



Urban Dirt

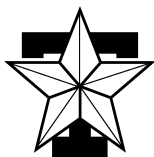


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Texas Agricultural Extension Service
The Texas A&M University System

Master Gardeners at the Ronald McDonald House

By Hope Dyson

About three years ago the Harris County Master Gardeners Association was approached by Bill Adams to help with a few plantings at the Ronald McDonald House in the Medical Center. The call was answered by Nancy Kuykendall and Ann Robinson. They planted an herb garden in pots in the garden/play area of the hostel. They then asked for volunteers interested in maintaining the pots. Master Gardeners Kay Kimball and Ron Harris took over the care of the garden and kept the pots watered, fed, and alive, doing what was necessary, up until the start of last summer. Kay and Ron are retiring to Austin at the first of next year (2001) and last spring they put out a call for someone to take over the project.

Joanne Storm saw Kay and Ron's request in Urban Dirt and called me to see if we could do it. Of course I said yes; who can't commit to watering a few pots of herbs a couple of times a week! Then even more people responded:

- Beth and Bruce Grunden
- E.J. and Mary Lanik
- Sandra Matejich
- Joanne Storm
- Jim and Mardy Thomas
- Robert White

Joanne got all the e-mail addresses together and after a meeting with Kay and Ron, the watering began. This wonderful group of Master Gardeners, apprentice MGs and spouses came forth and all through the summer of 2000 kept the herb garden alive and flourishing.

The administration of The Ronald McDonald House asked if we could maintain additional pots on the roof of the garage, that formerly had been looked after by the resident manager; the group decided they could do this. Beth and Bruce Grunden, Sandra Matejich, Robert White, and several others solicited plants, mulch, and Agra-Soak from local suppliers. Many thanks to Agra-Soak, inc., Garden Gate and Teas Nursery who provided fine plants and materials.



On Saturday October 28, 2000, six of the above volunteers assembled at R.M.H. and worked for several hours digging, planting and refurbishing the pots, dividing and moving plants as needed. We all had fun and were assisted by a little girl, a guest at R.M.H., who came out to help dig and plant. While we were working together she told me that her baby had a great big tumor here (she pointed to her chest) and they were going to leave it behind here in Houston. She loved digging!!!!

A big thanks to Nancy, Ann, Kay and Ron for starting the program and keeping it going up until the start of last summer and to Beth, Bruce, E.J., Mary, Sandra, Joanne, Jim, Mardy and Robert for continuing the project. ☘

Note from the Editor.

Hope Dyson submitted this article for the November newsletter and it subsequently disappeared in to the proverbial depths of my typical County Agents in-box. My sincere apologies to Hope.

Bill Notes

By Bill Adams



The Lone Star

Gardener's Book of Lists is finally out. I was fortunate to have so many Master Gardeners and associates contribute lists to this book that we are planning to have a line up of contributors available at the next Master Gardener meeting, February 20, 2001. So bring your book or buy one from the Master Gardener's Association (\$18) and we will scribble all over it for you. I'm not sure they will all be available but the list is extensive—Norm Arnold, Kathy Huber, Brenda Smith, Clyde Cannon, Glen Graves, Diane Ballentine, Stephanie Gebhardt, Sally McQueen Squire, Suzanne Chapman, Heidi Sheesley, Ruby Summers, Carol Cammack, Linda Gay, Tom LeRoy, Mary Versfeldt, Ellen Barner, Lee Jacobs (and they mistakenly used Lou Jacobs picture), Greg Harmison, Frances Robeson, Jan Gisler, Steve Wood and Cindy Appleman to name a few. A special thanks to Anne O'Neil for securing some of the first copies available in Houston!

Crazy Jerry Parsons our Extension Horticulturist in San Antonio is coming for the "Bright Spot in the Middle of Winter" program that Frances Robeson started last year with Felder Rushing. Frances is "high behind" this years program too and looking forward to Jerry's presentation on "New Plants for the New Millennium". Jerry is our Extension version of Don Rickles so don't wear your gardening feelings on your sleeve. Seriously, Jerry just helps us to laugh at ourselves ... and the humor comes with an educational message to boot.

