



A publication of...

TRAVIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS

# THE COMPOST BIN

November 2006



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Speaker for November: Steve Windhager, Ph.D.

“Ecological Restoration ”

Dr. Steve Windhager's talk will cover the process of ecological restoration and its philosophical implications, and the basics on how to get started on your own land."

Steve is the Director of the Landscape Restoration program at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, serves on the Board of Directors for the International Society for Ecological Restoration, and is former president and founder of the Texas Society for Ecological Restoration.

The Landscape Restoration program at the Wildflower Center conducts basic research in ecological restoration and land management, offers workshops to professionals and the general public, and provides fee-supported ecological consulting expertise to clients across Texas.

Steve has a B.A. in Philosophy from Texas A&M University, a Masters in Environmental Ethics and Ph.D. in Environmental Science from the University of North Texas.

Dave Tovar

2006 CREDITS

Dear Friends:

It has been my privilege serving as your 2006 V.P. of Programs. I hope you agree that we've had a fantastic year. Each of you demonstrated a spirit of caring and sharing and I couldn't have done it without you. I would like to take this opportunity to thank and acknowledge the following individuals:

Holly Plotner - February Speaker - Bella Vista Ranch  
Susan Decker- May Speaker - TexaScapes, Inc.  
Steve Reynolds - June Speaker - Yucca Do Nursery  
Rebecca Matthews - July Speaker - Cliff Shackelford  
Rosalie Russell - August Speaker - Melinda Kneese  
Susan Jung & Rosalie Russell - September Speaker - Southern Bulb Company  
Cheryl Harrison - November Speaker - Steve Windhager  
Becky Waack - Computer/Visual Set up  
Lindy McGinnis - Honorarium Payments  
Toni Dzubay, Paula Middleton, Steve Reynolds - Compost Bin  
Mary Allaway, Carolyn Williams, Venkappa Gani, Judy Lawson, Dolores Leeper, Sue Nazar - Speaker Suggestions

Dave R. Tovar

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## Message From the President...

It has been a very busy month for all of us, and as I write this on the eve of our Inside Austin Gardens Tour, I am excited about the prospects for a very successful event, with great weather, beautiful gardens and lots of happy and helpful volunteers. I hope you will have all had a wonderful day and a superb party afterwards. You all deserve it. Hats off to Steve Reynolds especially, and to Manda Rash and all the other folks who put their time and effort into making the tour run so smoothly and having everything look so professional. And thanks so much to the eight brave and hardworking Master Gardeners who opened their gardens to the public for this event. We couldn't do this without you.

Please come to the November meeting and participate in the voting process for the 2007 Executive Committee. This is an important official procedure and it can be handled quickly and smoothly, but we need you all to be there.

The Holiday Party is coming up, and I would like to put out a call for digital photos of our association events, including photos of Master Gardeners in action, your gardens, or gardens you have visited. I would like to assemble them in a slide show to be played at the Holiday Party. You can email photos to me or give them to me on a disk at the November meeting.

The Demonstration Garden is going to be on the East Austin Tour that Skip is organizing for next Spring and I will need folks to help get it in shape. I will be having workdays in November and I can always use folks who can go out on their own and do maintenance. I will send out email notices for workdays as I get them scheduled.

Thanks for all you are doing!

Susan Decker, President

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## Plant Portrait: Mandevilla (formerly Dipladenia)

Common name: Mandevilla or Pink Allamanda.

Mandevilla is a fast-growing tropical, woody, twining vine native to South America (mainly Bolivia, Brazil and Argentina). The plant excels at producing large, showy, trumpet-shaped blooms which are complemented by glossy, leather leaves. This exotic tropical is named after the 18<sup>th</sup> century British diplomat to Argentina and gardener, Henry John Mandeville.

Most Mandevilla will overwintered in the South, but since many are only hardy to zone 9 (10 or 11) they are typically damaged or killed by hard frosts if not protected. Here in zone 8 it usually regrows well from its roots in the spring if given a little protection from mulch and good site location. Some gardeners choose to simply grow them as annuals.

