

The Compost Bin

April 2015

**A Publication of the Travis County Master Gardeners
a volunteer program of Texas A&M AgriLife**

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Carpenter Bees

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Cover Photo:
Strawberries are best
planted in the fall for a
spring harvest.
By Bruce Leander

Right: By Liath Appleton



April Meeting - Meredith O'Reilly

Wildlife Gardening

As development leads to declining habitat, gardeners can make a huge difference in the survival of pollinators, birds, and other wildlife. Providing a diversity of native Texas plants is the key to a functioning ecosystem, one that protects your garden as well as keeping it fun and busy with activity. Our April speaker, Meredith O'Reilly, will highlight some of the best year-round strategies and native plants to attract a variety of desired wildlife species to your central Texas garden.

Meredith O'Reilly is the gardening specialist for 4-H CAPITAL's afterschool science enrichment program. She is a Texas Master Naturalist, a Habitat Steward Host for the National Wildlife Federation, and a member of Travis Audubon's Urban Habitat Committee. She greatly enjoys teaching and writing about native flora and fauna, as well as protecting the ecosystem through thoughtful gardening. She has a "Best of Texas" habitat, and writes about her wildlife gardening experiences on her blog, "[Great Stems.](#)"

Master Gardener Meeting information:
Wednesday, April 1, 2015, starting at 7 pm
Zilker Botanical Garden

**Master Gardener meetings are open to certified
Master Gardeners and trainees only.**

In the Vegetable Garden

by Patty Leander

Who wouldn't want to be a gardener in April?! This is the perfect month to soak up spring with all of our senses – the earthy smell of compost, the invigorating taste of carrots and spring onions, the buzz of busy bees, the feel of dirt under our fingernails and the sight of fields awash with Texas bluebonnets. Not to mention the redbuds, Texas mountain laurels and magnificent Lady Banks roses that can be seen all around town.



The first artichoke bud is the biggest, and the ones that follow will be smaller.

Here is the vegetable gardener's checklist for April:

- Artichokes should be ready to harvest later this month, or allow them to bloom, and enjoy the spectacular show. The first bud is always the largest; subsequent buds will be smaller but perfectly edible.
- Inspect tender new growth for signs of aphids. A small number can be dislodged with a strong spray of water, but a larger infestation may require insecticidal soap to get under control. Pay attention to beneficial insects such as ladybugs and lacewings – they may take care of the problem for you without ever having to spray.
- Never let weeds go to seed – those seeds will haunt you for years. Pull or hoe young weeds and add them to the compost pile.
- Hill up the soil or mulch around potatoes so that the developing tubers are not exposed to sunlight. Do the same with corn to help stabilize it and keep it from blowing over.
- Winter may be over, but now is the time to plant winter squash. Most varieties take 90-100 days to reach maturity, but once they are harvested, they can be stored for several months and enjoyed when cold weather returns. Smaller varieties can be grown on a sturdy trellis.
- Mid-April is a good time to plant okra, Southern peas, and melons, as well as a second planting of bush beans. All of these can be direct seeded, and will appreciate the warmer soil temperature.

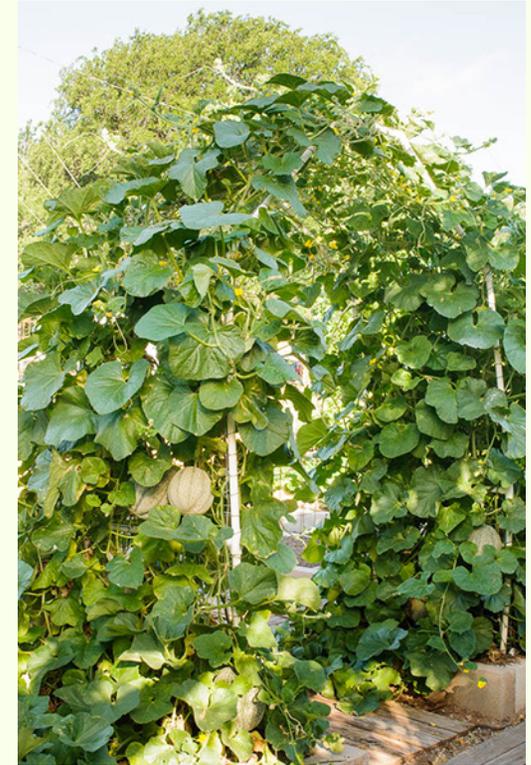


If you are not a fan of eating artichokes, enjoy their spectacular bloom.

