

The Compost Bin

September 2010

A Publication of the Travis County Master Gardeners - a volunteer program of Texas AgriLife Extension



In this issue ...

In the Vegetable Garden

Palms for Austin?

Survival of the Fittest

Snakes in the Garden

Composting

Road Trip Update

What 's Wrong With My

Plant? Book Review

My Most Dreaded Pest

President's Message



"The Love Potion"

by

Evelyn de Morgan (1903)

Plant Aphrodisiacs:
Tribulus terrestris (right)
Turnera diffusa (left)



Guest Presenter...

**Perfumes, Potions, and
other Plant Aphrodisiacs**

with

Molly Ogorzaly

Inside this Issue....

- September Meeting Speaker —Molly Ogorzaly Page 2
- The President's Message Page 3
- In the Vegetable Garden Page 4
- Palms for Austin? Page 6
- Survival of the Fittest Page 8
- Snakes in the Garden Page 8
- October Plant Exchange Page 9
- Composting Page 9
- Road Trip Update Page 10
- What's Wrong with My Plant? Book Review Page 11
- My Most Dreaded Garden Pest Page 12
- Coming Events Page 13
- 2010 TCMGA Board Page 17



Left: Stapelia, the carrion plant blooming in a Master Gardener's garden. Does this flower look and smell like rotting meat?

September Meeting Speaker — Molly Ogorzaly

Perfumes, Potions, and other Plant Aphrodisiacs: the science and chicanery of aromatherapy

Many of us know her as Molly O but her name is really Dr. Molly Ogorzaly. She is a passionate teacher. Her depth of knowledge, humor and enthusiasm brings alive the topic of Perfumes, Potions, and other Plant Aphrodisiacs. This lecture goes beyond the facts of if, and how, plants might turn you on as it delves into the most misunderstood, maligned and controversial of our senses — our sense of smell. The presentation will be an experiment in Smell-O-Vision, where scents complement the discussion.

Molly Conner Ogorzaly has a B.S. degree in Agriculture from Cornell University, an M.A. in Botany, and Ph.D. in Science Education from the University of Texas. As a result of work done for her disserta-

tion on the social and academic benefits of school gardens, Molly won the President's Environmental Youth Award in 1994. Molly is the co-author/illustrator of the top-selling book, *Economic Botany*. During seven years (1995-2002) as Director of Education at Zilker Botanical Garden, Molly created lectures and workshops for both adults and children. Education is still the center of Dr. Ogorzaly's work. During the summer, she has been leading groups of women as they "follow the route of the Impressionists" through France.

Master Gardener Meeting information:
Wednesday, September 1st, 2010 starting at 7 pm.
Zilker Botanical Garden

Hello Master Gardeners: A Message From Your President

Some of you may have read, as I did, the article in the Austin American Statesman, regarding Mattie Fancher. It was titled, "A lesson in beauty, power of nature from 105-year-old, lifelong gardener". After reading her story, you just have to stop and reflect on your own.

I have always told my family that I thought I was born with the "Scarlett O'Hara" syndrome. That is, I have to have my hands in the soil ... tending the soil ... nurturing the earth ... creating seasonal interest with beautiful blooming plants! It's something in our DNA and Mattie certainly has it also, this lifelong desire and enthusiasm for what you might do in the next gardening season. Be it a new variety of tomato, a new salvia just on the market, it's the "excitement of the hunt!" This love of gardening is truly a powerful gift and the fact that we share it with our organization makes it all the more meaningful.

As school starts its new session and football teams start creeping into the family conversation, you start watching the news to see if our temperatures are starting to drop ever so slowly. The fading of summer has begun its cycle. That first little sign of the upcoming fall season is pure joy.

Our new Master Gardener class has started at the Blue Bluff location and that is always an exciting time. The greenhouse staff is hosting a Mini-Talk/Plant Sale on Sept. 11th at the SFC Republic Square location at 3rd and Guadalupe. There will be speakers on fall vegetable gardening, fall blooming plants and herbs followed by the sale of those talked about plants. Come out, hear the talks and buy from our own greenhouse.