This vine winds and twines well among other plants and is great in a container or window box. They also grow well up a support and many Mandevilla can be found decorating mail boxes or bird feeder poles. Some cultivars can grow up

to 20 ft high. This is a good plant to combine with others as it could look sparse on its own when young. Mandevilla is a great bee, butterfly and hummingbird attractant too.

The bright, colorful blooms start in early summer and are produced mostly during warm weather. The plants do continue blooming sporadically through the rest of the year (even on young plants). Trumpet-shaped pink, white, yellow or red blooms have white or yellow throats and now there are some double cultivars. The blooms form on new shoots. Flowers look great against the shiny, dark, deep green, evergreen foliage. Some Mandevilla have fragrance (such as the Chilean jasmine (*Mandevilla laxa*) with a Gardenia-like scent), and reputedly 'Alice du Pont' flowers smell like cotton candy when it's warm.

### Outdoors

Grow Mandevilla in partial shade (or with mid-day shade) to reduce watering stress. Provide a trellis or support for it to grow up. If it doesn't "climb" well train new shoots to an appropriate support. Water well during hot weather. Do not let the plant dry out between waterings. Pinch young plants to encourage a denser form.

### Growing indoors

Mandevilla should be protected outdoors for the winter or brought inside during freezing weather. When bringing plants inside, many Mandevilla growers are surprised to find that their plants are full of tubers. These tubers are believed to store water for drought situations and are not used for propagation. Inspect plants for hitch-hiking pests and wash the plant with insecticidal soap before bringing them indoors. Bright indirect light, as well as night temperatures above 60 deg. F. and day temperatures above 70 deg. F. are ideal for good growth and blooms. Reduce watering in the winter if conditions are not ideal and the plant is treated as semi-dormant.



### Soil

Whether growing Mandevilla indoors or outside a rich, well-drained soil is preferred. Use a quality soil that contains equal parts peat moss, loam and sand.

### Fertilize

Every two weeks with a flowering plant fertilizer that has a higher phosphorus number to encourage blooms.

### Pests

Watch for aphids, mealy bugs, scale, whiteflies and rarely spider mites. Usually this plant is relatively pest-free.

## Cultivars to consider

'Alice du Pont' pure pink  
'Crimson Jewel' red  
'Janell' rose pink to red  
'Laxa' white  
'Leah' light pink with rose throat  
'Monite' Moonlight Parfait, pink buds open to white with pink throat  
'Monproud' Strawberry Lemonade, deep pink with yellow throat and green and cream foliage  
'Monrey' Tango Twirl, double pink  
'Monte' Summer Snow, pure white to blush pink  
'Parasol-Red' crimson red  
'Splendens' pale pink with rose-pink throat  
'Ruby Star' pink and white to deep red  
'Red Riding Hood' deep red  
'Red Velvet' pink to carmine-red  
'Rita Marie Green' Pink Parfait, double soft pink  
'Tropical Dreams' yellow with green and white foliage  
'White Delight' white with yellow throat  
'Yellow' bright yellow

Anne Marie Van Nest



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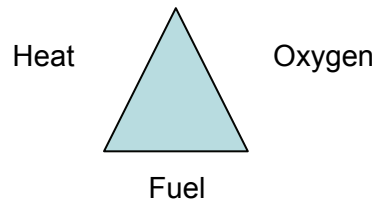
## Firewise Update: Rain Spells Relief

### RAIN SPELLS RELIEF

What a welcome relief the rain and cooler weather has been for central Texas! Do you remember the lengthy burn bans and even the “Red Flag Fire Danger” warnings issued by the county authorities, with advice from the Texas Forest Service? When there is plentiful rainfall people tend to forget about the lengthy severe droughts that inevitably return to central Texas.

Now is the time to assess our homes and yards and to plan, maintain and prepare the home and landscape for being as firesafe as possible. A first step in preparedness is the understanding *fire behavior*.