I was kidding about packing up in April. My retirement won't come before August

and perhaps a few months later. Come to think of it my comments sure generated a lot of interest. One Master Gardener even brought me a storage box. A less than subtle hint, perhaps?

Many of you probably have heard that Mike Shively our County Extension Agent-Agriculture is retiring January 31, 2001. In other words he may be gone when you read this. We get a lot of agriculture questions from absentee land owners so Mike will be sorely missed and most likely, he won't be replaced very soon either. Very few graduates want to work in the "Big City".

Team Tomato is coming up March 3 so we will need lots of help in the greenhouse—transplanting, labeling, etc. See Billy Duncan for an assignment. Talk with Mary Lynn Randall if you would like to work on the sale.



Also Clyde Cannon has been diligently working to improve the walk space around the vegetable garden, shade cover and compost area. He has had lots of help from Harris County inmates but I'm sure he could use another Master Gardener hand or two. Clyde's the one with the close hair cut.

The Millennium Garden still needs planting. We have a lot of the plants but many still need to be planted. I suspect we will have to provide more nutrition for the garden to flourish. Currently it is mostly sand and mulch. While we have used lots of plant fertilizer tablets that won't be enough. After hearing John Ferguson's program on compost last month I'm reluctant to recommend commercial fertilizer so does anyone have a ton of humus we could have? If not, I have a lead on elephant dung if you have a dump truck we could use.

We graduated the Spring 2000 class and the Pct 2 class January 11, 2001. What a great bunch of gardeners! By now Tom Robb should have them up on the Master Gardener web site at harris-cnty.tamu.edu/mg/. Donna Fay Hilliards Pct 2 MG's had so many

Upcoming Events

February 20, 2001

Extension Office

Master Gardener Monthly Meeting

6:30 p.m. - Desserts

7:00 p.m. - "People & Plants"

by Carol Cammack

February 27, 2001

Extension Office

A Bright Spot in the Middle of Winter

The ever "Crazy Jerry" Parsons presents New Plants for the New Millennium. \$15 for lunch showing, \$20 for the dinner showing. (See flyer pg. 8)

March 3, 2001

Extension Office

Team Tomato

Annual tomato, pepper, herb sale and demonstrations. Volunteers needed as always. Call Stephanie to sign up; (281) 855-5600.

March 20, 2001

Extension Office

Master Gardener Monthly Meeting

6:30 p.m. - Desserts

7:00 p.m. - "Gesneriads Revisited"

by Dale Martens

Tuesdays Mornings

8:00, Extension Office

Tuesdays Workdays

Get your volunteer hours in, make friends and enjoy the garden.

First Tuesday of the Month

Lunch, Extension Office

Hamburger Tuesday

After a rewarding morning of activity in the garden, enjoy a home-cooked burger and an informative presentation.

Feb. — Georgia Bost

Hardy Hibiscus

Feb. — Carol Cammack

Floral Design

volunteer hours we accused Donna Fay of locking the gates when they came out to work. Both classes were early starters and a real credit to the Harris County Master Gardener program. The Spring 2001 class started January 25 and they should continue the tradition.



President's Thoughts

By Kenneth Dorman, MG President

"Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." *Galatians 6:7*

I was sitting on the patio in our back yard the other evening enjoying the cool, crisp night air and looking at the sky. We had rain and wind the day before and the moon and four stars were shining clear and bright. Four stars? Where were the rest? I was sitting in the dark and could only see four stars clearly, but by squinting and concentrating I could dimly make out more. Very faintly, though. My mind went back to camping trips in South Texas when I was young and the memory of the huge sky filled with billions of bright stars, stationary and shooting made me sad. Then I thought about what the rain had washed from our yards and streets, parking lots and runways into the bayous, creeks and rivers that feed into Galveston Bay and was really sad. I spend a lot of time fishing in West Bay and there is a lot of life there. How does the marine life survive what we saturate them with? Perhaps this is evolution in progress; only the strong will survive in some mutated form that can exist with pollution. Us, too?