In closing I will quote from Mattie, who puts it so eloquently, "Nature is beautiful. Gardening is good therapy." That pretty much sums it up.

May we all be enjoying life and gardening at 105!
Carolyn

To read about Mattie Fancher's life and gardening experiences visit the Austin American Statesman website at www.statesman.com/life/gardening/a-lesson-in-beauty-power-of-nature-from-845332.html.



In The Vegetable Garden

By Patty Leander

September means fall has arrived for most of the country, but we are Texas, and we are not like most of the country. Even though our calendars show the arrival of autumn on September 23, those cooler temperatures sure take their time getting here. Planting cool-season vegetables in hot weather and hot soil is a bit of a challenge, but there are various techniques we can employ to ensure success. Just as we protect our plants from late frosts in spring, we must take the same care to acclimate our transplants to the intense sun and heat in fall. If the soil is dry, water it thoroughly a day or two before planting to ensure adequate moisture for seeds and transplants. When setting plants into the garden provide shade and a thick layer of mulch; this will help the soil retain moisture and will also help moderate soil temperature.

The fall weather in Central Texas is conducive to growing a variety of tasty and nutritious vegetables that prefer the cooler temperatures. Broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, kale, collards, carrots, beets, Swiss chard, kohlrabi, turnips and radishes – a fall vegetable garden is full of rich colors and interesting flavors. Use transplants for broccoli, cauliflower and cabbage because they take a longer time to reach harvest size, but the rest are fairly easy to grow from seed. All of these plants have a smaller footprint in the garden compared to rambling tomatoes or vining squash, and that makes them good candidates for growing in raised beds, pots or a square foot garden. And unlike those tomatoes and squash that produce several fruit from one plant, most of our cool-season crops produce only once, so if you plant an entire packet of turnips or beets on the same day, they will all be ready for harvest at approximately the same time. You can avoid this over-abundance and extend your harvest by making smaller, successive plantings every week or two. Lettuce and spinach germinate more easily and taste best when grown in cooler weather, so it's best to plant them later in the month or even in October.



Above: Fall 'Tokyo Cross' turnips ready for harvesting.

Left: The wonderful broccoli and cauliflower harvest to come.



There are many interesting vegetables, both heirlooms and hybrids, that can be purchased from online seed companies. A list of seed sources and recommended varieties can be found at <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/travis/index.htm>. If you haven't tried growing some of the unique Asian vegetables, such as bok choy, Chinese cabbage or tatsoi, do give them a try. They perform well in our fall and winter weather and will add a new dimension to your winter meals.

Be sure to plant some sugar snap peas in late September as they are easy to grow, wonderfully delicious and versatile in the kitchen. The vining variety called 'Super Sugar Snap' can reach six feet and is best grown on a fence, teepee or sturdy trellis. If you prefer bush varieties try 'Cascadia', 'Sugar Sprint' or 'Sugar Ann'. Sugar snap peas can be roasted, stir-fried, sautéed,

or sliced raw and added to salads, but they are sometimes enjoyed most fully when eaten while standing in the garden, fresh off the vine.

Our first frost usually comes in mid or late November, so there may still be time to plant seeds of green beans, cucumber or summer squash, but do not delay. Most take 60-65 days to reach maturity, so if planted in early September they should be ready for harvest by Thanksgiving. If you are growing peppers, eggplant or tomatoes, they will benefit from a dose of fertilizer and a fresh layer of mulch. And gardeners and plants alike will all be much happier once the days and nights cool off a bit ... and they always do!



Left: Tatsoi (One of the Chinese vegetables).

Right Top: Harvesting sugar snap peas.

Right Bottom: Transplanting broccoli and cauliflower into a raised bed in the fall.



What is Tatsoi?

Tatsoi is also known as spinach mustard, spoon mustard (the leaves are broadly spoon shaped), or rosette bok choy. It is grown for its greens. The dark green leaves form a thick rosette that is ready to harvest only 45-50 days from transplanting into the garden. Tatsoi can withstand temperatures well below freezing (down to 15 F.). The tender sweet tasting stalks and leaves are excellent in stir fries and mixed with other greens in salads. (*Brassica narinosa* or *Brassica rapa* var. *rosularis*).

