

# URBAN DIRT

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Edited by: Pam Libby

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## GARDEN SHOW

Master Gardeners worked together for a very successful booth at The Texas Home and Garden Show in February. So successful was the effort that all the plants were sold out plants by Saturday night! This could have been a disaster, but Ruby Summers saved the day when she went by Pam Shelby's and picked up trays of *Dona* tomatoes and dug up bulbs to provide plants for sale for the following day.

The show provides a way of meeting the public and educating them about our programs. A special note of thanks should go to all that participated. Please see GARDEN SHOW on page 6.

## INTERNATIONAL MASTER GARDENER CONFERENCE

Master Gardeners from all over the country (and Canada) will meet this year in San Antonio. We don't have all the details as yet, but expect conferences, garden tours and general get-togethers.

Make plans and reservations now for the conference which is slated for August 12, 13, 14, and 15th, 1993.

Many Master Gardeners are getting hotel reservations confirmed now in order to get the best prices and to insure availability. It is still possible to book rooms under \$100 per day (for example: La Quinta was \$91 at last report).



## NEXT MEETING:

4/20/93

Executive Board 5:00 pm  
Covered Dish Dinner 6:30 pm  
General Meeting 7:30 pm

## SUBJECT:

"Best Bets in Hanging Baskets"  
Bill Adams, Harris County Extension -  
Horticulture

Please remember: Bring plants to sell!



## MG PHONE DUTY IN FEB/MAR:

Mondays: Fern Baker,  
Susan Jones, Evie Lotze,  
Carey Manire, and Pat  
Manning

Tuesdays: Pam Clark, Maria B. De Perin, and  
Lee Tawse

Wednesdays: Barbara Biggers,  
Ben Looney, Linda Hatleberg, Nancy Nash,  
and Isa Taylor

Thursdays: Tracy King, Carolyn Davis and  
Aimee Atkinson

Fridays: Vicki Brignon, Tracy King Byron  
Forney and Harvey Kornblit

## SPRING IN THE ORCHARD

By Yvonne Gibbs



Waste Not -  
Want Not.  
Things are going  
on schedule. Now  
this is a good  
feeling, we have  
done our winter  
chores timely and  
with great  
participation.  
After our winter  
meeting on Jan.

13, the grapes were pruned. We really did a good clean up job, there was not a stick of grapewood left. Twenty very diligent souls had gone to work (many for the first time) and in less than two hours, things were in "apple pie order." All of the vines were properly pruned and all the grapewood safely stored in cars to be taken home to be used in decorative crafts.

Later that same week, another twenty plus diligent and knowledgeable souls set about their work and in less than three hours, the stone fruits and persimmons had been properly pruned. Much graftwood was collected. Where else can you get the named varieties that will grow here at a better price? (FREE) The dormant oil has been applied, the pears cleaned up, and the mulch is moving from a grand pile to smaller piles around the rows of trees.

Thanks to Tom LeRoy and Bill Adams' presence, lots of questions were answered and how-to instruction was given on many varieties of fruit. Sorry if you missed it.

Graftwood can only be collected when the trees are dormant. The wood will be stored until the trees are growing and the bark will slip. This is done under very careful conditions. If you are interested in learning how, come to the April 13th, meeting of the Fruit Study Group, which will be from 7:00 pm to 9:30 pm. This meeting will be dedicated to propagation. We will have a great guest speaker, Dr. Gerald Johnson, Plant Pathologist at Texas A & M.

Also on that day (April 13), from 5:30 to 6:30, we are planning a pecan grafting seminar and many demonstrations on budding and grafting. It will be limited to the first 20 to sign up. Participants will be able to graft a tree and take home a newly grafted pecan tree.

The fruit trees are starting to bloom, especially the early peaches and some of the apples. They are truly spectacular. Try to come out and see what's blooming early this year and don't forget to come back later in the spring to catch the late bloomers.

There is no better way to learn than by doing. We have a running schedule of things that we do and we would love to share with you. Here are some of the projects: painting the tree trunks, thinning the fruits, training the blackberries, training the trellised apples, training the pear branches. Each of these things have a reason and effect on the crop you can expect to get. Learn from the best source, Tom and Bill. We have the best right here! Volunteer day in the orchard is on Wednesdays at 9:00 am to about 11:00 am, most people bring along a lunch and we get to eat and visit a while. See you in the orchard!

## WHO AM I? HOW DID I GET HERE?

By Tom H. Robb, Jr. President



As Perry Mason always asks, "Where were you on the night of Oct 16, 1986.?" It's no surprise that most of us find such a question hard to answer. As for me,

"I'm getting to where I can't remember my Daddy's brother's last name."