Well, enough speculation and on to happier issues. Thursday, January 11, we graduated the Bear Creek Spring Master Gardener Class and the Precinct 2 Summer

Class. Linda Gay, newly appointed Director at Mercer, was the keynote speaker and even though ill, presented a wonderful program on gardens in the Northwest. We will have four more classes this year; two at Bear Creek and one each at Mercer and Precinct 2 with a total enrollment of about 245 potential new Master Gardeners. It appears we will graduate and retain a higher percentage of students from the Spring and Fall classes and the Mercer and Precinct 2 classes than we have in the past. I would like to challenge these new graduates to take an active part in the operation of the HCMGA. Not just in the gardening aspect, but in the overall operation and goal setting for the organization. We need fresh ideas from people that have come from outside the area, some new motivation and drive to expand the membership and scope of our community contributions. Make yourself visible. Be heard and participate.

Spring vegetable garden planting time is fast approaching and it is time to start working the soil. The Christian Community Service Center (CCSC) garden that we are helping with has been, and still is, a great success. We harvested snap beans until the first of December and bell and jalapeno peppers until the first week of January. We are presently harvesting broccoli, collards, mustard-spinach, Swiss chard, sugar snap peas, snow peas, cabbage and three kinds of lettuce. I planted 100 onion sets in between rows of lettuce in one bed so when the lettuce is finished we will have a crop of onions. Some time in mid-February we will have a group of young volunteers from local schools come in and help build another four beds and prepare all fourteen for planting. I could use some Master Gardeners to help direct this project so I will ask Tom Robb to send out e-mail when more details are available. We will also be planting fruit trees. All the produce goes to the pantry of CCSC and is distributed to persons in need along with the other goods and services this wonderful organization provides. The spring garden will have the following: 12 tomato plants, six sweet bell peppers, six hot peppers, one bed with pole snap beans and one bed with bush snap beans, two beds of potatoes, one bed with

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Book Committee Anne O'Neill
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squash, one bed of cucumbers, the onions, six eggplants, one bed of okra and one with watermelons for the workers. The beds measure 4'x8' inside so we will have a good garden area. We hope to plant twelve to fourteen fruit trees, mostly figs with a few citrus.

A new committee has been formed to monitor and recommend action on requests for Master Gardener assistance that come in from the communities in Harris County. George Williams is Chair with Glen Graves, Theron McLaren, Mary Lynn Randall and me as members. Expectations are that over the next few years the HCMGA will be asked to take a more active role in areas of the county other than Bear Creek and we encourage this.

Requests have been received asking to be able do sanctioned volunteer work on the weekends. At present this is not possible at Bear Creek. Access to county property requires supervision by county employees and our Extension Advisers shouldn't be expected to devote any more time than they already do. Hopefully, in the near future we will open up more areas like Precinct 2 so people in other parts of the county will have the opportunity to work closer to home and possibly on some weekends. The requests are not being ignored, but no solution is available at present. Suggestions are welcome.

Several times in the past I have invited suggestions on various topics, but receive very little to no input. The Board of Directors and the office of the President are in existence to bring to fruition suggestions and requests that are determined to be to the benefit of the organization. If we do not hear from you the only things that get changed are the ones we think up. If this suits everyone, great, lets get on with the show.

Although it does not appear on the schedule of upcoming events there will be a "Cure the Winter Blues" type program on February 27 with an outstanding guest speaker, I think. More on this later as news

comes in from Francis Robeson and Jean Fefer. Until next month I wish all of you peace, joy and warm weather. ☘



From the Glass House

By Jean Fefer, Billy Duncan & Pat Cole

What fun it is to plant a seed and watch it germinate and create a plant which yields a beautiful flower, delicious vegetables, and a diversity of colors, textures and fragrances. Think what fun you can have if you plant hundreds of seeds!! That's what's happening in the greenhouse and we need your help to get ready for the Team Tomato Sale on March 3rd. We are currently planting herbs, peppers and tomatos. Many different varieties of each are included. In a few weeks these will need to be 'bumped up' into quart and gallon containers. There are other things to do while we wait for the first plantings on January 16th to get big enough to be transplanted. We will continue to plant seeds which will be sold in smaller containers. We will prepare the larger containers to receive the transplants.

