



**Aransas/San Patricio
Master Gardener Association**

October, 2010

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www.aspmastergardeners.org

**Seeking Serious
Plant Lovers**

Texas Master Gardeners are a team of volunteer horticulture educators who are under the auspices of:



Green Acres is our award winning demonstration garden located at 611 E. Mimosa, Rockport, Texas. The gardens showcase plants and landscape schemes suitable for the Coastal Bend. For help with plant problems, or for class information, please call (361) 790-0103, or email aransas-tx@tam.u.edu

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The President's Corner



I recently read a story about a lady who is a nurse and lived in a big city. At first she lived in an apartment where she tried to garden on her balcony. Her family then moved to a small run down farm on the outskirts of town. It held promise for a gardener that had been restricted by apartment dwelling. So she worked and planted and tried to come up with the right mix of plants for her yard. Unfortunately she had a lot of failures. Things did not look and thrive as she had imagined. A friend of hers told her to seek out the help of Master Gardeners. They were such a big help that she eventually enrolled in Master Gardener classes. She became a Master Gardener. Her gardens were magnificent and she now hosts a weekly TV program on gardening. When asked about her journey thus far she said that she loves the comradeship and intellectual stimulation that being a Master Gardener provides. It has allowed her to live her dream. This is certainly a success story and just goes to show you how people can be affected by our advice and caring as Master Gardeners.

Ellen

October 5th Meeting
9 am
Texas AgriLife Extension

GA Garden Days
October 8th & 22nd
8:00 - 9:00 am

Fall Plant Sale
Rain Date
October 2
9:00-1:00

Pre-Sale Training
October 1
8:30-9:30

Happy Birthday !

Mary Ann Geer, 1st
Todd Cutting, 3rd
Jennifer Thomas, 14th
Shirley Windhorst, 15th
Lonnie Matthew, 17th
L'Ella Andrews, 18th
Pat Baugh, 22nd
Ruth Hoese, 26th
Jean Dyer, 27th
Marthanne Mitchell, 29th
Drew Jacobs, 30th

October Brown Bag
Tuesday, October 19 12:00-1:00 pm

Garden Art, Mosaics in the Garden
By DJ Chilcoat & Jeanna C. Godfrey,
Master Gardeners

Aransas County Library, 701 E. Mimosa, Rockport

Educational programs of Texas AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, or national origin. Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating.

Our Mission: *Improving the lives of people, businesses, and communities across Texas and beyond through high-quality, relevant education.*

From Our Writers

Coastal Bend Problem Ants

Todd L. Cutting, Master Gardener

Ants are one of the most populous insects on earth. There are nearly 700 species in North America and 200 in Texas alone. Most people learn to identify an ant in early childhood. The only insect that an ant is readily confused with is the termite.

Of all the species of ants possible, only four are of interest to most people: Texas leaf cutting ant, red imported fire ant, carpenter ant and a new exotic, raspberry crazy ants.

The Texas leaf cutting ant is really quite interesting. They don't bite or sting so they can be observed safely. They are most active at night or during cool, cloudy days. They make trails or roadways as they carry leaf pieces over their backs from your precious plant to their underground nest.

Texas leaf cutting ants don't actually eat leaves. Instead they take leaf pieces to their underground nests and use them to raise a fungus. This fungus then becomes the ant's food. They undoubtedly have preferences, but the literature doesn't really list them. They will eat grass, fruit tree leaves, etc. I know from personal experience that they like hibiscus, bouganvillea, and roses. In three nights they totally defoliated a mature Chinese tallow tree. That caught my attention!

Because cut ants only eat the fungus that they cultivate in their underground nest they are difficult to control. There are several insecticides that will kill the foraging worker ants, but this will not eliminate the colony. Contact insecticides such as carbaryl or permethrin can be sprayed or dusted on your precious plants to temporarily protect them or to exact revenge against the ants, but a special bait is needed to eliminate the underground colony.



Amdro Ant Block is a new product containing the insecticide hydramethylnon. This should be available at garden retail outlets. Use all pesticides only according to the label. If the ant colony is large, several treatments may be needed. I have had success using Grant's Ant Bait. These baits are placed alongside the active ant trails at night. The ants carry the bait down to the colony and contaminate their fungal food, eventually killing the colony. Multiple applications are necessary. AgriLife Extension Fast Sheet, ENT 1029, Texas Leaf Cutting Ant, has more details.