In the Vegetable Garden

Continued...

- Mulch well around all of your vegetable plants. The mulch will help retain moisture, regulate soil temperature, and will decompose over time, releasing nutrients into the soil.
- Tuck a few herbs among your vegetable plants, or plant them in pots; they need good drainage and plenty of sunlight.
- Take inventory of pesticides. Be sure to date all products that you've purchased, and store them in a safe, cool and dry place, preferably at temperatures below 90°F



Left: Pull soil around potatoes to protect developing tubers from sunlight.

Center: Protect soil and deter weeds in the vegetable garden with a layer of leaves, compost or shredded hardwood mulch.

Right: Smaller varieties of melons and winter squash can be grown on a trellis, arbor or other sturdy structure.

Carpenter Bees

by Wizzie Brown



Carpenter bees are one of those insects that can be viewed by people in varying ways: either as a beneficial or as a pest. If they are in your garden and helping to pollinate plants, they're great, but things can be put into a negative light when they burrow into wood and cause damage.

Carpenter bees look similar to bumble bees, but they have a shiny, hairless abdomen. They are ½-1 inch in length, and are typically black and yellow. Male carpenter bees have a whitish spot on the front of their face. Only females have a stinger, but usually do not sting unless very agitated or held in someone's hand. Males cannot sting, but can be territorial, and harass insects and other animals (including humans) that enter their space.

Carpenter bees get their name because they use their mandibles to chew galleries in wood, creating round, ½ inch diameter holes. Holes often have coarse sawdust near the opening. Holes may have yellowish-brown staining below them from where the bees defecate before entering the nest.

Galleries are rounded, and may sometimes cause damage to structures. The galleries are provisioned with pollen/nectar loaves. An egg is laid on the loaf, and the section is portioned off with a mixture of saliva and sawdust. Adults feed on nectar.

Nests may be created in exposed wood on structures, wooden decks or wood shingles or siding. Painted and treated woods are less preferred, but are not unsusceptible to attack. These bees do not eat the wood, but instead excavate it for nesting purposes.

Carpenter bees overwinter as adults, often in old nesting tunnels. Adults emerge in spring, with males usually appearing before females. The females will excavate new tunnels in wood, and create a pollen ball, on which they lay an egg. The eggs hatch within a few days, and development to adult within 5-7 weeks. Adults generally emerge in the summer, but they do not create new galleries. They will clean out old galleries to serve as overwintering sites.

Carpenter bees are similar to Bumble bees in that they are generalists and visit many types of flowers, as well as having "buzz pollination." Buzz pollination is where the bee grabs onto the flower, moves its wings rapidly and vibrates the anther, which dislodges pollen. Some plants are more efficiently pollinated through buzz pollination.

For more information or help with identification, contact Wizzie Brown, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Program Specialist at 512.854.9600. Check out my blog at www.urban-ipm.blogspot.com

Meet the Master Gardeners: Holly Plotner, Class of 2002

by Jean Love El Harim



by Jean Love El Harim

Having grown up in Chicago, a land of plentiful rainfall, and rich soil, Holly has adopted Austin as her home, and has adapted to the challenges of gardening in Texas. "We had a gorgeous yard when I was a kid," she says. "My dad grew roses and geraniums. The people who had the house before us had planted the yard to bloom in succession. So in early spring, it started over here, and then bloomed in a circle," she says, drawing a semi-circle on the table. "One of my earliest gardening experiences was going to day camp when I was about 10 years old. They had us plant a new flower bed in the park, and since I had experience at home with my dad, planting things and taking care of the yard, I said, 'Sure, no problem.' So, two other children and I made and planted a new flower bed and maintained it for years. That was my early community gardening."

Holly went to college in Illinois, and then attended graduate business school at the University of Virginia. She is also an artist. "I had a fine crafts art gallery for about 15 years in Austin, with ceramics, metalwork, woodwork, stained glass, blown glass, all kinds of three-dimensional art." Holly has her own pottery studio, plays the fiddle, likes to dance, and does many kinds of crafts. "Right now I'm the director of Csárdás Hungarian Dancers, so I do a lot of organizational work for that group. I also dance with Austin International Folk Dancers, and the Austin Scandinavian Dancers. Sometimes I'll go dance at a club that has live music that I want to dance to. I sew costumes for my dance group: design, pattern-making, and construction. I paint backdrops for my groups when we have shows." "I like to bead," Holly continues, turning her wrists to display her own creations - beautifully intricate, delicate, bead bracelets she is wearing, "and I do

other fiber crafts like needlework and embroidery."