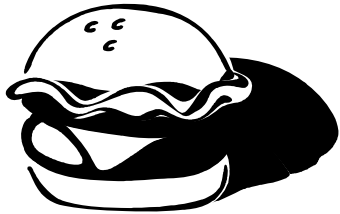
We will continue to maintain a variety of plants that we hope to preserve and propagate for the April Spring Symposium. These need to be tended with extra loving care so we can give them all our attention once Team Tomato is over. At that time, early March, we will ask for plants and cuttings that we can propagate for the spring plant sale. At this time we do not have room to house new plants other than the ones we already have plus the plants for Team Tomato.

If you are hesitant to get involved in the greenhouse because you are not sure you will know what to do, fear not! We are there to fill you in on all the skills you will need to help.

The executive board of MG has decreed that garden coordinators should spend some time in the greenhouse so they know what is involved in supplying their needs for their various plantings. This would be a good time for you to get involved, before things get really hectic outside and we need the help now inside.

You will notice some improvements in our working conditions-ground grids that make it easier to walk on the stones, new hoses that make walking around a lot safer and watering easier and new wire mesh tops on some of the tables that were deteriorating. We are thankful to the powers that be for granting some of our wishes. We will probably have a few more so we want everyone to know that we appreciate the additions. We look forward to seeing you - Bring a pencil. ☘





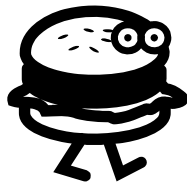
Hamburger Tuesday Update

By Mary Ann Wagner

The first Tuesday of January was windy, clear and cold. The plants in the gardens were brown and wilted. Thoughts of Spring were in the air when Glen Graves made his wonderful presentation on Butterfly Gardening. Glen had a wonderful video that made you want to rush home and start plans for your Butterfly Garden. He described the life cycles of the butterfly, he told us what butterflies are found in Houston, and where to find more information on Butterfly Gardening. Butterflies are the topic for our Spring Symposium. Glen's program was a great introduction.

Our February program will feature Georgia Bost of the Village Botanica. She will speak on the Hardy Hibiscus. Georgia hybridizes these plants and is responsible for many of the varieties on the market today. She has received a U.S. Department of Energy grant to study how the hardy hibiscus helps control the amount of carbon escaping from the soil. It is believed that carbon escaping into the air contributes to the greenhouse effect.

Carol Cammack will discuss flower arranging on the first Tuesday of March. Carol is going to show us how we can make the most of flowers we purchase at local grocery stores. Most of us don't have access to the big wholesalers and cannot obtain all of the fancy flowers that are used by florists. Carol will show us how a beautiful arrangement can be



fashioned with flowers from Sam's, Albertsons, or any grocery store.

Remember the first Tuesday of the month. Join us for some gardening, a great hamburger, good companionship, and some new ideas. ☞



News from the Speakers Bureau

By Nancy Davis

I declared today that I hate cold and dark days and I can not find one thing pleasant about cold and rainy weather. So what does one do with these disturbing feelings. We know that this season will continue for at least another month. Bears have permission to hibernate and moles go underground, but what can humans do when they really want to be a bear or a mole? Planning and more planning usually fill my nonproductive, and lazy hours on dark and dreary days. When my thinking becomes negative, I must think

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of brighter days for hope and renewal. When the dark side of me prevails I want active ideas to produce some glitter of hope for sunnier days. Sunnier days allow outdoor activities versus inside gloomy activities of housework and cleaning. I know there must be other things to do other things to do other than stare at the tracks on the carpet as the rain drops outdoors produce the promise of more mud and tracks on the carpets. Books take us to other places and many use the computer to divert their attention from the gloomy days. Convinced that television has little to offer one, other than brain "rot" and tired eyes, I often am forced to take a nap. (ha-ha) Napping is renewal for me, if I can get over the guilty state that I inflict on my thought processes. Guilt is like bad weather, if one ignores it, sometimes it goes away or it may get worse. Feeling guilty can either cause one to suffer or to initiate an action to stop the guilty about something and want an instant guilt removal conversation, I will listen and if you want to join the Speaker's Bureau, it is a worthy activity for a time filler. One can also learn as you prepare for speaking. Most programs are for small groups who are so appreciative that you often feel guilty about accepting the fee for the Master Gardeners. Hey, we are worth more than thirty dollars and MGs often give much more valuable presentations than any other speakers. So guilty or not-please call and help me be a better Speaker's Bureau leader and I promise, I will answer the phone, when home, whether it is a sunny day or a gloomy day. Nancy Davis 281-398-2089. Should I feel guilty about this article? ☞



From the Editor's Desk . . . aka Carol's Commentary

Urban Dirt Goes Monthly!