Eat tatsoi raw, throw them into a stir fry, or saute them with a little bit of your favorite oil (e.g. vegetable, coconut or peanut oil), saute them a few minutes until they soften. Try including ginger and/or garlic with it and your favorite spices and seasonings. Or try tatsoi (as you would use spinach) in a quiche or omelette.



Palms For Austin? Why Not!

by Bob Beyer

Here in Austin, we live in a stressful gardening environment which tends to limit our plant selection to those which are very drought tolerant, can endure temperature extremes, low humidity, and our alkaline soils. Although not natives, there are several plants that one wouldn't think belongs in Austin or is adaptable to our environment, but think again - it's **Palms**. They are not only for tropical regions of the world or Zone 9 and higher. In fact, there are many genera and species that are native to desert regions, and others which are very cold hardy.

Most of the palms that fall into this category are fan leaved, shrubby, not tall, and many come in colorful silver/blue hues. Since palms are slow growing and are propagated only from seed, they will be on the expensive side to purchase, but a good landscaping investment. Let's explore a few.



The most cold hardy palm in the world is the Needle Palm (*Rhapidothymum histrix*). It matures at about four to six feet tall, develops a short trunk only with age, but it gets its name from the six inch black spiny needles that project from the leaf petiole at the base of the plant. This palm is hardy to below zero in winter. A mature needle palm survived -27 degrees F. in Knoxville, TN. The foliage is a rich deep green, palmate and fan shaped. A slow grower, it is virtually maintenance free and will endure sun and shade.

Another excellent choice is *Nannorrhops ritchiana*, a cold hardy palm from Afghanistan. This palm comes in both a green or a silver/blue leaf form and grows shrub-like with multiple trunks. Give this one a little bit of spreading space. It loves full sun and dry conditions and is quite tolerant of our temperature extremes.

Saw Palmetto (*Serenoa repens*) is considered a natural weed in Florida — seen overtaking pasture land and dominant in the natural landscape of Florida. Luckily it's rare to find this plant in Texas. Although it comes in green and silver leafed forms, the latter is definitely most desirable



for its silvery/blue foliage. Like Nannorrhops, this plant grows shrubby without developing a trunk and spreads by shooting up from the base. It is hardy down to around 15 degrees F. It loves full sun or shade (although the silver form will color better in sun). This plant won't grow taller than six feet at full maturity.

Native to the southwest U.S. and northern Mexico in dry, caliche

desert regions is *Brahea armata*. This naturally silver-leaved beauty is very slow growing, and prefers dry climate conditions with poorer soils. It's beautiful silvery leaf color begs to be in full sun, silver being a protective reflective adaptation for it. *Brahea* will eventually develop a small trunk but never exceeds about eight feet over a lengthy time. This is one of the best palms for our Hill Country climate and environment.



Top: Saw Palmetto
(*Serenoa repens*)
Right: Mexican Blue Palm
(*Brahea armata*)
Left: The Needle Palm
(*Rhapidothymum histrix*)

Another cold hardy palm (to 20 degrees F.) that develops a trunk and gets rather sizable in spread is *Butia capitata*. This palm is not in the fan palm category. Getting ultimately to 15 feet tall and about as wide in spread, this palm has a unique bluish tint to the foliage that makes it stand out and easy to identify. The fruiting clusters are also very colorful and good food for wildlife.

The Mediterranean Fan Palm (*Trachycarpus fortunei*) is another cold hardy palm, but it doesn't like our high light intensity so should be grown as an understory tree or in a shaded location where it can be protected from the bright afternoon sun. This palm forms trunks up to 10 feet with many years of age and has a looser palmate leaf arrangement. It is drought tolerant but prefers moderate watering.

Palms in Austin? Why Not!

Continued...