Retired now, Holly says, "Every day is different. Some days I garden, take long walks, or practice playing my fiddle. I come to the Master Gardener greenhouse once or twice a week. I get together with friends, and read books. I talk to my friends about gardening. A friend of mine who has a big mansion in Dallas with a gorgeous, professionally landscaped back yard, wanted to make a vegetable and herb garden, but needed it to look tidy so her husband wouldn't object. One day when she and I went to lunch at a restaurant, I took a napkin and drew something for her. I said 'This is going to be gorgeous, your husband will love it, and it will be easy to take care of.' She planted it, and eight years down the line, it's still there. I don't know if her husband has even clued into the fact that it is a vegetable and herb garden."

Holly lives about a mile from Zilker Botanical Garden, and has designed an Austin-friendly garden at her home. "I bought the house in the area specifically to be close to Zilker Park," she says. "I like parks and big open areas. I grew up in a place where there is a neighborhood park every three or four blocks, and big city and regional parks. I specifically wanted to be in this area, near Zilker Park, the hike-and-bike trails, and Barton Springs." Describing her garden and how gardening fits in with her busy schedule, Holly says, "Right now I want my weeds to go away, but I don't want to be the person that does it. During the summers I usually have a small vegetable garden. I don't usually have a winter garden because it's such a busy time for me. September and October are really jam-packed months. Like today, after

Meet the Master Gardeners

Continued...

I leave you, I'm going to my band rehearsal, and then a dear friend is having a 70th birthday party. And it was the same thing yesterday. I did two performances last night, and another friend was having a birthday party. I usually have some vegetables growing in the garden. I live alone and I can only eat so much. And most of my neighbors are gardeners, too. In years when there is a good tomato or cucumber crop, we're all trying to pawn off our extras on each other, and it just doesn't work. I don't like to grow so much that I'm just using it as compost."

"I have a lot of roses and perennials, a full-sun garden, and a kitchen herb garden," Holly continues describing her garden. "I have a succulent garden, and I did it right. I excavated down deep, filled the hole with decomposed granite, mixed it all together, and added a few bigger rocks. I may have watered it when I planted, but it is not irrigated. I haven't given it a drop of water in three or four years, and it's huge. I have a little shaded woodland garden, with a nicely pruned crepe myrtle tree and a sycamore. Those two big trees put the garden in deep shade. At the edge of the garden is a big stand of mock orange that blooms for a month or two in the spring. There is also American beautyberry, sago palm, Anacacho orchid, dwarf Barbados cherry, a big redbud, and a stand of flame acanthus. I have taken out all the grass. I have no grass on my property now."

When asked about her main gardening interests, Holly hesitates for a moment. "You won't believe this," she says, "especially in light of what I just said. I like pulling weeds. I like to be outside on a beautiful day and just sit down or lie down on the ground and pull weeds by hand, no tools." "I like pretty things," she continues. "I love roses. I like a lot of things that don't grow here. Peonies are one of my favorite flowers. I tried valiantly to grow them here, I used to throw ice on the soil, but they just don't grow here. At home in Chicago they grow like weeds. One reason I love roses is that it is a childhood memory, something I did with my father. This is great place to grow roses. They are easy to grow, and if you select the right varieties, they take care of themselves. They reward you all year round with flowers. I like having flowers and color in the garden. I have become more interested in architectural plants with a structure that is interesting and unique. Succulents of all types do so very well here. Cactus, agave, the aloes, and euphorbia."

When asked about her greatest gardening challenge, Holly responds: "Texas. When I first came, I couldn't grow weeds. This is a very interesting, challenging place to garden," Holly elaborates, "not like any place I've ever lived before—the climate, the rainfall, the soil pH. Even though I've lived in Texas half my life now, it feels new to me. It's not like where I grew up." Her gardening tip is to "compost, compost, compost."

What is Holly's favorite plant? "If you asked my friends," she answers, "they would tell you my favorite is roses. I'm not sure that I would say the same thing. It's kind of like asking which is your favorite child. I have other plants that I really love, and plants that aren't in my garden because they are things that I can't grow here. I don't want to favor one my 'children' over the others. I like working with new things. That's one of the reasons I like working at the greenhouse, seeing the variety of things that come in, and getting experience with a lot of different plants. I love the incubator environment of the greenhouse. I enjoy getting some familiarity with how a plant grows, how fast it grows, what kind of problems it is susceptible to, what are the challenges and rewards of the plant."

