning your pile is that you are introducing more air into it.

When microbes start digesting carbon compounds, the carbon is literally burned or oxidized. Part of this oxidative energy is given off in the form of heat. That’s how you know that decomposition is occurring. Temperatures of 165 degrees may be achieved; however, lower temperatures will produce finished compost only slower. When you can no longer get the pile to heat up, the compost is essentially done and can be used.

Remember “Compost Happens”.

1. Don’t get bogged down with complicated recipes and formulas.
2. There are no hard and fast rules—just guide lines.
3. Let common sense and your available organic materials be your #1 and #2 composting guides.

—by Charlie Shiner

## Food Drive Is A Success!



With all the good causes and charity the TCMGA is already engaged in, the Master Gardeners stretched themselves for yet another good cause when asked to contribute food to the much depleted supplies at the Tarrant County Food Bank.

Hurricane Ike had emptied the shelves, and the Master Gardeners helped fill them up again by donating 210 pounds of canned and boxed food at the October meeting. The eight boxes of food were delivered to a much appreciative Food Bank employees the afternoon after the meeting.

Thank you to all who contributed. Remember to keep these needy families in mind during the upcoming holiday season.

—Marilyn Sallee

## OCTOBER 7 FIELD TRIP

What a perfectly beautiful day for a field trip! More than 60 Master Gardeners gathered on October 7<sup>th</sup> for the tour of the Mansfield area and were rewarded with three outstanding gardens.

Pat Lovejoy's garden is pure delight. Her expertise in using and propagating native and adapted plants is obvious throughout. Her garden also offers a wealth of ideas in water management, such as turning what could have been a water drainage problem into a lovely rain garden using trapped water. Pat also gave a demonstration on drip irrigation for containers.

Elizabeth Johnson opened her inviting country garden to us. With the help of Lucy Harrell, she has designed curving beds with beautiful plant combinations and unique water features, including re-circulating water in a dry creek bed. This garden is all the more remarkable because Elizabeth started only two years ago.

The last garden visited was Fran Blanton's gorgeous landscape. Over the last four years, this garden has seen major updating. Several large water features include a tropical-like swimming pool and a bog turned into a lovely pond. A new greenhouse has been worked seamlessly into the landscape. Endless plantings of Encore azaleas and hydrangeas and the use of large containers with tropical plants have turned this garden into a peaceful, reflective retreat.

The field trip ended at John Deere Landscaping for a little shopping and to take advantage of a very generous discount offered for that day only.

Thank you, Carla Pickens, for making all the arrangements!

—Kay Gunn

## December 4, 2008 Holiday Luncheon & Awards



Our annual holiday luncheon serves as our final meeting of the year. We will celebrate our accomplishments, give out a 'few' awards, and draw for a

'few' prizes. Great fun, great food, and excellent friends! It's a time to pat each other on the back and say,

"Good job, Master Gardeners!"

Tickets are \$20 and will be for sale again at the November 6 monthly meeting. Checks are to be payable to TCMGA.

If you will not be present, you can also mail a check for \$20 to Joy Lease. To reserve your seat, your check must be received by November 27<sup>th</sup>, or your check will be returned. (We have to guarantee a count in advance.)

At the end of the November 6<sup>th</sup> meeting, we sell any remaining seats to spouses or others.

WHEN: Thursday, December 4, 2008  
11:00 – 1:00

WHERE: Texas Star Golf and Conference Center

1400 Texas Star Parkway  
Eules, Texas 76040

Bring on the cold weather!

—Susan Stanek



### Birthdays for this month

- 11-1 Marilyn Sallee
- 11-4 Tammye Kuntz
- 11-5 Sharon Clarke and Dorothea Theus
- 11-6 Dick Oliver
- 11-7 Ben Oefinger and Jane Dunkelberg
- 11-8 Katie Kowierschke
- 11-15 Hester Schwarzer
- 11-16 Carol Norfleet
- 11-21 Barbara Lind and Louis DeSantis
- 11-22 LaVonne Nowlin, Warren Tingley, and Pam Jewell
- 11-29 Jim Nelson
- 11-30 Janet Riley.

—by LaVonne Nowlin  
lavonnen@sbcglobal.net

### LITTLE HANDS ON THE FARM

HOWDY, as Big Tex says. And I say a Big THANK YOU for being a part of Little Hands on the Farm team.



As always, we received rave reviews from the children and parents and recognition that we were there as VOLUNTEERS. There were many repeat customers this year.

As soon as I can compile the hours that so many of you put in on all the events that have to happen to make this one day work, I will publish it. Keep listening!!

—Eleanor Tuck

## Volunteer Opportunities for TCMGA

<u>Project Code &amp; 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	8:30 a.m., Weds.	Cindy Woelke	817-421-4201
312 BG Trial Garden	Tues. 8:30-11:30 a.m.	Susan Miller	817-261-1420
313 BG Cottage Garden	Tuesday's 8-11 a.m.	Janet Riley	817-732-7837
321 Thistle Hill	1 <sup>st</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> Weds. 9:30 a.m.	Emily Ward	817-281-5925
322 Union Gospel Mission	First Mon.-Warm Place 8 a.m., 2nd-4th Mon. - Reg. Schedule	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 <sup>st</sup> Sat.	Don Graves	817-465-1667
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Sat.	Charlie Shiner	817-448-6123
403 FW Library at Hulen St.	4 <sup>th</sup> Thurs, 8:30 a.m.	Evaline Woodrey	817-295-4683
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Sat, 8:30 a.m.		
404 SW Sub-Courthouse	2 <sup>nd</sup> Sat, last Wed.	Gailon Hardin	817-475-0923
405 Liberty Garden	Call chairman	Wendi Carlucci	817-488-5640
	2nd Tues, 8-11 a.m.		
<b><u>School Gardens</u></b>			
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 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.

Steve Chaney—For up-to-the-minute  
More state news: [www.tcmga.org](http://www.tcmga.org)



TCMGA news visit: [www.tcmga.org](http://www.tcmga.org)  
[texasmastergardeners.com](http://texasmastergardeners.com)