



MG Wood Works

Wood County Master Gardeners

January 2009 Newsletter

2009 Wood County

Master Gardeners Officers

Carolyn Rominger—President
Kathleen Denmon—Vice Pres.
Connie Amsden—Secretary
Karen Doss—Treasurer

President's Message - Carolyn Rominger

Happy New Year!

January, the month on new beginnings, beckons us to reflect on the year that has passed and dream about the year to come. As I look back at 2008, I am quite proud of the work of the Wood County Master Gardeners! The talent and generosity is so abundant in this group and our payment "in kind" of over \$90,000 is a wonderful testament to that. Kudos go to our outgoing officers, to each of the 2008 award recipients, and to each and every one of you for your special contributions this past year.

The author of my new daily devotional suggests altering the process of New Year resolutions a little. Victoria Moran suggests "Call them 'possibilities' instead of 'resolutions' – that takes the pressure off." I like that. And when I think about the possibilities for Wood County Master Gardeners in 2009, it almost makes my head spin! We've come such a long way since our founding in 2003. There is much going on in our organization and I trust that each of you will take the opportunity to be involved in areas that interest you.

One challenge we face as we grow is to stay connected. We are indeed fortunate to have a great newsletter and website and I encourage us all to take advantage of these tools to stay informed. The new 2009 class kicked off on January 6. Please join me in welcoming the trainees into our association and to our meetings.

On behalf of the 2009 officers--Kathleen, Connie and Karen, we look forward to making 2009 a year of possibilities fulfilled.

Carolyn

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Newsletter Comments to:
Eileen Bartlett
ebartlett3@yahoo.com

Wood County Master Gardeners website: www.wcmgtx.org

Wood County TX AgriLife Extension Service
618 South Main Street
Quitman, TX 75783-0968
Phone: 903-763-2924, Fax: 903-763-2092

Wood County Extension Agent
Clint Perkins
Email: ctperkins@ag.tamu.edu

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT - Carolyn Rominger

Location: Hilltop Farm, near Gilmer, Texas

Family: My husband, Kelly and I have one son, a beautiful daughter-in-law and two precious grandchildren (I know... all grandchildren are precious!)

.....Carolyn & Sister-in-Law planting a baby spruce.....



Currently, Kelly and I own/operate a chicken farm. We are contract growers for Pilgrim's Pride. I also have a space, Back In Thyme, at JANS Antiques in Winnsboro. It is a fun outlet as it seems there is never enough room for all the junk/treasures I encounter. (Kelly's still trying to decide if this is a hobby, a business, or a royal pain, as he is my "go-to" guy for repairs, etc.)

Joining Master Gardeners

We moved to the farm in 2002 after living in Dallas for many years and running the rat race. At first, being out here in the middle of nowhere was therapeutic, but after a year, I was ready to get involved in the community and make new friends. I grew up in Quitman and heard from my mom they had started a master gardener program. I wasn't very familiar with the program, but I loved gardening and was keen on getting to do volunteer work in my hometown. I kept my fingers crossed that I could get in the class since I actually lived in Upshur County. I got lucky and was accepted to enroll in the 2003 class.

Childhood Plant/Garden Experiences

As is the case with many, my grandmother introduced me to gardening. As a very young child, I remember visiting her and asking if I could have something from her garden to take home with me. She asked if I wanted a flower or a plant; I replied, "a flower." Then my mom had to explain all about roots, etc. on the way home, as I thought I could just stick my flower in the dirt and have it grow.

Garden Mentors

There are too many to list, but one is Doctor Dirt from Mississippi. A couple of years ago we got to visit him and tour his eclectic garden and he autographed my Southern Living Garden Book on the page with his photo.

Garden Interests - Goals - Dreams

After we heard Buggy speak at a Master Gardener Meeting last spring, I talked Kelly into building me a water fountain for my birthday – he used a 6' stock tank with an old crucible elevated in the center. For Christmas, we got a big old cupola and the plan is to mount that above the fountain and then landscape a garden room around it in the back yard. I'm on a mission to get rid of most all the turf/lawn area, but it will be a long journey. It seems I have more ideas than I have money or time. It is fortunate that I live out on a farm so I don't have to endure the scorn of neighbors as they react to some of my garden art! (Like the bedspring arbor, or the tire crown planters and the bottle tree and bottle bushes....)

