

Urban Dirt

IN COOPERATION WITH THE TEXAS COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

Tomato Sale Huge Success

By Carol Cammack, CEA Horticulture

It's 10:15AM, Saturday morning, and there's not a plant for sale in sight.

More than 150 eager plant buyers were lined up outside

the gates as we opened at 8:00 a.m. Customers were actually observed *running* to the tomato tent, wagons in tow, to beat others to the best varieties!

We sold nearly 5,000 plants to an estimated 600 people in less than 2 hours! What a great success for the Master Gardener program and tomato lovers everywhere.

**2,723
Tomatoes**



1,300 Peppers



942 Herbs



Garden Gifts

By Kenneth Dorman

News From Our Outreach Gardens

Well, on February 4th we officially closed the 2001 fall and winter garden at CCSC and began preparing for the 2002 spring and summer garden. **George, Susan Dickson** and I picked all the broccoli and cabbages and cut 14 pounds of lettuce for the Pantry. Fourteen pounds of leaf lettuce is a lot of grocery bags full. All together the days harvest was 27 pounds including some cilantro and a few hot peppers. Total for the winter garden was 418 pounds of pesticide free produce. We cleaned out all the beds except for the two with lettuce and onions in them and then prepared three beds for potatoes

to be planted later in the week.

George and I went to the cotton oil mill in Richmond to get the cottonseed meal and were treated just like the big boys. We got in line with the eighteen wheelers, weighed the Explorer, got our weight ticket and went and got loaded (with cottonseed meal) and lined back up to get

weighed out. The meal at the mill costs ten cents a pound as opposed to forty-five at a nursery. Of course, at the nursery it is in a sack that says fertilizer, not cow feed.

I planted potatoes on February 7th, which is a couple of weeks later than last year, but it has been a little colder this year according to my notes so I think we are OK. I put 48 potatoes in three beds and that may seem like a lot, but there is a good amount of cottonseed meal as well as some "Root Vegetables Alive" that will take care of the intense spacing. I also put the RVA on the onions and lettuce. We expect to harvest the potatoes and onions in mid-May and hope to get about 150 pounds of onions and 180-200 pounds of potatoes. By then the lettuce will be about done as will the strawberries, but the beans, eggplants, peppers and tomatoes will be producing.

The tomato that ate figs

On February 9th, George and I got to the garden early to get it ready for the volunteers that were coming to refurbish the beds. We took up the irrigation systems and put the fertilizer bags out

Continued on next page

Then, we tackled that year-old, three hundred square foot Sweet Chelsea tomato vine.

Outreach Garden, *continued...*

Continued from cover page
for distribution. Then, we tackled that year old, three hundred square foot Sweet Chelsea tomato vine. The vine was too big for our compost pile so we put it in a dumpster. We more than half filled a normal sized dumpster with at least three hundred pounds of tough tomato. It still had tomatoes and blooms, but was killing two fig trees and had begun to climb into three of our raised beds out on the parking lot so it had to go.

At 10:00, along with **Susan**, one of our weekly helpers, and **Debbie** from CCSC we prepared to meet our volunteers.

Good things come in small packages

I had been told we would have ten volunteers so imagine my surprise when only six, eleven and twelve year old sixth grade Girl Scouts from Troop 5063 in Copperfield and two supervisor moms showed up. I knew the girls were coming, but thought they would be in addition to some strong young men.

So here we were with seven cubic yards of compost and ten 50-pound sacks of fertilizer to spread and till in and six small and seemingly frail young ladies. Not to worry though!

My surprise turned to elation as they fell to on the compost and fertilizer. George, Susan and I were hard pressed to keep up with them and they were happy, laughing and yelling at each other, filling wheelbarrows, spreading fertilizer and having a good time and doing good work. Like all our experiences with young people helping in the gardens, it was, to put it mildly, wonderful! We invited them to come back in May before school lets out to see the results of their labor. Maybe they could come for the digging of the potatoes. To me, digging potatoes is like being a kid opening presents at Christmas, so they may enjoy it.

March madness

The first Monday in March the tomato plants we have growing in the greenhouse will be set out, and as weather permits the eggplants, cucumbers and French hybrid melons I have growing in my garage. Then

**George and I went...
to get the cottonseed meal
and were treated just like
the big boys. We got in line
with the eighteen wheelers
in our Explorer...**

we'll plant the peppers and the beans and corn (does this sound like a Native American planting?) and this garden will be off and growing. Everyone is welcome to come and visit the garden at any time, but I suggest sometime in May when everything is up and getting some size to it.