The Board of Directors has indicated they would like to see Urban Dirt become a monthly publication. I think this is an excellent idea, but I can't do it without your help. All articles **now** need to be submitted to me by the **15th of the month**. Anyone can submit an article or idea for a column. If you would like to make a submission to the Urban Dirt, please email it as **text or attachment** to c-cammack@tamu.edu. Non – electronic submissions should be typed on white paper using large fonts, with no extraneous markings. Mail, fax or drop these items in the Editor's Box at the Extension Office 2 Abercrombie Dr. Houston, TX 77077. Fax: 281-855-5638.

The next issue will be Mar 2001. The submission cutoff date is Feb 15, 2001.

The Most Carefree Tree

By Frances Robeson

A beautiful tree adapted to any soil, suitable for sun or shade and perfect in any site from a xeriscape to a bog, bothered by no insects or diseases would surely be the delight of every gardener. All that is needed is a space to plant it. Ideally this lovely tree should be planted where it can be seen from all sides. To appreciate it fully the viewer should be able to walk around it and look up into its branches as the light shines through its bright rainbow of colors. A fine specimen will have branches adorned in cobalt blue, emerald green, ruby red, aquamarine, amethyst, amber, chartreuse, and pink. It may also be hung with shiny ropes of beads. This perfect tree is of course a bottle tree.

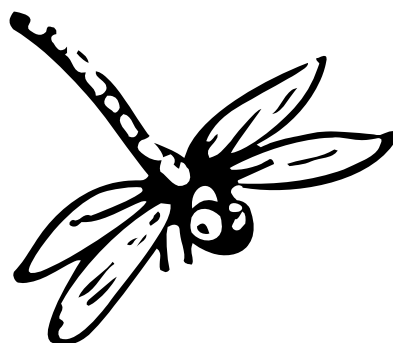
A splendid example of such a tree can be seen at the Antique Rose Emporium. It is made from three branches of a dead juniper that are about fifteen feet high. Each branch holds probably twenty -five bottles upside down on long nails. Light shining through both the colored and clear glass is a thing of surprising beauty like light shining through glass bottles on a window ledge but on a larger scale.

For more information on bottle trees and their history see Scarecrows: Making Harvest Figures and Other Yard Folks by Felder Rushing a book we have in the Master Gardener library. A bottle tree on a smaller scale is shown in The Southern Heirloom Garden by William C. Welch and Greg Grant in a section called "A Garden of Welcome".

It would be hard not to feel welcome in a garden that had so lighthearted a piece of yard art. For this reason it seems that a bottle tree would add a note of joy and welcome to our own Extension Service display gardens. Our 2000 Christmas tree



has been saved for this purpose. It would be a good thing for Master Gardeners to bring favorite bottles to adorn this tree so that we may all share in its creation. Our beloved pink flamingoes may even decide to make their permanent home beneath its branches.✂



Master Naturalist Class

by Karen Breneman

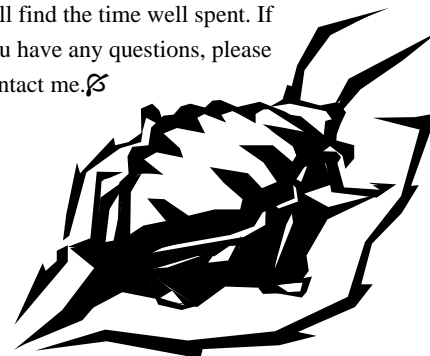
The Spring 2001 class of The Gulf Coast Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist Program is scheduled at Mercer Arboretum to begin on Tuesday, March 13, 2001. The classes will run From 9 to noon on consecutive Tuesdays for 10 weeks with a few Saturday field trips. This wonderful program whose mission is to educate the public about managing and preserving natural resources and habitats within our Houston area community provides the participants with essential information and

strategies to restore and conserve our indigenous species and habitats.