In order for a fire to burn it needs fuel plus heat plus oxygen. This is known as the *fire triangle*. Virtually all plant matter is 'fuel' to a fire. Fuel is the one fire ingredient that we can reduce or remove before drought conditions return. The key is to reduce fuel, especially within zone 1 (within 30 feet of the home).



Last February a young couple from Round Rock area came to Mansfield Dam to attend the Firesafe Seminar. Central Texas counties had had a lengthy burn ban that was still in effect. The young couple had purchased property and cleared the underbrush and junipers near their home. They had used a shredder to help reduce the mounds of brush (volatile fuel). Yet, they still had large quantities of combustible material. They knew of no way to get rid of the brush other than burning, which was illegal and very hazardous to do during extreme drought and also without an adequate water source. They asked what could be done to further reduce the large volume of dry plant material, as well as, reduce the fire potential. The first suggestion was to keep the dry mulch and brush well away from the house, trees, and other valuable property. Spreading the mulched wood shavings to a depth of 3 to 6 inches (as in paths) was also suggested, as deep mulches and composts can smolder a long time and ignite to become full-blown fires before being noticed. An example of this was presented at by Jan Fulkerson at the Firesafe Seminar. A slide was shown of a dead tree with a burned woodpile around its base. The tree would have survived the grass fire, but the firewood served as a bonfire around the tree. The firewood smoldered for days.


The volume of trimmings and debris that is created with mowing, pruning, and the collecting of fallen leaves and other yard debris is amazing! This can overwhelm one's compost bin capacity, as well as one's physical endurance! El Nino may bring us a wet winter, but we need to plan for and expect the future drought that is sure to come by reducing the fuel sources around our homes.

Jane Bramlett  
Firewise Landscape Specialist

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### Special Feature: German Free School (circa 1857)

The herbs in the garden – Dill, Garlic, Sage, Rosemary, Marjoram, Parsley and Thyme – are typical of their German heritage. Potatoes, pork, cabbage, sausage, beer and wine would have been found on their tables. Other herbs they cultivated were Salad Burnet, Bay, Chives, Spearmint and Woodruff. There are a few more I added because they grow well in the Central Texas area such as; Fennel, Lemon Verbena, and Oregano. But the basic herbs found here would have been found on every German table, from towering castle to cozy biergarten.



It has been my pleasure to help bring this small part of the German Free School's garden back to what probably would have been a true "Kitchen Herb Garden". So named because it would represent a typical garden named for its proximity to the kitchen door, so one could easily pinch a few leaves to enhance the meal. A fence around to protect and control, a path within for ease of harvest, and containing the herbs used most frequently.

Since the Central Texas area is so closely associated with the German people and culture, it has been educational to learn what they would have historically planted. Comfort, Fredericksburg and New Braunfels are wonderful examples of early Germans settling in this area and bringing with them their horticultural expertise. Dr. William Welch in his book, "The Southern Heirloom Garden" lists German contributions as ..."good gardeners and keen horticulturists," "scientific interest in plants, production, botany and new plant material," and "heavy emphasis on fruit and vegetable culture and many early market farmers." Certainly we should give these early German immigrants much credit for their contributions to the Central Texas land they helped settle.

Carolyn Williams

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## News & Notes

### **Elections for 2007 Board Members to be Held on November 1**

The nomination process for officers of the 2007 Travis County Master Gardeners Board has been completed and all positions have been filled. The next step is approval by the membership at our November 1<sup>st</sup> monthly meeting. The following persons have been nominated:

Susan Decker – President  
Jerry Naiser – Vice President, Programs  
Rosalie Russell – Vice President Education  
Deborah Lindsey – Vice President, Volunteer Coordinator for Certified Master Gardeners  
Michelle Butler – Vice President, Volunteer Coordinator of Master Gardeners-in-Training  
Velia Sanchez-Ruiz – Secretary  
Johnny DeMyers – Treasurer  
Susan Jung – State Council Delegate  
Jo Kautz – State Council Delegate  
Cheryl Harrison – Director of Publications  
Cindy and Marty Berdan – Co-Directors of Membership  
Anne Van Nest – Manager Greenhouse  
Manda Rash – AAGC Representative

We thank the members of the nominating committee for their good work. These are:

Tommie Clayton, Wayne King, Kathy King, Jo Kautz, Liz Caskey, and David Lutz (Chair).