Facing the challenges of gardening in Texas, Holly says the Master Gardener program "seemed to me an intelligent thing to do, because it was a self-contained course rather than going to the university and spending years learning a lot about horticulture or botany, and not knowing if that would translate to practical knowledge." An added incentive was that the classes were then held at Zilker Botanical Garden, within walking distance of Holly's house. As a Master Gardener, Holly does it all. "I love working at the greenhouse," she says, "both for the people and the plant aspect of it. It's nice to meet all the interns as they come in. It's a social outlet. I love the Speakers Bureau because I love meeting other people that garden, and talking to people about gardening."

Meet the Master Gardeners

Continued...

Holly shares a special, quirky, fun fact about herself, and tells of her special talent. "I'm very shy. I'm loud, but I'm quite the introvert." Paradoxically, she says she has "the gift of gab." "I'll talk on any topic. I have several rose presentations, for different audiences. I give talks on herbs, container gardening, perennials, and blooming plants for our area. Once, with only one hour's advance notice, when the speaker got sick and needed me to fill in, I gave a talk on soils. As an email responder, I love helping people with gardening problems, and I really like to do it from the comfort of my own home, in the middle of the night, in my pjs. That works out great for me," she laughs.

"I do anything else that comes up that we need to do," she continues. "I volunteer on the tours, and I have done plant clinics in the past." Holly has earned the Earth-Kind Roses, Irrigation Efficiency, and Greenhouse Management MG specialties. Yet, of all the Master Gardener programs, Holly's favorite is the initial class. "The breadth and depth of the information, and the quality of the presenters is amazing!" she says. "It's a great value. One of the things I love about the Master Gardener course is that they just spell it out. They tell you exactly what all this stuff does, giving the conclusions of all the in-depth horticultural research that has been done."

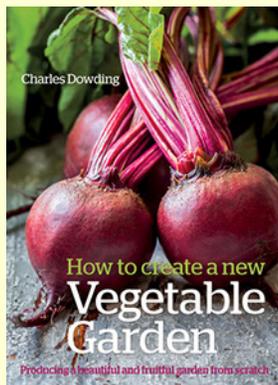
With a gracious smile, Holly concludes that what she likes most about the Master Gardener program is, "the people, of course."

Weeds and Reads: A Gardener's Book Guide

by Liath Appleton

There's a lot of reading material out there, and new books are being published faster than anyone could ever possibly keep up! Hopefully these lists will help myself and others find fun and insightful new books to enjoy between the weeding and the watering.

March 2015:



How to Create a New Vegetable Garden: Producing a Beautiful and Fruitful Garden from Scratch - April 1, 2015

by Charles Dowding

Drawing on his years of experience as an expert gardener, Charles Dowding illustrates the simplicity of starting a new vegetable garden with tales and pictures from his first year on his latest plot of land. Filled with insights into the processes that Charles uses to garden so successfully, this practical book is a must-read for anyone who has unused land and doesn't know ...[\[more\]](#)

Literati Style Penjing: Chinese Bonsai Masterworks - April 7, 2015

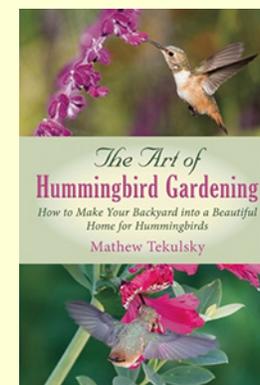
by Zhao Qingquan, Thomas S. Elias (Foreword)

The art of bonsai is widely known in the West: from the Karate Kid to the American Bonsai Association and even local grocery stores, bonsai has become a common sight in the States. But bonsai, the Japanese art of creating miniature trees, actually originated in China, where it's called penjing. Penjing, meaning "tray scenery," is a traditional Chinese art of creating minia ...[\[more\]](#)

The Art of Hummingbird Gardening: How to Make Your Backyard into a Beautiful Home for Hummingbirds - April 7, 2015

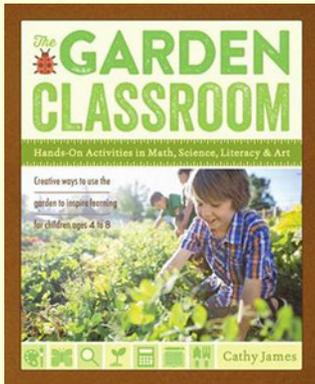
by Mathew Tekulsky

This book is devoted solely to hummingbird gardening and is a practical guide to cultivating flowers and other plants that will attract the hummingbirds of North America to your home and garden. You will be able to grow flowers in profusion and provide nectar for these smallest of birds, which hover on fast-beating wings while they drink from flowers including pink Chinese ...[\[more\]](#)



Weeds and Reads

Continued...