Red imported fire ants are so important that they have their own website: <http://fireant.tamu.edu>. Few people realize that fire ants can be beneficial because they hate them so much for their stings and bites. Imported red fire ants are a real nuisance and public health problem. Right now, September and October, is the best time to control them using broadcast baits over your entire lawn. Broadcast baits take some time to work so applying them now will get the fire ants killed before the kids start playing outside again next spring.



AgriLife Bulletin, L-5070, The Texas Two-Step Method of Fire Ant Control details how to go about applying bait to your entire lawn area. Garden stores carry several products containing one or more of the following insecticide active ingredients: spinosad, hydramethylnon, indoxacarb, methoprene or fenoxycarb. More information on fire ant control is in Bulletin B-6099, Broadcast Baits for Fire Ant Control or B-6043, Managing Imported Fire Ants in Urban Areas.



From Our Writers Continued

Continued from page 2

Carpenter ants don't eat wood but dine on dead and living insects and have honeydew for dessert. They can be a problem if they decide to nest in your house's framing as they will weaken it with their tunnels.

Raspberry crazy ants, named after a man named Raspberry who first found them in Texas, are an exotic or import from more tropical areas. Crazy ants are so called because their movements tend to be erratic. Don't ask them to walk a straight line. They have spread throughout the Houston area and have been found in the Rio Grande Valley but so far are not in the Coastal Bend. They have extremely large colonies with several million individuals. They also seem to like electrical boxes, motors, etc. and can short out circuits and so on. So if you come across a very large, active colony of ants, let us know so we can see if this pest is here yet.

More information on ants and other insects is available at the website: <http://citybugs.tamu.edu>.

Upcoming Activities

Welder MG Demonstration Gardens Dedication & Refuge Tour

Mon, October 18, 9am – 11am

Welder Wildlife Refuge near Sinton

The new Aransas/San Patricio MG Demonstration Gardens at Welder (Native Grass Garden and CONE Garden) will be dedicated in a brief ceremony. A tour of Welder Wildlife Refuge follows for those interested.



From Our Extension Agent

We are half way through my first A/SP Master Gardener Intern training, and I, for one, am enjoying it. Thanks very much to all the Master Gardeners who have helped in many and various ways with the classes! Your assistance (and refreshments) has been wonderful. Remember that MGs can attend any of the classes at no charge.

A great big thank you to Pat Stanton and her roommate, who made possible a dinner at Jama's following the September 13 garden work evening. It was a fun evening and provided a chance to get to know other Master Gardeners.

October Master Gardener Classes

Oct. 5 th	Rain barrel Construction & Rainwater run-off/ Office Training <i>Plant ID: Children's Discovery Garden</i>	Barbara McSpadden, MG Rainwater Harvesting Specialist Ginger Easton Smith, Aransas CEA
Oct. 12 th	Turf – irrigation & its fertilization, weeds, aeration, common problems-pests & diseases, Q&A <i>Plant ID: Herbs & Borders</i>	Michael Potter, Nueces County EA-Horticulture
Oct. 19 th	Landscape Design **CC Museum of Science & History, 1900 N. Chaparral Street, CC – Lecture Hall	Dr. Carol Brouwer, Harris County Extension Agent-Horticulture
Oct. 26 th	Landscape Plant Selection **Gill's Landscape Nursery, 2810 Airline, Corpus Christi	Kathy Hubner, Landscape Designer Gill's Landscape

Around the State

SPECIALIST TRAINING **Irrigation Efficiency Training** **Dallas, October 27, 28, 29**

Efficiency training will cover hands-on practices for determining irrigation efficiency, setting controllers, soak and cycle method, minor irrigation repairs, system trouble shooting, catch-can test, converting spray head irrigation to new water conserving heads, converting spray irrigation to drip irrigation and other water conservation practices.

Only 15 participant spots are available for this training. Registration is first come/first served basis at \$200 per person. For more information log on to the Texas Master Gardener website Specialist Training. <http://texasmastergardeners.com/>

Native Plant Society of Texas **Symposium 2010, October 7-10**

The Native Plant Society of Texas (NPSOT) presents how-to-create sustainable landscapes educational event, to be held from Oct 7 - Oct 10 at Texas Woman's University in Denton, Texas.