**IMGC Registration is Officially Open!  
Come Celebrate Gardening in the Natural State  
May 2-5, 2007!**

Arkansas is proud to present the agenda, registration forms, pre and post conference information, speaker bios and garden tour information. Please go to: <http://mg2007.uaex.edu/>  
Click on: *Registration Information* and you will see all the information you need to register.



In an effort to reduce expenses and put as much of our efforts into presenting a first class event, we are doing registration via email and the web instead of printing programs. You may choose to register on line using a credit card, or print out your registration form and mail it in with a check.

Note: Early registration runs until December 31, 2006 and the final registration deadline is April 1, 2007.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me. We look forward to seeing you all in Little Rock next May! We are going to have a great time!!

Janet B. Carson  
Extension Horticulture Specialist  
[jcarson@uaex.edu](mailto:jcarson@uaex.edu)

**U of A**  
UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS  
DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE  
Cooperative Extension Service

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### **TCMGA Shirts and Hats**

Want to look really spiffy as you work in your garden or jaunt about town. Buy yourself a new TCMGA Shirt or Hat. We have white Polo (collared) shirts or Denim long-sleeve, short-sleeve, or sleeveless shirts, all embroidered with the TCMGA logo. We also have caps and bucket hats with our logo. You'll need at least one of these to protect you from the sun while you garden.

Shirt samples will be available at the November and December TCMGA meetings. These shirts are the same as we have ordered in the past. Please note there is a "no return, no refund" policy.

Mail your completed order form with your check to: Mary Lou Bell, 2315 Farnswood Circle, Austin, TX 78704, or place an order in person at the November or December TCMGA meeting. Contact Mary Lou at 441-4048 or [maryloubell@sbcglobal.net](mailto:maryloubell@sbcglobal.net) if you have any questions. Deadline for ordering is December 11, 2006.

**Travis County Master Gardener Association - Shirt and Hat Order Form**

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Paid - Check No. \_\_\_\_\_; Cash: \_\_\_\_\_; Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Delivered Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Received By: \_\_\_\_\_

**Long Sleeve Denim Shirt**

Small	23.00 ea.	Quantity _____	Amt. _____
Medium	23.00 ea.	Quantity _____	
Amt. _____			
Large	23.00 ea.	Quantity _____	Amt. _____
X Large	23.00 ea.	Quantity _____	Amt. _____
XX Large	24.50 ea.	Quantity _____	Amt. _____

**Short Sleeve Denim Shirt**

Small	22.00 ea.	Quantity _____	Amt. _____
Medium	22.00 ea.	Quantity _____	
Amt. _____			
Large	22.00 ea.	Quantity _____	Amt. _____
X Large	22.00 ea.	Quantity _____	Amt. _____
XX Large	23.50 ea.	Quantity _____	Amt. _____

**Sleeveless Denim Shirt**

Small	24.00 ea.	Quantity _____	Amt. _____
Medium	24.00 ea.	Quantity _____	
Amt. _____			
Large	24.00 ea.	Quantity _____	Amt. _____
X Large	24.00 ea.	Quantity _____	Amt. _____
XX Large	25.50 ea.	Quantity _____	Amt. _____

**Polo Shirts – White Only**

Small	20.00 ea.	Quantity _____	Amt. _____
Medium	20.00 ea.	Quantity _____	
Amt. _____			
Large	20.00 ea.	Quantity _____	Amt. _____
X Large	20.00 ea.	Quantity _____	Amt. _____
XX Large to XXXXL	21.50 ea.	Quantity _____	
Amt. _____			

**Hats**

Bucket	7.00 ea.	Quantity _____	Amt. _____
Caps	8.50 ea.	Quantity _____	Amt. _____

**TOTAL AMT. OF ORDER** \_\_\_\_\_

**Notes:**

There is a “no return, no refund” policy on shirt orders. Shirt samples will be available at the Nov. & Dec. TCMGA meetings. If you have ordered shirts before, these are the same.