Favorite Plants/Trees/Shrubs

My latest favorites are the two deodar cedars I had as living Christmas trees. I love conifers. I'm also especially fond of ornamental grasses and most any native plants.

Favorite Beneficial Critters

I love them all and made a pact with them not to use any chemical pesticides or herbicides. I relish this time of year, watching the birds enjoy the potager garden outside my kitchen window.

Clint Perkins Gardening Corner

Insects In The Vegetable Garden



It is still winter time in Texas, but spring will be here before we know it. I know people are getting the gardening itch, and are ready for the temperatures to warm up so they can plant their vegetable gardens. Producing your own vegetables can be challenging. One of the greatest challenges is to successfully control insect pest. Fortunately, there are numerous management alternatives that vegetable gardeners may consider when dealing with insects and other pest. These include cultural, biological, and management controls and, last but not least, chemical controls. The weather this time of year offers a good opportunity to stay inside and plan for the work to be done in the coming months.

There are approximately 30,000 insect species in Texas. Fortunately, fewer than 100 species are routine pests in the vegetable gardens. Most insects found in gardens are either incidental or beneficial, contributing to pollination, the balance of nature, or recycling organic matter. A garden with an abundant supply of insects actually may be quite healthy and productive. However, insect pests can reduce the quantity or quality of the vegetables produced and may transmit plant diseases. Consider using control measures when insects threaten the garden.

Identify the insects in your garden to determine if they are beneficial, incidental or pest. Learn to recognize the common insects in your area, especially the pest and learn to recognize the type of damage associated with pest.

Insect pests can enter vegetable gardens by walking or flying. Flight allows many insects to have great mobility, and their movement in large numbers is possible. Also, certain pests, like aphids and mites, reproduce about once a week under good conditions and their populations can increase rapidly. When pests seem to appear in large numbers almost overnight, they have either moved in or are rapidly reproducing.



Clint Perkins Gardening Corner

Insects In The Vegetable Garden (continued)



As insects grow, they change in size and shape. The process is called metamorphosis. Some insects damage plants in both the immature and adult stages. Because insects change, they may be difficult to identify and the type of damage they cause may also change. Young caterpillars may barely scrape the surface of a leaf when feeding, while the same caterpillar may eat great chunks of leaves when they mature.

An insect's mouthparts can be a key to understanding the type of damage by a pest. Insects with sucking mouthparts feed by piercing leaves or fruit. Damage appears as mottled leaves. Insects with chewing mouthparts chew holes in plants. If you can recognize the type of feeding, you can select the proper insecticides (i.e., stomach poisons for chewing insects).

When planting a vegetable garden, anticipate the pests that may occur during the growing season. Consider all management practices that will help deal with the pest before they become a problem. Then, develop a management plan and put it into use before problems occur. Use your past experiences as a guide in anticipating pests for the upcoming season.

Integrated pest management, IPM, is a philosophy of managing pest using multiple stewardship when implementing control practices. IPM is the overriding strategy for most of the production agriculture practices that are being used today and is rapidly being adopted in home gardening as well. Always remember, when a chemical is needed, always read and follow the label for recommended uses. Go to: <http://hortipm.tamu.edu/>

Now is the time to have your garden soil tested in case your soil needs to be amended to produce a bountiful harvest. The soil bags and forms are available here at the Extension office located at 618 S. Main in Quitman.

Clint Perkins, Wood County Extension Agent
Ag & Natural Resources

PLANTS OF THE MONTH: Winter Plants & Care

Winter Plants of Interest at the TAMU Horticultural Gardens & Field Laboratory
By Dr. William C. Welch, Professor and Landscape Horticulturist



Pansies

The TAMU horticultural gardens at College Station (Zone 8-b) has had several light frosts by the middle of December, but many plants are still performing well. We in Wood County are Zone 8-a.