Nationally recognized keynote speakers J. David Bamberger, Jill Nokes and Dr. David Tallamy will deliver practical advice and information on making a positive environmental impact on your yard as well as on your local Texas ecosystem. Additionally, a diverse selection of how-to-do-it guided field trips, workshops with experts and garden tours will demonstrate how native plant communities can help conserve water, save money and preserve natural habitat.

Complete Symposium 2010 information, field trip and presentation summaries as well as online registration are now available on the NPSOT website at:

www.npsot.org/symposium2010

Native Plant Society of Texas **Wildscape Workshop, October 2, 9:15am-3pm** **South Texas Botanical Gardens & Nature Center**

This workshop taught by members of Native Plant Society of South Texas focuses on varieties of native plants and adapted species that not only will improve the beauty and quality of your landscape, but also attract various birds, butterflies and other critters to your yard, while lowering your water bill. Guided tours of Butterfly, Hummingbird, Tree & Wildscape Gardens, Bird & Butterfly Nature Trail. Native plants for sale. Workshop fee is \$15, \$12.50 members. Includes snacks & lunch.

SPECIALIST TRAINING **Vegetables** **Weslaco, November 3-4**

Hosted by: Barbara Storz, County Extension Agent-Horticulture, Hidalgo County

Meeting Location: USDA-ARS, Bee Building
2413 E. Highway 83, Weslaco, Texas 78596
Texas AgriLife Extension Service – Hidalgo County
Office: 956/383-1026, email: Barbara Storz, CEA-Horticulture email: b-storz@tamu.edu
<http://hidalgo-tx.tamu.edu>

The purpose of the MG Vegetable Specialist training is to provide advanced training whereby Master Gardeners can obtain specialization in Vegetable Gardening that support or expand designated educational programs of Texas AgriLife.

This training was created as an intensive multi-day, hands-on course to provide Master Gardeners with knowledge and skills required to communicate vegetable production information to others.

Completion of the course and other requirements results in recognition as a Master Gardener "Vegetable Specialist". This certification does not empower the individual with supervisory or administrative authority within his/her local county programs.

Course Fee: \$250

Course Fee includes:

Pocket Loupe, Book - Garden Insects of North America, Book - Commonsense Vegetable Gardening for the South, Book - Identifying Diseases of Vegetables, Jump Drive that includes about 1200 pdf files on all aspects of gardening (Catered lunch, snacks, and drinks over the 2 days of meeting)

Sit down dinner at a local restaurant

Reimbursement of \$50 from the Master Gardener secretary upon completion of all requirements

South Texas Wine & Herb Festival **Saturday, October 16, 9am -5pm**

South Texas Botanical Gardens & Nature Center
Enjoy Seminars, Demonstrations, Wine Tasting, Food Samplings, and a variety of wine & herb product by local vendors. In partnership with Texas Dept. of Agriculture's *Go Texan* program, Rockport Herb & Rose Study Group, Nueces Master Gardeners Herb Passion Team. Relax in the afternoon to music provided by Texas Jazz Festival while enjoying a glass of Texas wine from the new cash wine bar. (Vendors and music: General Admission: All-day seminar fee: \$5.00. FMI: 852-2100.

October 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 8:30-9:30am Training for Plant Sale	2 9:00-1:00 Fall Plant Sale Green Acres
3	4	5 9am MG meeting 1:30-5pm MG Class-Rainwater 6pm-9pm Earth Kind Class	6	7	8 8 am Green Acres Garden Day 10 am Landscape meeting	9
10	11	12 1:30-5pm MG Class -Turf 6pm-9pm Earth Kind Class	13	14	15	16
17	18 9-11am Welder MG Demo Garden Dedication	19 10am Board Meeting 12-1pm Brown Bag 1:30-5pm MG Class Landscape Design- CC Museum 6pm-9pm Earth Kind Class	20 10am Tree Team Visits	21	22 8 am Green Acres Garden Day	23
24 31 MG Hours due	25	26 1:30-5pm MG Class Plant Selection- Gill's Nursery 6pm-9pm Earth Kind Class	27	28	29	30