Mail completed order form (check payable to TCMGA) to **Mary Lou Bell, 2315 Farnwood Circle, Austin, TX 78704** or place an order in person at the Nov. or Dec. 2006 TCMGA Meetings. Contact Mary Lou at 441-4048 or [mary-loubell@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mary-loubell@sbcglobal.net) if you have questions.

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## Events...

### **Oak Wilt Seminar**

Date: Nov. 2, 2006  
Time: 7:00-9:00 PM  
Location: Sunset Valley City Hall  
3205 Jones Road, Sunset Valley



Free! Oak Wilt, Identifying the Disease and Precautionary Measures Seminar. Learn the Eight Step Program to Oak Wilt Management. See satellite pictures of the encroachment of the disease into your neighborhood. This fact filled program is presented by Texas Forest Service, City of Sunset Valley and Travis County Extension Service. Learn about the resources available to help you combat this disease. Web site: <http://www.tcmastergardener.org/html/events.html>. Or call 512-854-9600, M-F, and ask for the Master Gardeners' desk for information.

Rosalie Russell

### **Fall Festival of Roses**

Brehham/Independence, Nov. 3-5  
Don't miss the Fall Festival of Roses at Antique Rose Emporium in Independence/Brenham. Study and admire artfully landscaped display gardens, along with lectures, activities, and plants for sale. See [www.antiqueroseemporium.com](http://www.antiqueroseemporium.com) for details, or call 800-441-0002.

### **Fall Garden Fair**

San Antonio, Nov. 4 Enjoy a family-friendly gardening and horticultural festival, including vegetables grown by the children's garden participants, guest speakers, demonstrations, and plants for sale at the Fall Garden Fair. 9 a.m.-4 p.m. San Antonio Botanical Garden, 555 Funston Ave, San Antonio. (210) 467-6575 for details, or visit [www.sabot.org](http://www.sabot.org)

### **Big Bugs**

Austin, through Dec. 2 Dave Rogers' "Big Bugs" returns to the Wildflower Center - a colossal praying mantis, giant spider, and assassin bug. Special related kids' activities, including crafts, are also available. See [www.wildflower.org](http://www.wildflower.org) for details. Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, 4801 La Crosse Ave., Austin. (512) 292-4100.

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## Closing the Garden Gate...

The 2006 Inside Austin Gardens Tour is behind us...and it was a great success! Everyone did a great job in pulling this tour together, and a special thanks goes to all the host gardeners for opening their gardens to Austin! More info and photos will be coming soon!

Steve Reynolds

A fitting closing:

You don't have a garden just for yourself. You have it to share. -- Augusta Carter

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**TCMGA 2006 Executive Committee:**

President: Susan Decker  
Immediate Past President: Becky Waak  
VP Programs: Dave Tovar  
VP Education: Rosalie Russell  
VP Volunteer Coordinator for Certified Master Gardeners: Judy Lawson  
VP Volunteer Coordinator for Master Gardeners in Training: Manda Rash  
Secretary: Cheryl Harrison  
Treasurer: Lindy McGinnis  
Publications Director: Jennifer Brown  
Membership Director: Rebecca Matthews  
Greenhouse Manager: Don Telge  
AAGC Representative: Steve Reynolds  
State Council Representatives: Jacqueline Johnson, Susan Jung  
Past Presidents (Non-voting): Tommie Clayton  
Susan Cashin  
Peggy Stewart  
Bill Boytim  
Don Freeman  
Will Walker  
Ex Officio Member of the Board (Non-voting) Horticulture Extension Service  
Agent:  
Skip Richter  
1600-B Smith Road  
Austin, Texas 78721  
854-9600, 854-9611  
r-richter@tamu.edu

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**The Compost Bin Team:**

Steve Reynolds  
Cheryl Harrison  
Elaine Dill  
Rebecca Mathews  
Anne Marie Van Nest  
Liz Caskey  
Manda Rash  
Paula Middleton