Snapdragons



Cyclamen

The VIP petunias are still covered with bloom, and pinks, pansies, snapdragons, cyclamen, flowering cabbage and kale, and alyssum are coming into their own.



Lobelia Cardinal Flower



Ornamental Cabbage

Lobelia will continue to add its special blue colors to the garden until the event of a bad freeze.

Wood violets are already blooming.



Wood Violets



Coral Fountain Plant

Russelia equisetiformis (Coral Fountain Plant) and Hymenoxys (Four Nerve Daisy), planted in a well-drained area in the dry garden, continue to produce showy blooms.

Shrubs such as Turk's Cap will flower until hard frost.



Turks Cap

Four Nerve Daisy...



Winter Plants & Care

Dianthus, First Love - Zone 7 - Blooms Mid Winter/Early Spring



How do plants react to low temperatures and die in winter?

Evergreens and deciduous plants adapt differently to cold. Some evergreens survive cold temperatures, such as conifers, but many plants that thrive in subzero-degree climates are deciduous species.

Plants fail to survive because they don't "harden-off," or adjust to cold temperatures. Tropical hibiscus would not be expected to survive below-freezing temperatures; on the other hand, hardy hibiscus generally lose their leaves as the days shorten and go dormant before winter arrives.

Plants sometimes never harden-off due to the following: if they were pruned late in summer or were over fertilized in fall, the cold can catch them unprepared for winter. This often happens with roses.

Under fertilized plants can suffer as well. If they don't have enough carbohydrates stored in their stems and roots, they can fail to form buds in the spring.

If plants are small and recently planted, they might not have had time to establish good root systems by winter. Plants need to be watered immediately after they were planted. In dry winters, evergreens should be given adequate water; root systems don't go dormant and need moisture to survive.

Native plants survive best since they are adapted to the zone.

A common condition in the South is the suddenness of change. In Texas, it can be 70+ degrees F one day and freezing the next. We lose a lot of plants this way.

If you are expecting a severe cold spell in your area, consider place some old blankets or quilts around tender plants' roots overnight. Remove them in the morning if the sun comes out.

If your plants have winter damage, in spring signs include failure to form buds and develop leaves and flowers, cracked bark (particularly at ground level), leaf loss on evergreens, browning appearance of leaves, brittle limbs, failure of the plant to take up water and a general failure to grow.

On the other hand, dead leaves do not necessarily mean that your plants are dead. Take steps to protect your plants. Make sure they have adequate water, and don't fertilize. Use something breathable to cover them.

COLD FRAMES

BY NANCY WEAVER

YOU MIGHT ASK, “WHY BUILD A COLD FRAME IN EAST TEXAS.?” HAVING A COLD FRAME CAN STRETCH THE GROWING SEASON FOR SALAD GREENS UP TO THREE MONTHS. AS EXPENSIVE AS LETTUCE BECOMES DURING THE WINTER MONTHS THAT REASON ALONE MIGHT SUFFICE. HOWEVER, THERE IS MORE. A COLD FRAME CAN INCREASE THE TYPES OF VEGETABLES YOU CAN GROW. THE VEGETABLES WILL ALSO TASTE BETTER.



A COLD FRAME CAN BE SIMPLE OR IT CAN BE A LITTLE MORE COMPLEX, DEPENDING ON HOW AMBITIOUS YOU ARE. I LIKE THE SIMPLE ONES AND THAT MEANS NOTHING MORE THAN A BOX OF BOARDS SET ON THE GROUND OUTDOORS AND TOPPED WITH A SECOND HAND STORM WINDOW.