We have put up a friendly sign explaining that all the food produced goes free of charge to needy families, that the work is all done by unpaid volunteers and that visitors are welcome to enjoy the plants, but not to handle or harvest them. We'll see if that, along with prayer, improves our vandal problem. Even if it is not what solves the problem it makes me feel better to see it.

On the 16th, we redid the gardens at the Bonita Street House Of Hope rehab center and planted two Mid-Pride peach trees, one Florida Home pear and a pollinator, Spalding, plus two banana figs. These figs are wonderful! We have two at the CCSC garden that we planted in February 2001, that produced some fruit the first year that was very good and I am sure that as the trees age the fruit will improve. We will plant tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, beans, melons and cucumbers to go with the potatoes already in the ground the day after we plant at CCSC.

Never talk to a plant you intend to eat

In an effort to explain to "flower" gardeners the deep meaning vegetable gardeners get from their endeavors, I went back to my much used gardener's dictionary for their description of vegetable. In an effort to keep it as simple as possible they explained it thusly:

"Vegetable — Many individuals are reluctant to raise animals for food, dreading as they do the inevitable emotional turmoil that accompanies the conversion of a pet into lunch. With members of the vegetable kingdom, it is easier to avoid attachments, but for the truly squeamish the harvest can be a trying experience. Here are a few hints that will make it easier to bear: Never talk to a plant you intend to eat; when digging up potatoes, avoid eye contact; do not pet soft-headed vegetables like lettuce and cabbage; don't give your melons and pumpkins names; and always apply fertilizer with a mechanical dispenser rather than by hand."
This information is not just humorous. Soft lettuces and eye of potato are hard to avoid.

Speaking of raising animals for food, when I got home this afternoon there was a large, brown hawk eating a squirrel in my back yard. What a good bird! I only wish it would catch one a day.

Thomas Jefferson said, *"No occupation is so delightful as the culture of the earth,"* so go get occupied culturing your earth.

Thomas Jefferson said,

**'No occupation is so
delightful as the culture
of the earth'...**



President's Thoughts

By Jean Fefer

February is such a short month that the 15th seemed to come sooner than usual. Everything is relative. I have to start by thanking Tami Pipkin for taking on the job of Newsletter editor.

Carol Cammack has done a fantastic job and I am confident that Tami is equal to the task. I also want to thank the MGs, veteran and intern, who helped to get ready for the Tomato/Pepper sale. I checked the plants this morning, just a few days until the sale and everything looks great! I would like to put in a list of names to thank you all personally, but there were too many who helped on Tuesdays. There were five people, however, who came out on a Wednesday to help finish the work that could not be completed on Tuesday and they rate a **special thanks – Bob and Barbara Kish, Tami Pipkin, Cindy Crow, and Janet Eshelman.**

Community Gardening in Switzerland

I promised last month to tell you about Community Gardening in Switzerland so here goes. On a train from Zermatt to Fribourg (where my daughter lives) I noticed large plots of land that were divided by fences into smaller areas and all planted with vegetables and often bordered with a row of flowers. What was unusual was that each of the smaller areas had a structure on it that was too small for a house, but larger than a tool shed. I found out that these were communal gardens and the structures were actually sleeping quarters or at least temporary living quarters for the people who came to tend the gardens on weekends. The land is rented from the commune by the family and is often right next to the railroad tracks and probably not useful for truck gardening on a commercial scale.

Much of the land in the valley we were traveling through was used for vineyards, which were even planted up the sides of the foothills by terracing. The Swiss are very good at making maximum use of their land. I also found community gardens near Fribourg, which is a large university town. The land used for these gardens probably belongs to the owners of the apartment building that was visible from the gardens.

Shaker Lemon Pie

5 small lemons
1 full piecrust
2 cups granulated sugar
1 T. butter, melted
5 eggs, well beaten
1 T. milnot*

Prepare the lemons by removing seeds and cutting off the rind. In a large bowl, combine lemons and sugar, mixing until sugar is dissolved. Let stand covered overnight.

Add beaten eggs to lemon sugar mixture. Mix well and pour into bottom crust. Cover with top crust and seal edges well. Cut small slits in top crust and brush with melted butter. Bake at 250o in convection oven or 300o in a conventional oven for 1 hour and 10 minutes. Increase oven temperature by 50 degrees and remove pie from oven.