We're trying to get the computer data base organized and one of the things that we're trying to find out is when each of our members (and non-members) took the Master Gardener Course. Included responses to our questionnaire were "It was several years ago", "While M. Portie was there", and "???".

Some left the space blank while others put in dates that our records show are wrong.

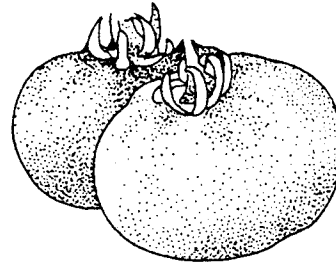
Actually, the computer at the Extension Service gives little or no information for the period prior to Stephanie coming to work. Before that another computer system was being used and the files either could not or simply were not transferred to the present system.

If anyone has a copy of their Class Roster, particularly those prior to 1990, it would surely help us bring the records up to date in this area. And if you also have a list of your class graduates that would be great too. These Class Rosters could also be included in our "History" which is kept on display in the Master Gardener Room. Please send them to me, Tom H. Robb, Jr. at 8823 Cardwell, Houston, TX 77055.

## CONGRATULATIONS TO...

Tom Robb, on the wonderful article on Tom and his great work with our Master Gardener Association. It appeared in *The Houston Chronicle*, March 5th edition and was written by Kathy Huber, Garden Editor, who by the way, is also a Master Gardener.

The article told about Tom's remarkable success in the vegetable test gardens, particularly with tomatoes. There was one small and amusing mistake, the article stated that Tom and the other volunteers were able to harvest top producer - Carnival at an average weight per fruit of 5.1 pounds! Some tomatoes!!



## LOOKING FOR A FEW GOOD GARDENERS

by Tom LeRoy

Bill and I are getting started on another book project and need to photograph a few attractive vegetable gardens that are photo- genic.

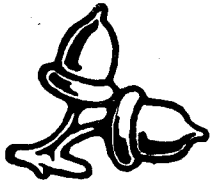
Please submit a snapshot (if possible) and your name and phone number and we'll be contacting you.

(Ed. note: Perhaps they should look into photographing some of Tom Robb's 5 lb. tomatoes.)



Master Gardener, Vicki Forsyth is looking for MGs as employees for her new nursery in The Woodlands. She can be reached at 353-6827.

MIGHTY OAKS FROM TINY ACORNS  
by Tom H. Robb, Jr. President



Have you ever considered how one action, perhaps commonplace and unnoticed at the time, can be the catalyst that creates great changes?

Who would ever have thought that the organization of a state Master Gardener program hinged upon one Houston woman deciding to take the Master Gardener class in the mid '80s. But I'm getting ahead of myself.

Last week, in response to our recertification program, I received a renewal from one of our former Master Gardeners, Delores Dulak Konrad, who now lives in Peshtigo, Wisconsin. She wrote a letter and enclosed a newspaper article. The name of the newspaper was not included but it reads as follows:

*PESHTIGO - Delores Dulak Konrad of Peshtigo, was elected as the first president of the Wisconsin Master Gardener Association. The Wisconsin Master Gardener Association represents 1,800 volunteer Master Gardeners.*

*Master Gardeners are trained volunteers who provide public education in consumer horticulture for the University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension Service. Konrad received her training in Houston, Texas, and initiated the Master Gardener program in Marinette County and Menominee County.*

*She is president of the M & M gardener Club and the Northern Lights Master Gardener Association. She is also a co-host on the live "call-in" radio program*

*"Green and Growing" on 5.70 AM WMAM.*

I also want to share Delores' letter with you:

*Dear Tom:*

*Greetings to ya'll in Houston. I've enclosed a check for membership even though I'm not living Texas. I'm interested in receiving your newsletter.*

*I graduated in the second class of Master Gardeners. I also was in the first advanced training class given. I know that I spoke to several classes on "Organizing your materials and what it means to be a M.G." I left Houston in November 1988 and have continued to be active in M.G. in Wisconsin. When I moved here, there was no program. My county agent thought the program was a good one and gave me the "O.K." I had to recruit, design, market, and implement the program for a 3 county area since none of the agents had any experience with M.G.s. The program has grown to 5 neighboring counties and still growing. I was recently elected as the first President of the Wisconsin M.G. Association and have been invited to participate in the University of Wisconsin College of Agriculture and Life Science Strategic Planning Process. I will be working to establish long term goals and funding for Extension programs.*

*I will be attending the National M.G. Convention in San Antonio and I hope to see some of my old gardening friends there. Say hi to Bill Adams if he is still there.*

*Sincerely,  
Delores D. Konrad"*

( Continued, see Acorn, p.5)

## ACORN (Cont.)

Some of you, particularly those of you from out of the area, have written asking what you can do to remain active in the Master Gardener program. Does the preceding newspaper article and letter give you any ideas??