IN CHOOSING A SITE I PREFER ONE CORNER OF THE GARDEN, SINCE THIS IS AN AREA THAT HAS ALREADY BEEN CULTIVATED AND IS ALSO WELL DRAINED. THE SOIL SHOULD BE RICH AND CRUMBLY. POSITION THE COLD FRAME FACING THE SOUTH TO BENEFIT FROM MAXIMUM HEAT AND LIGHT. THE SIDE WALLS OF THE FRAME SHOULD BE CANTED SO THAT THE HIGH SIDE OF THE FRAME IS TO THE NORTH. ASSUMING AN OLD STORM WINDOW IS USED AS THE COVER, THE WINDOW MUST BE GLAZED SO THAT WHEN IT IS TILTED IN POSITION ATOP THE COLD FRAME, LOWER AREAS ALONG THE GLAZING WILL NOT COLLECT RAINWATER. PAY SPECIAL ATTENTION TO THIS TO AVOID WET AND ROTTING WOOD.

CUT A NARROW BOARD OR STICK TO USE AS A WINDOW PROP. DAYTIME TEMPERATURES CAN SOAR TO 100 DEGREE RANGE INSIDE A SUNLIT COLD FRAME, SO BEING ABLE TO PROP THE TOP OPEN IS IMPORTANT TO PREVENT WILTING.

ENJOY THE DELICIOUS PRODUCE YOUR COLD FRAME ENABLES YOU TO GROW!

Out & About

by Linda Timmons

Garden: One of a vast number of free outdoor restaurants operated by charity-minded amateurs in an effort to provide healthful, balanced meals for insects, birds, and animals.

Henry Beard and Roy McKie, Gardener's Dictionary

January is another quiet month for gardening activities. It's usually a great month to dream over seed catalogues and plan for the busy upcoming spring planting season. This is a great time to start a gardening journal if you don't already have one. Allowing for multiple years in a single notebook helps to keep track of the chores and challenges from prior years and better plan for the current year.

WCMG Training Class

January 6th the first training class will kick off at 9AM at the Quitman extension office with orientation. Clint Perkins will then present "Botany, Structure & Processes".

January 13th will be "Introduction to Propagation". The propagation class is scheduled for 9AM-noon and an afternoon session from 1PM-3PM with lecture, workshop and field trip.

January 20th and 27th will be "Soil I" and the sequel "Soil II". The complete training class schedule is posted in the "Members Only" section of our web site at WCMGTX.org

January 15 "Grow It and Stow It - Raising and Preserving Your Own Groceries" at the Smith County Extension meeting room in the Smith Co. Cotton Belt Bldg, 1517 W. Front St., room 116. This will be offered 2 times: from 9AM-noon, and from 6PM- 9PM.

Upcoming:

Our 7th WCMG Gardening Conference will be held March 7th at the Mineola Civic Center. The speakers will be Dr. William Welch - "Southern Heirloom Gardens" and Kenny Rolins - "Gopher and Mole Control".

Shirley Hirt and Pat Wilson are heading up the conference committee this year and will be needing help from all of us during setup and take down. We will have the opportunity to showcase our WCMG projects at the conference, also.

**Wood County Master Gardeners Meeting
Wood County Extension Office: Thursday, January 15th
8:30 AM ARRIVAL, MEETING STARTS AT 9:00 AM**

The WCMG Association meeting on Thursday, January 15th will be a mixer of current WC Master Gardener members and 2009 students.

We will get to know each other with an open forum; discuss the Mentoring Program, By-laws, Standing Rules, Volunteer Hours Reporting, Project Report Submissions/Requests and answer any questions.

All members should try to attend and all 2009 students as well.

Reminder: Dues for 2009 are due before January 31. You can pay at this meeting: \$15

(All 2009 students dues are paid with their payment for the class)

For additional information on WCMG, please visit the Wood County Master Gardeners Website: www.wcmgtx.org

Winter Garden



*There is peace with a garden, a peace so deep and calm.
That when the heart is troubled, It's like a soothing balm.
There's life within a garden, A life that still goes on.
Filling the empty places, when older plants have gone.
There's glory in the garden, at every time of year,
Spring, summer, autumn, winter, it fills the heart with cheer.
So everyone tend your garden, its beauty to increase.
For in it you will find solace, and in it you will find peace.*

-- Richard Sheridan



Wildscape Project



Our next work date will be Monday, Jan. 19th at 1:30 p.m. in order to include the new class. Until the weather gets better, we will work in the afternoons.