The Garden Classroom: Hands-On Activities in Math, Science, Literacy, and Art - April 7, 2015

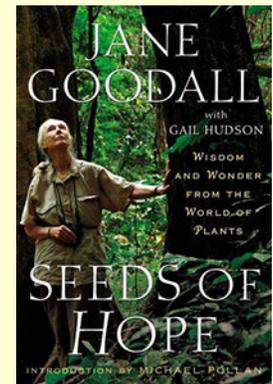
by Cathy James

Packed with garden-based activities that promote science, math, reading, writing, imaginative play, and arts and crafts, *The Garden Classroom* offers a whole year of outdoor play and learning ideas—however big or small your garden. [\[more\]](#)

Seeds of Hope: Wisdom and Wonder from the World of Plants - paperback printing April 14, 2015

by Jane Goodall, Gail Hudson, Michael Pollan

Renowned naturalist and bestselling author Jane Goodall examines the critical role that trees and plants play in our world. [\[more\]](#)



Strawbale Gardening

by Martha King

Last year some friends of ours were starting a garden at their new homestead off of RM 1826 southwest of Austin. As is typical for that area, they had little to no soil, so they were looking at building raised beds when they discovered the strawbale gardening concept – a method that uses intact, composting straw (or hay) bales as a soil source and container for raised bed gardening. Always up for a new gardening experiment, my partner and I joined in the venture, and purchased some bales of our own. As we placed them in our inner-city yard, we mischievously thought of telling our neighbors that we were getting donkeys, which would not have surprised them considering some of our previous projects, but we opted for full disclosure instead! Using a compilation



of instructions gathered from reading *Strawbale Gardening* by Joel Karsten, and from watching a number of YouTube videos, we set off to see if we could make it work. For us, it was not that we did not have good soil on our little urban patch in Crestview. The motivation for us was finding an easy raised bed that we could use in our "Tomato Coop," a completely enclosed wire structure that we built to safeguard our precious heirloom tomatoes from marauding squirrels!

We chose bales of hay from the Natural Gardener as the only organic option available, though it was contrary to the general advice that you must use straw, and not hay, since seeds in hay might sprout and compete with your intended crop. The greater concern, we felt, was the assurance that the bale had not been sprayed with herbicides, a guarantee that none of the other local suppliers of hay or straw could make. It seemed to us that there would be more nutrients in hay than straw, anyway, and that we could easily deal with any little sprouts as they emerged, if necessary, though as it turned out, we had no problem with any unwanted seedlings.

Leaving the bale string intact, we placed the bales, with the cut side up, in the Tomato Coop, and a number of spots out in the yard. As instructed, we made sure that air could circulate around the bale, and we were not concerned about the surface beneath the bale, which can be anything, including concrete, and does not have to be weeded or cleared. The bale



Coop bales at the start.

Strawbale Gardening

Continued...



Coop bales producing.

itself becomes both the container and the soil for whatever is planted in it. In hindsight, I will say that it is helpful if the bale is supported on each of the long sides, since it does begin to fall as it breaks down through the growing season, taking its plants with it – rebar works well, if placed on the ground, or a couple of cinder blocks, if not.

The next step is to condition the bale. There are two schools of thought on this, and we tried them both. One is to inoculate the bale by watering a nitrogen source, such as feather meal or a high-nitrogen fertilizer, down into the bale using a high-pressure hose sprayer. You apply this every other day for three applications (1/2 cup of inorganic vs. 3 cups of organic), watering the bale from the top thoroughly every day. Within just a few days, you will notice that the bale is beginning to heat up on the inside. Around day 10, you should apply a general fertilizer to the top of each bale and water it in well. By now, the bale should be quite hot inside. Ours reached about 140 degrees! At this point, you should slow down on watering the bale and monitor the internal temperature. It should be cool enough to plant within about a week, but continue to check it, either with a compost thermometer

or your hand (even after planting) to be sure you are not cooking your transplants.