Having a similar common name, but being a completely different plant is the Blue Mediterranean Fan Palm (*Chamaerops humilis* var. *cerifera* (*argentea*)) which is native to Morocco. Right there is a clue that it is drought tolerant and can take desert temperature extremes, from triple digit to the low 20s. The foliage is a natural bluish/silver tint which is also reflective of the high light adaptation of desert plants. Give this one full sun. This has been recently introduced into the nursery trade and become popular as a landscaping palm.

Trithrinax campestris, also known as the Blue Needle Palm is yet another of the lovely bluish tinted palms worth trying. Hard to find, this trunked palm can get tall in its native environment in Argentina and Brazil, but would be much slower growing in central Texas. Its hardiness is thought to be 20-25 degrees F. so a slightly protected spot might be advisable. It likes full sun and is water friendly.

A perfect palm for a shady deck or patio would be the Lady Palm (*Rhapis excelsa*) which can get over eight feet tall unless you get a dwarf variety such as 'Koban'. This split, stiff leaved palm is hardy down to 25 degrees F. and survives winter in Austin in a protected place, but does need shade. It is clumping and fills out a décor planter very nicely.

Palms in general are shallow rooted with tight clumps of fibrous roots which makes them relatively easy to plant. As the foliage of fan palms is rather different from our local and native plants, they look best when planted as a specimen plant so that they are the featured attraction. Palms make excellent container plants as well. Do beware as there are some palms sold at local garden centers that won't make it through a winter in Central Texas, such as Pigmy Date Palm (*Phoenix roebelenii*). If you invest in a quality palm, you certainly don't want to risk losing it, so stay with tried and tested varieties.

Try these recommended, durable and adaptable palms in your landscape and you will be very pleased. Finding them may be a challenge but the reward is great. I suggest searching Google using the botanical name for best results.

Palms are one of Austin's most underutilized plants. See what you are missing out on!

Used with permission from the Gardening In Central Texas blog www.centraltexasgardening.blogspot.com



Above: Blue Mediterranean Fan Palm (*Chamaerops humilis* var. *cerifera*)
Right: Lady Palm (*Rhapis excelsa*)
Bottom: Blue Needle Palm (*Trithrinax campestris*)



Images for this article
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Survival of the Fittest

By Bob Beyer

Survival of the Fittest

It's tough gardening in Central Texas, between severe drought, extreme heat, low humidity, shallow soils with alkaline limestone substructure not conducive to moisture retention, weed seed proliferation, did I mention hail and severe storms, etc. I'm sure that newcomers to Austin trade one set of gardening problems for another but Central Texas requires plants that can endure all of the above.

Using native and adaptive plants, going to more xeriphytic landscapes are two widely mentioned and smart approaches, but there is nothing like trial and error to find out which specific plants are tough enough to meet the gardening challenges Central Texas provides.

I have begun a program to eliminate plants that can't handle it in my gardens, taking into account microclimate areas that might allow a particular plant to grow well in one specific location.

Being a plant collector by nature, I need to be careful to separate desire for an attractive plant from the reality of being able to grow it well in our challenging environment. If I feel it stands a chance based on research, I will give it a test run and if it doesn't do well after two years, it's outta here!

My best advice to fellow gardeners in Central Texas is to plant an "intentional" garden, knowing in advance based on research and local experience and advice of other gardeners, which plants you will place in your garden, then seek them out specifically by

botanical name to make sure you have the right plant. Too many people go to a nursery and let their eyes and emotions govern what they buy, only to be disappointed. Impulse buying can waste money and disappoint the gardener. Unfortunately, too many nurseries stock according to the consumers visual reaction to a plant, not what is best for local gardens. So remember, buyer beware!

Remember on these hot, dry days, the plants in your garden can't sit in air conditioned comfort like you but must endure the extremes of the Central Texas environment.

Plant well and sit back in your air conditioned home and enjoy seeing a garden that takes care of itself, endures, needs little attention from you to grow well and look good even in the toughest of conditions.