Brush a thin layer of **milnot*** over top crust and return pie to oven. Bake until top crust is light brown. Cool pie to develop a thicker consistency. Can be warmed slightly before serving. (I like it better cold.)

I also want to thank the MGs, veteran and intern, who helped to get ready for the Tomato/Pepper sale.

These also had buildings on them and the people who live in the apartments rent the land. The growing season is short in Switzerland so one can not dawdle when spring arrives. They also have an interesting method of fertilization, but let that be my cliffhanger for this month.

What happened to the plant exchange?

I have been asked “*whatever happened to the plant-exchange article that used to be in the newsletter?*” Well, I don’t know, but we can put it back if anyone is interested. I do know that we often have people bring cuttings and plants into the greenhouse and we can not always deal with them. Sometimes this is because of space; sometimes it is just because they didn’t tell us the identity of the plant. It is hard to deal with mystery plants.

Rather than passing plants through the greenhouse, it would be better if the person who wants it deals directly with the one who has it. This could be done on a message board in the MG room or in a column in *Urban Dirt* or both.

So... if you have a plant or plants that you want to part with, or if you have been trying to find a particular plant with no success send me an email and I will put it in the next newsletter and we will see what happens. This is a good time of year to be doing this since gardeners are getting out there to do some dividing and looking for bear spots in their landscapes. Just to get things started, I want a couple **Persian Shield** plants. I meant to take some cuttings in the fall and start a couple to keep things going for this year but got too busy and now I have but one and it is too small to take cuttings from.

I have also been asked “*Why don’t we put some recipes in ‘Urban Dirt’?*” Well, I don’t know. Probably because no one has submitted any and we certainly would want recipes that are unique in some way. OK how about this one. Great if you have a bumper crop of Meyer Lemons.

***A special prize goes to the first person to email me the identity of milnot.**



"The Lazy Gardener's and Bulb Lady's Gulf Coast Gardening Newsletter" is not getting rave reviews as a name for Brenda Beust Smith and Sally McQueen Squire's new monthly email newsletter. In fact, some subscribers are clamoring for a new name.

As a result, a naming contest has been started, and you do not have to be a subscriber to enter. The prize is a complete set (value \$75) of River Bend Company's fine gardening book inventory, including "The Lazy Gardener's Guide", "A Gardener's Guide to Growing Bulbs on the Gulf Coast", "Habitat Gardening for Houston and Southeast Texas", "Gardening with Dogs" and "The 2002 Lazy Gardener's Calendar".

Entries can be submitted in several ways.

Via email - LGBLGCGN@aol.com;
by snail mail -

NEWSLETTER NAMING CONTEST
RIVER BEND COMPANY
9039 KATY FREEWAY, SUITE 502
HOUSTON, TEXAS 77024

(Note, this is a new suite number)
or by fax - (713) 621-8055.

Be sure to include your name and address. The (soon-to-be-renamed) newsletter is published monthly by River Bend Company and is available only by email.

Subscribing

Subscriptions cost \$10 a year. Mail to LGBLGCGN Newsletter at the address listed above.



Hamburger Tuesdays

By Mary Ann Wagner

Our first Tuesday in January was a week late this year because of New Year's day. On January 8, **Tom Robb** showed slides of his last vacation. What a treat! We were all transported to wonderful pacific islands. It was so beautiful. Tom takes such great pictures, and he knows so much about the subject, you feel like you are watching a professional travelogue. I am sure everyone went home wishing they could visit these exotic lands.

On February 5, **Diana Foss** presented a program on invasive plants. Diana always has wonderful information. I am sure most of us had not given much thought to the plants we purchase. If you find it at a nursery, you think it couldn't have a negative effect. It was enlightening to hear what some of these plants do to our environment.

On March 5, **Karen Breneman** will share her experience in creating a native garden. She will show how she started with a vacant lot with a concrete slab and the process it took to make it a Wildscape Demonstration Garden. We are hoping her new book *Gardening in Texas, A Practical Guide* will be available for sale at the meeting.

Roz and Pat Merrit will present a program on hibiscus in April. They are active in the Lonestar chapter of the American Hibiscus Society and experts on tropical hibiscus.