The other method is to allow your bale to condition naturally. This is definitely the least expensive method in time and money! If the weather is rainy, the bale will begin to break down inside with rainwater alone (no nitrogen inoculant needed). If you need to water it, it would be best to use rainwater, but hand watering using a hose works too. Just water it well from the top each day, and within a few days, it will begin to compost on its own. We noticed that ours seemed to begin the process just as quickly as those we had inoculated, and cooled down quicker for planting. So this year we are skipping the inoculant. With this more natural process, you will still want to introduce a high nitrogen source (urea is the recommendation) around day 10, and then every other day for three applications. About 1/2 cup per bale watered in from the top should do it. You may not want to tell your friends about this particular detail, or they may be a little iffy about accepting a dinner invitation to your house! As one friend of ours put it, "Don't pee on my peas!" That said, though, urea is completely harmless, and a good nitrogen source for your garden; it is an easily collected (or distributed, depending on your gender), natural, renewable resource that should not be overlooked!



Bale harvest.

Strawbale Gardening

Continued...

Once the bales were cool enough to plant, we just pulled out a bit of the softened inside of the bale from the top, tucked in a little compost and garden soil (to nurture and protect the roots), and inserted our transplants. We included a little egg shell and Epsom salt with our tomatoes, in an effort to ward off blossom end rot, though a couple of our tomato plants seemed prone to it, regardless. We planted two tomato plants per bale, with a flower (Viola, Dahlberg daisy, Lobelia, nasturtium) or herb (fennel, sweet and globe basil) at each end, as well. In the Tomato Coop, we also inserted strawberry plants on the sides of the bales, which did quite well until the tomato plants got too large and blocked out all the sun. As with any transplant, we mulched around the plant, watered them regularly (the Tomato Coop has drip emitters on a timer), and fed them fish emulsion and compost occasionally. According to the book/videos, you can put a thin layer of garden soil on the top of the bale and plant seeds as well, though we have not tried that, as yet.

All of the plants did amazingly well, producing probably our best crop of tomatoes yet! We did have to pull out one tomato within a week of its planting because the interior temperature of the bale spiked again, but a little extra watering and leaving the hole open for a few days cooled it back off enough to return the plant, and it did fine after that. All of the bales lasted well into the summer, as did most of their plant inhabitants. We had just the usual pesky pests, including stink bugs and squirrels (out in the yard). At the end of the season, we spread the composted hay throughout the yard to protect areas of the soil until the next planting season – no waste and little effort at the end of a successful harvest!

As for our friends on 1826, they were not quite as successful with their 20 bales last year, getting a bit antsy and planting their transplants too soon into bales that were more suited for sautéing plants than growing them! They ended up abandoning their bales as container gardens and went the conventional route, purchasing traditional raised beds and garden soil, but with plenty of organic hay to mulch their pathways!

Announcements

TRAVIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS ANNOUNCE DATE FOR INSIDE AUSTIN GARDENS TOUR 2015

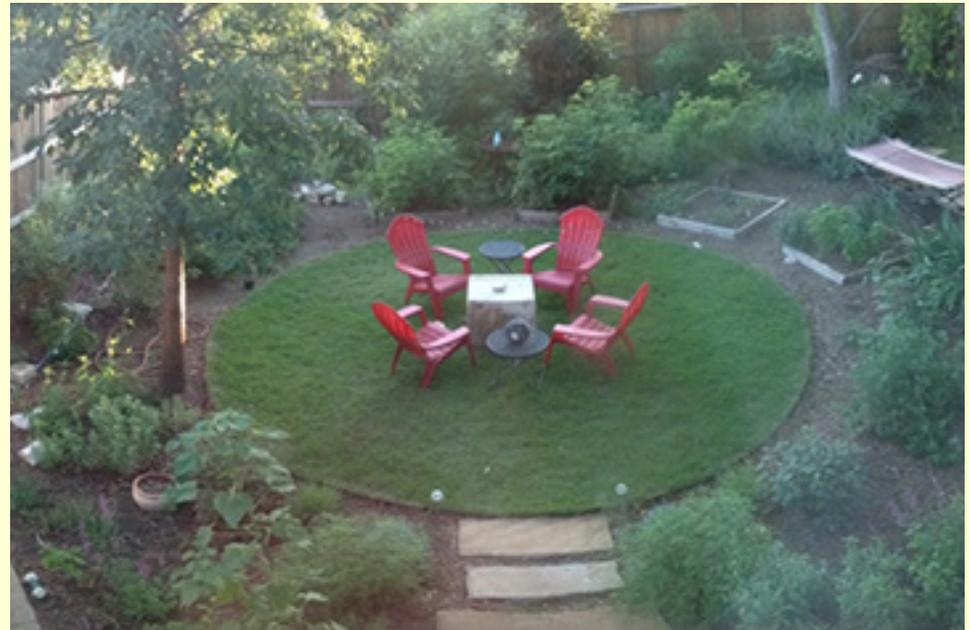
The Travis County Master Gardeners Association has set Saturday, October 17, 2015 for their popular Inside Austin Gardens Tour (IAGT). The tour provides a rare look inside six private gardens and one public experimental garden that demonstrates realistic, sustainable gardening practices for Central Texas.