The training class is limited to 25 people with selection criteria to include interest in the program, availability for volunteer service and commitment to stewardship of our natural resources. The fee for this training is \$100. Deadline for applications is March 5, 2001. Call 281-855-5600 for more details and application.

The Fall 2001 class will be held at the Harris County Agricultural Extension office on Abercrombie in the evening starting in September. Exact date and time TBA. All of you are cordially invited to attend our chapter meetings held the first Thursday of all odd numbered months at 7 PM at the Extension office. The next meeting is March 1, 2001. Come learn more about our group and listen to enthusiastic speakers on all aspects of nature and our environment.

This wonderful program is sponsored by the Texas Agricultural Extension Service and Texas Parks and Wildlife. The instructors are enthusiastic experts in their fields. If you enjoy nature, join us to help educate others. I know you will find the time well spent. If you have any questions, please contact me.✂





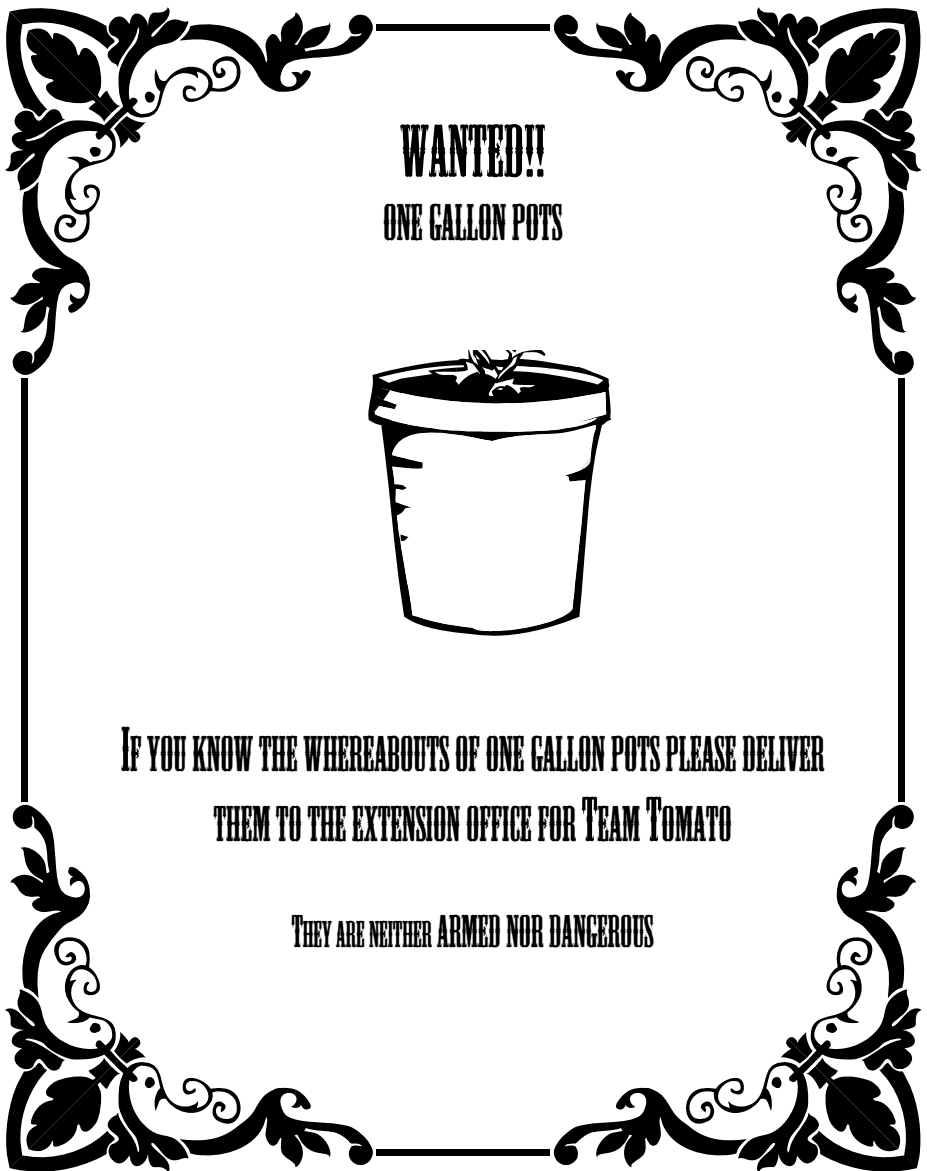
Web Surfin'

by Tom H. Robb, Jr.