Used with permission from the Gardening In Central Texas blog
www.centraltexasgardening.blogspot.com



Above: The Texas Garter Snake
(*Thamnophis sirtalis*)
image courtesy of Wikipedia.com

Snakes in the Garden

by Mark Berthiaume

Snakes in the Garden

Gardeners don't need to fear snakes, for they are a part of the garden that helps balance everything that lives and grows. For the veteran gardener, snakes are just a slimy fact of life that one must be aware of and respect. So know how to identify them, it's important to know the difference between nonpoisonous and poisonous. A good book for reference to help identify a mystery snake is Snakes of North America.

Garter snakes, (Genus *Thamnophis*) (not garden snakes) are the most common of snakes to be found in your garden, and they are not poisonous. Having a couple of garter snakes in your garden is good. They eat lots of insects, mosquito larvae, slugs, snails, crickets, rats and mice. Having snakes around your pond is not good though, as these pests can mean the end of fish, frogs and turtles that contribute the pleasure of having a pond in the first place.

There are some steps to help reduce snakes in your yard if they are a problem: mow your lawn often, don't allow grass to grow up along the sides of your house or other structures. Get rid of tall grass around your property that provides the perfect hiding place for snakes. Piles of leaves and other debris should also be removed. Only the elimination of shelter and food will make snakes find new homes. And the most important tip, please use caution around snakes and respect them. A poisonous snake bite is very, very expensive.

Garden to Garden Plant Exchange

Advanced Notice

Garden to Garden Plant Exchange at the October Meeting!

Are you looking for a Blue Elf Aloe, a fancy leaf begonia or maybe some really cool succulents? Then get ready for the plant exchange after the October meeting. And as you clean up your gardens for the fall, save those extra plants that would make your gardening friends happy. In addition, put aside those extras seeds, garden magazines and pots that you'd like to share with other master gardeners. More info coming in next month's Compost Bin.



Composting

Fall is just around the corner, so I keep telling myself! Crickets chirping, the "scent of fall" early in the morning, and leaves - falling leaves, at first just a sprinkling, swirling down as breezes stir the trees.

Leaves ... are an opportunity to invest in one's soil bank, a mineral and nutrient resource for soil microbes! Perhaps neighbors don't realize the value of leaves; they bag and place them at curbside on trash day. Rescue those leaves! Don't let them end up in a landfill; put them to work in your garden or collect them for our Extension Demonstration Garden compost bin!

Leaves are a carbon source (brown stuff) for your compost pile; Leaves can be composted by themselves (leaf mold); Leaves can be trench composted in vegetable garden paths; Leaves can be shredded or left whole and used as garden mulch.

Educate your neighbors – help them turn trash into treasure. To learn more attend our "Composting Basics Seminar," Saturday, October 23, from 10 am - 12 noon, at the Travis County East Service Center, 6011 Blue Bluff Road – all gardeners welcome, your neighbors too!

Composting Tip for Leaves: If composted alone, leaves are slow to breakdown in a conventional wire cylinder. Break them up by running the mower over them or running them through a shredder. Spray with water to moisten as you add layers and sprinkle with a little organic fertilizer and/or finished compost to hastened breakdown – don't let the pile dry out.

Tommie Clayton & Richard Moline
TMG Compost Specialist Interns

Road Trip Updates!

by Liz Caskey

Podcasts updates: Some of our favorite garden shows are now podcasted! Tom Spencer's Wildflower Hour radio show is one of my favorites, but I seem to miss it quite often. Now I can listen to it at my convenience, since it's available for download on KLBJ 590's web site, along with John Dromgoole's Gardening Naturally. Both are also available through iTunes.



Technology updates: Howard Garrett has gone high tech! His radio shows have been available to download through his dirtdoctor.com web site for a while, but his new show, Green Living, is now also available through iTunes. In addition, he is now posting updates on Facebook, including answers to frequently asked questions, information about his upcoming radio shows and a featured plant of the week.

Paul James, from HGTV fame and the keynote speaker for the 2011 Texas Master Gardener state convention, has a new web site: www.gardenerguy.com. It includes a bulletin board forum, frequently asked questions and answers and "GGTV," otherwise known as Gardener Guy TV. GGTV includes video segments about gardening subjects such as composting, container plants and even some vintage clips of Paul.