The tour's theme this year is "The Natives Are Relentless", focusing on the beauty, variety and stamina of native and well-adapted plants in the garden. In turn, each garden has a theme that demonstrates a particular set of characteristics that central Texas gardeners are likely to encounter in their own gardens. Those themes are the following:

- Flashy Natives – bright and colorful
- Sunbathing Natives – brutal, full sun
- Shady Natives – shade and under trees
- Death-Defying Natives – especially hardy, smaller
- Cottage Natives – heirloom classics and pass-along seeds
- Oh Deer! – deer-resistant, not deer-proof
- Native Testing Ground – new varieties and proven winners

Wendy Buck, the 2015 IAGT Chair, described the unique nature of the tour this way, "This is really a garden tour for gardeners by gardeners. Interested gardeners can experience a wide range of ideas, learn the details from the Master Gardeners that created the gardens, and know how to execute those ideas successfully in their own gardens."

Native plants require less water and less maintenance. Natives survive the central Texas environment, which include erratic swings in temperatures, high summer heat day and night, drought, flood, clay soil and rocky soil. Natives provide food for animals and insects while establishing a beautiful, unique sense of place. They are the foundation of all the sites on the Inside Austin Garden Tour.



The Thomas garden. Backyard in June, from second floor window: central lawn rondel surrounded by planting opportunities.

Announcements

East Austin Garden Fair wins 2nd Place in the International Master Gardeners Search for Excellence

That's right. Our East Austin Garden Fair has won a huge award... on an international level!

"Thanks to all of you who have helped to shape the direction of the EAGF over its nine year history. The EAGF is bigger and better today than it has ever been. And it continues to make a big impact in our East Austin Community. Extra special recognition goes to Caroline Homer for writing the award application."

-- Dapne Richards

The award will be conferred at this year's International Master Gardener Conference in Council Bluffs, Iowa, September 22-25, 2015.





NINTH ANNUAL
A Passion for Plants
pasión por las Plantas

AN EAST AUSTIN GARDEN FAIR
FERIA DE JARDINERÍA DEL ESTE DE AUSTIN

SATURDAY, April 11, 2015
sábado 11 de abril de 2015
9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

In case of bad weather, event will be moved indoors
En caso de mal tiempo, el evento se trasladará a interiores

PARQUE ZARAGOZA RECREATION CENTER
Centro de Recreo del Parque Zaragoza
2608 Gonzales St. 78702

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POLLOS, APICULTURA Y BICHOS!
ACTIVIDADES PARA NIÑOS Y PLANTAS GRATIS
Para más información: 512-854-9600

Educational programs conducted by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and the Prairie View A&M University Cooperative Extension Program are open to all people without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, genetic information or veteran status.
The Texas A&M University System, the U. S. Department of Agriculture and the County Commissioners' Court of Texas cooperating.
Persons with disabilities who plan to attend a meeting and who may need auxiliary aids or services are required to contact Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service-Travis County at 512-854-9600 ten working days prior to the meeting so appropriate arrangements can be made.

Austin Area Events

Austin Cactus & Succulent Society Spring Show & Sale

Saturday & Sunday, April 4 - 5, 2015
10am to 5pm

Zilker Botanical Gardens
2220 Barton Springs Road
Austin, TX

Plant show with specimen cacti and succulent plants from around the world.

Plant sales with vendors from Texas, New Mexico, and Oklahoma. There will be handcrafted pottery, daily silent auction and hourly plant raffles, expert advice and free literature available.

FREE admission with paid admission to Zilker Botanical Garden (\$2 adults, \$1 children & seniors)
Details at <http://austincss.com/Show-&-Sale>

Dealing with Drought-Tree Care

Thursday April 9, 2015
10am – noon

Travis Co AgriLife Extension Service Office
1600 Smith Road
Austin, TX

\$10 through 4/05, \$15 starting 4/06 and onsite

Many trees are stressed by prolonged periods of hot, dry weather. Selecting trees that use water efficiently is one way to make your landscape more resistant to droughts. Learn about several tree maintenance procedures to increase a tree's chance during drought, such as mulching, proper pruning, limiting fertilization and supplemental irrigation.