A week or two ago, I received a telephone call. This change of Urban Dirt going "monthly" caught me by surprise and I almost missed the deadline. But there are a couple or three (or four) things that come to mind. One - and I've been meaning to broach this for some time - is the way some of you treat your email. Yes, I know that I'm meddlin' when I make this accusation but I'm going to make it anyway.

As you know, from time to time I send out email notices about meetings or other gatherings. Email servers aren't like the Post Office. When the Post Office doesn't find an address, the document ends up in the "Dead Letter Box" and isn't returned to the sender. But email does return the undelivered message. And I am amazed at how many messages I send out are returned because "Mail Box Full". There is one member (I won't mention names) who has had every message returned for the past six months for that reason. I find it hard to believe that anyone would pay for Internet and email service and evidently never look to see what messages are awaiting them - but the last mailing could not be delivered to four of our members because of "Mail Box Full".

It's also surprising how many members evidently don't know their email addresses. Again, comparing with the US Postal Service, the Postman may be able to find you if your address is slightly wrong but Email is exacting. It won't deliver a message to "aol.net" instead of "aol.com"



or "prodigy.com" instead of "prodigy.net".

And "name1" won't be sent to "name1" - they look similar but an "L" isn't interpreted the same as a "ONE". We graduated 73 new students the other night and after entering their "email" addresses (as listed on their data sheet) and sending a notice of the January Meeting, there were 12 returned as "UNKNOWN". I managed to find corrections for about 5 of those but the others didn't get the message.

I usually wait until about the second or third returned message coded "UNKNOWN" before I take the name out of the file. If you are not getting email from us, it may be that we don't have your correct address. Don't

write out a note to me about it - send me an email at: <trobb@hal-pc.org> - that should automatically have your correct return address. And if you change your address (email or home) let me know so that I can make the correction.

Do you get many messages warning you about viruses and asking you to pass the word on to your many friends? And did you know that messages urging you to notify all your friends are usually hoaxes? There are two websites that will let you know which are hoaxes and which are real. The Virus Information Library is run by McAfee and is found at vil.nai.com/vil/default.asp In addition to genuine viruses, the Virus Information Library contains useful information on virus

hoaxes. The Symantec AntiVirus Research Center's Online Encyclopedia offers the most up-to-date information on recent threats. This is found at: www.symantec.com/avcenter/

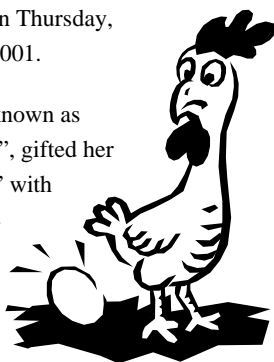
As I have mentioned before, make it a habit to delete, without opening, any email attachments from senders unknown to you, as they may contain viruses, trojans, or worms. If you are sending an attachment to someone, be sure to tell them in the main letter what is in the attachment and approximately how large it is. And, of course, be sure to update your virus program, preferably at least once a week. Last year's flu shot won't help you much this year. And new viruses are created and spread almost daily. ☞

Precinct 2 Master Gardener News

The first class of Master Gardeners to graduate from the Harris County Precinct Two Master Garden was a large and enthusiastic group. There were twenty four graduates, ten of whom had accumulated over 100 hours. There were a total of 4354.75 hours worked at the garden in 2000.

In appreciation of the dedication and devotion she has put into the garden and the master gardening program, the graduates presented Donna Fay Hilliard, the coordinator for the Precinct Two Master Garden with a gift at the graduation ceremonies on Thursday, January 11, 2001.