We'll be spreading cardboard and mulch on the remaining area of the wildflower meadow, as well as spreading seeds for spring flowers. Most of the wildflower meadow is already covered and seeded.

In the next few weeks we'll be tackling the drainage problem. The city of Mineola will be building berms at the entrance to the paths off the sidewalk by the parking lot to divert the flow of water.

Joan Morgan will be keeping up with the wildscape expenditures, so all receipts should be turned in to her and she will, in turn, give them to Karen Doss for payment.

Peggy, Joan, Judy, Fran, and Liz have volunteered to serve as team leaders to assist with work days. All those who "adopted" beds in the butterfly garden are encouraged to maintain them this year and the grassy area has been divided into two sections and will be maintained by Peggy and Judy.

We are hoping to mentor new trainees in assuming partnership in the various sections. Another project we will be developing is a demonstration composting area. Stay tuned for that. We also plan to hard surface the pathways this year and we'll be researching materials to use.

We're excited about the New Year and what it will bring at the Wildscape!



**Wood County Master Gardeners - Project Total Volunteer Hours
December 2008 Hours ending 12/31/08**

Project Code	Dec. Service Hours	Cumulative Service Hours 2008	Project NAME
MISC	6	617.0	MISCELANEOUS
ADMIN	17	280.5	Administration/Executive Tasks
SPKR		60.5	Guest Speaker
WEB	5	117.5	Website & Email (Email Added 8/6/6)
MSG		52.0	Mineola Nature Preserve, Sensory Garden
MWG	11	915.5	Mineola Nature Preserve, Wildscape Garden
HHH		7.5	Hawkins Helping Hand
MSP	2	44.5	Mineola South Park
CCGSC			Children's Church Garden, Smith Chapel (Mineola Smith Chapel Pioneer Club)
MERT		234.5	Mineola Earthkind Rose Trial (Addendum Request Submitted 02/17/07)
CEU			Continuing Education Units (Units = Hours)
QL		36.0	Quitman Library
NLTR	5	90.0	Newsletter
CONF		357.5	Conferences
WMMM	2	26.0	Winsboro Morgan Mercy Mission
WCAP		101.5	Wood County Airport Landscaping
T		44.0	Training
QSH		25.0	Quitman Stinson Home
PROP		57.5	Propagation
QEO		9.0	Quitman Extension Office
WEC		2.0	Winsboro Episcopal Church
WGC		13.0	Winnsboro Garden Club (PHW)
GHPA	28	1483.0	Governor Hogg Park Arboretum & Botanical Garden
QSE			Quitman Special Education
JMG		65.0	Junior Master Gardeners
Total	76	4639.0	

Note: The totals for December and Cumulative 2008 only include hours until December 15th. Any other hours reported for the remaining of the month will be included in the January 2009 hours.

**Reminder:
Please get your Project Hours form to Nancy Weaver at the end of each month**

WOOD COUNTY MASTER GARDENER CALENDAR - January 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6 9 a.m. 2009 Class Botany, Structure & Process	7	8	9	10
11	12	13 9 a.m. 2009 Class Propagation LAP TOP/PROJ	14 9 a.m. Arboretum Work	15 8:30 Arrive 9:00 a.m. WCMG MEETING LAP TOP/PROJ	16	17
18	19 1:30 p.m. Wildscape Work	20 9 a.m. 2009 Class Soil Pt. I LAP TOP/PROJ	21 9 a.m. Arboretum Work	22	23	24
25	26 1:30 p.m. Wildscape Work NEWSLETTER ITEMS DUE	27 9 a.m. 2009 Class Soil Pt. II LAP TOP/PROJ	28 9 a.m. Arboretum Work	29	30	31 <i>VOLUNTEER HOURS DUE TO NANCY WEAVER</i>

NOTE: Reservations for Laptop & Projector are indicated as: **LAP TOP/PROJ**

Some of the above dates are tentative or can change.

Please check your e-mails or call the project leaders with questions on dates/times.