Lara Schuman, an ISA Certified Arborist and acting Program Manager at City of Austin Urban Forestry will share her knowledge on caring for trees.

Registration: \$10 through 4/05, \$15 starting 4/06 and onsite
<https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/TravisCounty>

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Dealing with Drought series.
For more information contact:
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service
Travis County, 512-854-9600.

Austin Area Events

Passion for Plants – East Austin Garden Fair

April 11, 2015
9am – 2pm

Parque Zaragoza Recreation Center
2608 Gonzales Street
Austin, TX 78702

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, Travis County Master Gardeners, and Austin Parks & Recreation present the ninth annual East Austin Garden Fair.

Free and open to the public, this fun, hands-on fair involves community members in creative, low-cost ways to grow vegetables, herbs and fruit to improve the family diet as well as information about Earth-Kind landscaping. Get expert advice from Master Gardeners on all aspects of gardening and composting, as well as backyard chickens and beekeeping. The fair will feature an assortment of DIY and demonstration activities, including garden planning, kids' activities and container garden building.

New information this year will address raising backyard rabbits, alternate methods of gardening, building a backyard greenhouse or hoop house, house plants and terrariums, and garden tools and techniques.

Long-standing partners and participants include the Sustainable Food Center, Capital Area Food Bank, Festival Beach Food Forest, Green Corn Project, Home Depot Kid's Workshop, Texas 4-H, AmeriCorps, AgriLife Extension Master Wellness Volunteers and Prairie View A&M University.

FREE vegetable, herb and ornamental plants offered to participants while supplies last.

For more information, please call 512-854-9600

2015 Iris Society of Austin Show

Saturday, April 11, 2015
1pm - 4pm

Zilker Botanical Gardens
2220 Barton Springs Road
Austin, TX

The Theme for the 2015 Show is "Colors of the Rainbow," which will reflect the diversity of forms and colors of the Rainbow Flower.

FREE admission with paid admission to Zilker Botanical Garden (\$2 adults, \$1 children & seniors)

Details at http://www.kenfuchs42.net/isa_events.html

Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center Spring Native Plant Sale

Saturday, April 11, 9am-5pm
Sunday, April 12, noon-5pm

Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center
4801 La Crosse Avenue
Austin, TX

Admission: \$10 adults, \$8 seniors and students, \$4 children 5 through 17, and members and children under 5 are free.

Please bring your own wagon to haul your purchases. There will be free cold filtered water, but bring your reusable water bottle, or buy one in the store.

There will be no recycling of plastic pots at this plant sale. Please consider recycling them at your local recycling center.

Details at <http://www.wildflower.org/plantsale/>

Austin Area Events

Heart of Texas Orchid Society's 44th Annual Show and Sale

Saturday, April 25, 10am - 4pm

Sunday, April 26, 11am - 4pm

Zilker Botanical Garden Center
2220 Barton Springs Road
Austin, TX

"FIFTY SHADES OF ORCHIDS"

Yes...this is the Theme for the upcoming Heart of Texas Orchid Show and Sale. Hoping to excite you and your loved ones to try something new - Growing Orchids! Orchids come in every color and size; and with Mothers Day right around the corner, they are the perfect gift for the ones you love!

FREE admission with paid admission to Zilker Botanical Garden
(\$2 adults, \$1 children & seniors)
Details at <http://www.hotos.org/>

TRAVIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION

2015 EXECUTIVE BOARD

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Texas AgriLife Extension Travis County
Horticulture Agent: Daphne Richards
1600-B Smith Road, Austin, Texas 78721
512-854-9600 drichards@ag.tamu.edu

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Photographers:
Bruce Leander

Editor and Layout:
Liath Appleton

Contributing Writers:
Liath Appleton
Wizzie Brown
Martha King
Patty Leander
Jean Love El Harim

Assistant Editor:
Martha King

The Compost Bin Submissions

We are always looking for Travis County Master Gardeners who are interested in writing for our monthly newsletter, and we would love to see your articles, photographs, book reviews and gardening ideas.

General Guidelines

- Please first email the editor to discuss potential article ideas.
- Email contributions as attachments (preferably in Word with a .doc or .rtf suffix).
- Please send images as separate attachments (preferably .jpg suffix). Don't forget to include photographer acknowledgments and captions.

Send your submissions, announcements, questions and suggestions to: editor.compostbin@gmail.com



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www.tcmastergardeners.org
<http://travis-tx.tamu.edu>
512-854-9600

"In the spring I have counted one hundred and thirty-six different kinds of weather inside of four and twenty hours"
- Mark Twain