Have you noticed that many garden centers are jumping on Facebook? For instance, North Haven Gardens (Dallas) and Antique Rose Emporium (Brenham) are sending out sales and promotional information through this format. You might check to see if your favorite nursery is using Facebook. And don't forget to look for Texas AgriLife Extension Service and Junior Master Gardeners on Facebook too!

facebook

What's Wrong With My Plant? (And How Do I Fix It?) Book Review

By Anne Van Nest

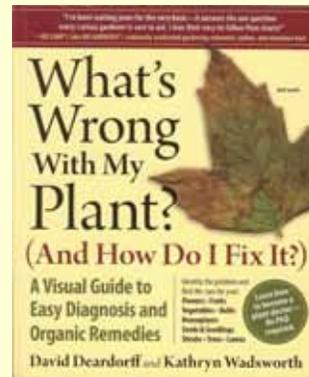


What's Wrong With My Plant? (And How Do I Fix It?)

Learn how to become a plant doctor — No Ph.D. required is the selling pitch on the cover of this new book. The irony of this statement is that this book is written by a Ph.D. But it certainly doesn't read like an academic book. It is a hands-on, practical book that will be a big help with identifying and deciding on a course of treatment for many plant problems in any garden.

Co-author David Deardorff is a plant pathologist and botanist who lives and gardens in Port Townsend, Washington. Kathryn Wadsworth is a naturalist who shares her love and gardening and the outdoors through writing and photography. Although the authors hail from the Northwest, the garden problems they describe are pretty much universal across the continent (including Texas).

Good books to help serious gardeners and Master Gardeners identify plant problems are really rare. Many include plant problems with a slew of other subjects and are so "boiled down" that they simplify everything so much that they can be dangerously inadequate because of their omissions. Others have such inaccurate drawings that even if you recognize the problem, the picture in the book bears no resemblance. Or some books think that they are being global in their scope but they really are addressing just NE plant problems. A Visual Guide to Easy Diagnosis and Organic Remedies by David Deardorff and Kathryn Wadsworth tries to overcome these shortfalls — common to other plant pest and disease books and really be a valuable tool for the organic gardener.



Dealing with a sick plant is one of the most frustrating situations a gardener can face. If only plants could talk, we would be able to deal with problems easier. With this book, gardeners can learn to read the signs that plant show and take action to cure common plant maladies. The book is organized in an easy visual (either drawing or picture) clue style. Part One has illustrated flow charts or keys, that are organized by the plant part on which the symptoms appear (such as "the leaf has raised bumps, warts or weird growth"). This first part is a simple series of statements that use yes or no questions to narrow down the problem choices. When a possible diagnosis is determined, readers follow the clue to Part Two which holds a solution where the problem is explained, often confirmed with a photo or drawing, and a safe, organic solution. Part Three — What Does It Look Like? contains a photo gallery of common stressed, damaged or diseased plants. A simple format that will help solve plant problems even without knowing the plant name.



An impressive 451 pages (although some pages in Part One have a fair amount of white space), \$24.95 and published by the good gardening people at Timber Press. ISBN-13: 978-0881929614

Check out the authors' blog on gardens, gardening and pests called Deardorff and Wadsworth at <http://ddandkw.com>.

My Most Dreaded Garden Pest

By Bob Beyer

Help! Some of my agaves and yuccas have rotted at the base and collapsed. Upon investigation I only find a mushy and decayed mess. What is causing this?



Left: Black adult weevil and white grub-like larvae.

Right: Agave weevil larvae ready for roasting and seating.

It's an attack of the Agave Snout Weevil (*Scyphophorus acupunctatus*). The above picture shows the adult and the grubs which were embedded in a *Yucca aloifolia* plant and the damage they cause.

This is a nasty little creature, ½ to 1" long, black, wingless, with a typical weevil snout that bores holes into the base of more mature agave, yucca and other related plants with a base diameter of 2" or more. Then it introduces a bacteria which is necessary to cause rapid tissue decay in the plant to feed its white, legless grub-like larvae. At the same time it lays its eggs. Once hatched, the larvae feed on the rotting and bacteria-rich inside tissue of the agave plant causing it to eventually collapse. It then pupates from larva to adult stage in the surrounding soil. If this pest is not discovered early on, there is little one can do to save the plant.