Donna Fay, known as "Mother Hen", gifted her little "chicks" with tomato plants that were planted inside egg shells.. ☞



Master Gardener Specialist Training

2001 Camp Master Gardener is a new program designed to provide advanced training whereby Master Gardeners can obtain specialization in areas that support or expand designated educational programs of the Texas Agricultural Extension Service.

The Junior Master Gardener Specialist Program is the the first Specialist Program to use Camp Master Gardener as a training venue. Master Gradeners trained and certified to be JMG_{sm} Specialists will become part of a state corps of JMG_{sm} experts and facilitators. To become a JMG_{sm} Master Gardeners will be required to attend Camp Master Gardener to fulfill training requirements. Service requirements will include organizing and implementing a county JMG_{sm} program, providing local JMG_{sm} trainings and workshops, pursuing funding and partnerships for JMG_{sm} programming and leading a registered JMG_{sm} group. In Harris County these requirements will be a bit different in that you will be assisting the County Agent in these existing activities rather than starting from scratch. Training activities during Camp Master Gardener will empower Master Gardeners to complete these service requirements.

Upon completion of the JMG_{sm} Specialist requirements, the Master Gardener will be recognized as a JMG_{sm} Specialist. The JMG_{sm} Specialists will be formally recognized at the Annual Master Gardener Conference and awarded a Master Gardener

Specialist vest, framed certificate and lapel pin.

To be eligible for Camp Master Gardener, an individual must possess up-to-date Master Gardener certification. Camp applications must be submitted with the recommendation and approval of the local County Extension Agent. Camp costs will be drayed through individual registration fees, sponsorships and agency contributions. A state committee will select twenty-five individuals to participate in Camp Master Gardener. If you are interested in applying for this exciting opportunity, please contact Carol Cammack at 281-855-5600. ☞

Volunteer at Peckerwood Garden

By Frances Robeson

Spending time in a beautiful garden is a special treat, especially a garden so unusual as Peckerwood with its rare desert plants growing beneath tall pines, its grasses and rain lilies, its agaves and azaleas, rare plants along every path as well as intriguing works of art, and to have with it the special bonus of working alongside its owner and creator.



This opportunity is available to you by becoming a volunteer during Open House Days at Peckerwood which starting in March will be the afternoons of one weekend every month. The work consists mainly of directing people through the garden so that they will not injure themselves or step on any small rare plant. You may schedule the weekends that you want to work of course. You will not be expected to work every open day.

We are fortunate to have this glorious garden located within a short distance from us and to be able to get to know it better is an opportunity not to be missed. If you want to volunteer or have questions about volunteering at Peckerwood call me Frances Robeson at (281)-890-4259 or e-mail me at LARRYROBESON@aol.com. ☞



Volunteer Opportunities

- There are still slots available to work with the Fire Ant Program at the upcoming Texas Home & Garden Show on February 9 - 11, 2001 and the Houston Home Show on March 23-25, 2000. Volunteers will work in shifts, *receive free* admission to the show and be given credit toward their Master Gardener volunteer hours! If you have any questions or would like further information, please call Terrie Delaney at 281-855-5600 (W) or 713-862-6975 (H).
- Tuesdays are the designated work days at the Extension office. We have lots of fun working in the Children's Garden, Millennium Garden, Greenhouse, Vegetable Garden, Herb Garden, Orchard, Flower Garden and anywhere else we can find to plant something. Come by, enjoy the fellowship, gardening and even an occasional burger.
- We will be hosting a youth gardening table at the Mercer Arboretum March Mart, March 23-24. The table will showcase our own Cylinder Gardening Program as well as the Junior Master Gardener Program. If you can help work at this display, please contact Carol at 281-855-5600.
- Volunteer at Peckerwood Gardens. See article on page 8.
- Office Work...If Tuesdays don't work for you, or you prefer indoor volunteer activities, we have lots of other opportunities for you. Current needs include:
 - someone to head up the effort to track volunteer hours on the computer
 - someone to coordinate volunteer opportunities (write this article, match volunteers with opportunities etc)
 - The class coordination group is looking to add a couple of people to the committee. The group is in charge of coordinating the training class, including everything from speaker to donut selections.

Please contact Carol at 281-855-5600 if you are interested in these or any other 'indoor' volunteer opportunities.

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