On behalf of the Harris County Master Gardener Association, as of now 231 members strong, I want to express my congratulations to one who has taken the "acorn" of Texas education and planted and nurtured the "oak" in Wisconsin.

## MERCER ARBORETUM REPORT

by Buddy Barziza



Mercer reopened the Master Gardener's telephone hotline in January after closing down the program during December. Several of our MG volunteers have

indicated that calls were silooooow but as spring approaches, we anticipate our calls to increase.

Observed answering the phone at the MG's desk during January were: Connie Stevens, Reba Morrill, Beth Galiano, Tricia West, Barbara Killian, Elizabeth Hees, Imogene Harding and Dee Jefferies.

It was good to see Barbara Killian, MAAC's hospitality chairperson, at the MG's desk taking calls after a severe case of food poisoning.

Our second class for MGs began in January. What a great opportunity for Mercer to participate in such a quality program that is not only beneficial to Mercer, but to the general public and as a back up to Bear Creek MG's.

## EVENTS AT MERCER

### March 26 - 27: MARCH MART

Perennials, trees, shrubs, herbs, exotics, house plants and native plants will be offered to raise money for education programs.

### April 3: GUIDED GARDEN TOUR

Saturday, 10 am to 12 noon. Visit the Louisiana Iris Display and stroll through the gardens.

### April 15: PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP

The workshop meets for three days (April 15, 17, and 20). Registration is required, fee is \$60.00. Call for details.

### April 17: HOUSTON PALM SOCIETY

SHOW AND SALE: Sat., 9 AM to 5 pm.

### April 24: EARTH DAY GARDEN TOUR:

Visit the Daylily Garden Display, tour from 10 am to noon.

## AN INVITATION...

If you wish to volunteer to help sell at the March Mart, contact Yvonne Gibbs 462-7052. You don't need extensive knowledge as an information sheet will be provided with each plant. You will be needed to work a 8 am to 4 pm shift on either March 26, 27 or 28th. Lunch is included!!

## AROUND TOWN:

Moody Gardens in Galveston will be opening their 10-story, 40,000 sq. ft., glass, Rainforest Pyramid on March 27, 1993. It should be spectacular, with over 2,000 plants, 3,000 butterflies, and a variety of tropical birds and fish!

The Texas Herb Market will be in Houston on May 1, 1993 at the St. George Orthodox Church on Bissonet at Mercer (Buffalo). It will be from 10 am to 5 pm and is a non-profit show and plant sale sponsored by the Texas Herb Growers and Marketers Assoc.

**GARDEN SHOW**  
by Barbara Ferer,  
President-Elect, MGA



Because of the Tremendous outpouring of help, this year's booths at the Home and Garden Show were a resounding success. This year's show broke all previous records.

Special thanks go to:

Ruby Fairweather for her extra help providing booth hardware

Bob Fredericks for his consignment compost bins

and

The Spring 1993 Master Gardener Class for set-up/break-down of the show.

Reluctantly, I admit to reservations about the large task of coordinating this show. Thanks to EVERYONE who helped put these fears to rest with their overwhelming assistance, making the show a smashing success!

**APRIL EVENTS AT THE HARRIS COUNTY EXTENSION CENTER**

**APRIL 13:** Gulf Coast Fruit Study Group will meet at 7:00 pm. The topic: Pecan Grafting (You must pre-register to do four-flap grafting)

**APRIL 14** Training program on the Africanized Honey Bee.

Note: Two classes will be offered. You can choose either the 2-4 pm session or the 6-8 pm session.

**APRIL 17** Spring Garden School (see sign up sheet - attached)

**THE OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED**



The Harris County Extension Service will be closed on April 9, 1993 in observance of Good Friday and April 21 for San Jacinto Day.

**PEACEABLE KINGDOM TRIP**

by Murray P. Kast

April 24 is set for the trip to Peaceable Kingdom and Washington on the Brazos.

Peaceable Kingdom is a non-profit, teaching and research foundation situated on 150+ acres. The horticultural plan is totally organic. A seed-saving garden is used to assure quality control and to be certain that any chemical use has been totally eliminated.

There are four separate organic gardens on the tour. The balance of the day will depend upon whether the wildflowers are still in good bloom. The Texas Dept. of Parks has a hot-line phone number that will be called a few days prior to the trip to see if the countryside is still providing those brilliant vistas. If not, there are several alternatives at Washington on the Brazos, included is the home of Anson Jones (last president of the Republic of Texas), Independence Hall, and The Star of the Republic Museum.

The cost is \$5.00 per person, should we need to spend more time at Washington on the Brazos, you may want to bring \$2 or \$3 extra for some of the facilities at the park. Bring your lunch, soft drinks will be provided.