Here are some tips about what you may need to do to prevent this nasty creature from destroying your agave and yucca plants; apply a systemic insecticide (liquid or granular form) that is effective and registered for grubs. Any with the active ingredient imidacloprid have been used effectively. Recommended treatments should be done in spring and once absorbed into the plant, should protect your plant for up to a year. Treating the surrounding soil is also necessary. Oth-

er systemic insecticides can be used if they are recommended for treating grubs. Always follow the directions on the product labels.

As much as I hate to use any chemical product, this unfortunately is the only effective way to combat the Agave Snout Weevil once discovered. Frequent observation and immediate removal of infected plants and soil around them is also helpful in combating this pest.

Agaves grown in containers with sterile soil are much less susceptible as the weevil is soil borne during much of it's development. This weevil is doing much damage to commercial agave crops in Mexico (Tequila, Sisal), and therefore is having an economic impact as well. Ironically, it is this Mezcal worm grub that is often placed in the bottom of a bottle of Tequila.

Next time you enjoy a Margarita raise your glass and say, "Curses to the Agave Weevil"



Left image courtesy of Bob Beyer. Right image courtesy of www.widkipedia.com.

Coming Events

Farmer's Market Garden Talks

**Saturday, September 11th, 2010.
9:00 am - noon**

Republic Square Farmer's Market
400 West Guadalupe Street between 4th
and 5th Streets, Austin, TX 78701

Take a moment out of shopping for fresh vegetables and dynamic local foods to learn about your garden. With fall weather comes the perfect season to get your vegetables and perennial plants in top shape. Join us for short talks on timely garden topics, including fall vegetable gardening, herb gardening, best fall bloomers for the Austin area, and how to build your own grow box container. After the talk, buy some of the very same plant varieties that you heard about at our plant sale.

These talks are free and open to the public. They are presented by the Travis County Master Gardeners Association, a volunteer arm of the Texas AgriLife Extension Service in Travis County. www.tcmastergardeners.org.

Growing a Great Lawn

**Saturday, September 18th, 2010.
10:00 am - noon**

Zilker Botanical Garden
2220 Barton Springs Road, Austin, TX
78746 (512) 477-8672

Knowing how to grow a great lawn can help you save money, water and have a wonderful area to complement your house. Come learn the best information on the care and feeding of your lawn. Topics will include choosing the right turf for your site, irrigation, fertilization, proper mowing technique, and disease diagnosis and treatment. This class is free and does not require reservations.

This seminar is free and open to the public. It is presented by the Travis County Master Gardeners Association, a volunteer arm of the Texas AgriLife Extension Service in Travis County. www.tcmastergardeners.org.

Endangered American Burying Beetle in Texas

Monday, September 27th, 7:00 pm

Zilker Botanical Garden
2220 Barton Springs Road, Austin, TX
78746 (512) 477-8672

The American Burying Beetle, *Nicrophorus americanus*, (ABB) is an endangered beetle whose range has decreased dramatically since the 1930s. Much of the life history of this beetle is unknown, including an accurate population size, specific habitat requirements, and reasons for its decline. Without knowing these life history traits it makes it difficult if not impossible to manage this species. Current research using genetic techniques to estimate population size and migration has been very helpful in determining where this beetle is and where it is moving. We will then look at some of the current threats to the beetle and what we can do to conserve this amazing little insect!

Kendra Bauer is a 6th year Ecology Evolution and Behavior doctoral candidate in the Section of Integrative Biology at the University of Texas at Austin.

Presented by the Austin Butterfly Forum. For more details visit their website at www.austinbutterflies.org.



**4th Central Texas Master
Gardeners Conference**
**Urban Farming – The Ultimate Backyard
Experience**

Saturday, October 9th, 2010.

8:00 am - 4:15 pm

Schertz Civic Center

1400 Schertz Parkway, Building 5, Schertz,
Texas

Urban farming, edible landscapes, whatever you call it, is “growing” in popularity; converts flock to talks and demonstrations given by AgriLife Extension and Master Gardeners!

Now it’s your turn, join us for an educational fun filled day learning about the concept of Urban Farming from the microbes in the soil to the fruit, flowers and vegetables perfect for your home grown edible landscapes. Our esteemed speakers are: Dr. Larry Stein, Dr. Diane Boellstorff, Dr. David Reed and Dr. Joe Novak.

In addition to our educational talks, vendors will offer books, plants, fruit trees, and goodies for your gardening pleasure. Visit our educational displays on honey bees, backyard poultry, beneficial nematodes, compost tea and more!

Our objective is to offer Master Gardeners who usually don’t attend the State MG Conference an opportunity to participate in a quality one day event located in Central Texas. Master Gardeners attending this conference will be granted 6 continuing education hours.

Early registration will ensure your place – the conference is limited to 250 attendees!

Registration information www.tcmastergardeners.org/what/conference/CTGCreform.pdf and agenda details www.tcmastergardeners.org/what/conference/agenda.html

How to Make Compost

**Saturday, October 23, 2010
10:00 am-Noon**

Travis County East Facility

6011 Blue Bluff Rd., Austin TX 78724

Turn trash into treasure!! Take what Mother Nature gives you and make the best soil amendment available — without additional cost! Learn the basics of composting; the great number of items in your trash that can be used; and the steps needed to make excellent compost.

This demonstration is free, open to the public and requires no reservations. It is presented by the Travis County Master Gardeners, a volunteer arm of the Texas AgriLife Extension Service in Travis County. For more details, see <http://www.tcmastergardeners.org>.

A Presentation by Jeff Glassberg

Monday, October 25, 2010, 7:00 pm

Zilker Botanical Garden

2220 Barton Springs Road, Austin, TX
78746 (512) 477-8672

Dr. Jeffrey Glassberg is the president of NABA (North American Butterfly Association) and the author of many books about butterflies. He wrote both the Eastern and Western guides, "*Butterflies through Binoculars*"; "*Butterflies of Mexico*" and is the editor of "*American Butterflies*", the quarterly publication of NABA.

Presented by the Austin Butterfly Forum. For more details visit their website at www.austinbutterflies.org.

Caring for Your Trees

**Saturday, October 30, 2010
1:00 -3:00 pm**

Yarborough Public Library

2200 Hancock Dr. Austin TX 78756

Join Austin's City Arborist, Michael Embesi to learn about the benefits of trees, our urban forest, and why trees are an essential part of our lives. Learn to select appropriate trees for your Central Texas landscape, those that are appropriate for our native soils and tough climate. Understand how to select and care for the right tree, in the proper location, considering size, longevity, and biological needs. Finally, hear about your opportunities within multiple community programs, including grant opportunities, which promote the urban forest.

This seminar is free and open to the public. It is presented by the Travis County Master Gardeners, a volunteer arm of the Texas AgriLife Extension Service in Travis County. www.tcmastergardeners.org.

Growing Culinary Herbs in Texas

Saturday, November 13, 2010, 10:00 am - 10:00 noon

American Botanical Council

6200 Manor Rd., Austin TX 78723

Herbs are a delight to the senses and an easy way to add beauty to your landscape! This class will cover the basics of growing both seasonal and perennial culinary herbs in central Texas, and will offer some suggestions for their use. Class size is limited, so sign up early by calling the Master Gardener Help Desk at (512) 854-9600.

This seminar is free and open to the public. It is presented by the Travis County Master Gardeners, a volunteer arm of the Texas AgriLife Extension Service in Travis County.

www.tcmastergardeners.org.



American Beautyberry (*Callicarpa americana*), a Texas native shrub in its full fall color glory!

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This issue of the Compost Bin has been published thanks to the contributions of the following Travis County Master Gardeners:

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512-854-9600

Visit the websites: www.tcmastergardeners.org and
<http://travis-tx.tamu.edu>



The End...

Time to Get Gardening!