The First Tuesday program will have it's third birthday this summer. I've been finding speakers for three years and have run out of ideas, and plan on retiring after the July program. It is time for a change and I know there is someone in the organization that has some fresh ideas and would like to take over. If you are interested, please let me know.

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



Web Surfin'

By Tom H. Robb, Jr

How often do you receive email that has line after line of addresses before finally getting down to the message itself? I know that I do and I always wonder why the sender sends out his/her messages this way. Personally, I don't appreciate my email address being broadcast, along with all the others, to persons I don't know, particularly when there's a much simpler way to accomplish the same thing. And that way is by using a feature called **BCC** (blind courtesy copy).

I realize that the reason for not using **BCC** usually is because people either do not know that it exists in email or do not know how to use it. In newer versions of Netscape, either Communicator or Navigator, the **BCC** option is clearly visible. In the **TO** field enter your own email address and add the addresses of your receivers in the **BCC** line with commas between each entry. Older versions of Netscape required you to click on the button to the left of the Address Field to select **BCC**.

Outlook Express hides **BCC** but you can make it visible with just two clicks. From a new message window, pull down the **VIEW** menu and choose **ALL HEADERS**. Again enter your own email address in the **TO** field and use the **BCC** field for the addresses of all the people you want to receive the message. Each recipient will see only his address and not even know that 700 other people received the same message at the same time.

Mail programs like Eudora 5.1 or Pegasus Mail 3.12c are much more sophisticated and among their many features, permit you to use the blind copy to send programmed lists of recipients. Both are *freeware* (meaning no cost) and can be downloaded from **Download.Com** at <http://download.cnet.com/>. When this homepage comes up select **Internet** then **E-Mail** then **Clients**. Eudora will be found on page 3 and Pegasus can be downloaded from page 4. Both are excellent, though I personally prefer and use Pegasus. As of the writing of this article each program has had around 2 million downloads for the past week. Pegasus' approval rating was 93% and Eudora's stood at 79%.

Happy surfin'!

Carol's Comments

By Carol Cammack, CEA Horticulture

Wow, another month gone by. February has been a whirlwind here at the Extension Office. I spent the first week recovering from January and now it seems there is more and more to do. The Tomato/Pepper Sale will be another page in history by the time you read this. I'm sure it was a great success. I am continually amazed by how much the Master Gardener volunteers accomplish. Putting together these sales are a lot of work and they run so smoothly thanks to all of you.

Cylinder Gardening

Cylinder Gardening is off to another blazing start this semester. So far 3,403 children at 46 schools are enrolled and 29 volunteers have signed up to work with these schools. **Note:** If you have volunteered for Cylinder Gardening in the past and plan to work with a school again this semester, please let me know so that I don't assign your school to another volunteer. I'll also need to make sure that school has turned in their enrollment forms.

Our masterful CG volunteer **Scott Hume** has us ready with buckets and is actually already preparing for the fall. Breyer's Ice Cream has always been generous enough to donate buckets to us, but we just recently found out that they would no longer be able to do so. Scott is such a trooper that he has already lined up another free source of buckets for us; the world famous **Blue Bell** ice cream factory. Scott plans to rent a trailer every few months and drive to Brenham to pick up 400 or 500 buckets for us. (Maybe he can rent a refrigerated trailer and bring us some giant tubs of ice cream too!!)

Amy Bryant has also done a great job keeping the folks in the phone room busy filling seed packets for the program, so we're raring and ready to go.

In other news, **Angela Chandler** has been elected President of the Genoa Friendship Gardening Steering Committee at Precinct 2. Our beloved **Donna Faye Hilliard**, the founder of the Garden and Past-President of the Steering Committee has found full-time employment in the local horticulture industry and is unable to

I hope everyone will be taking part in some or all of these upcoming events...

Water-Wise Landscaping Conference



Annual Azalea Trail



Hamburger Days



Peckerwood Garden



Monthly Meeting



March Mart



continue in the capacity of President of the Steering Committee. Donna Faye is inspiration behind the creation of the Genoa Friendship Garden and the Master Gardener Satellite Group there.

Her unflinching leadership and guidance has made the garden a great success and brought about the creation of great group of Master Gardeners and future leaders for the program. Donna Faye still visits the garden from time to time, offering suggestions and support. Her full-time presence will be missed, but as Lifetime Member of the Master Gardener program she'll always be an important part of the program.

Next time you see Donna Faye be sure to say 'thanks' and tell her how much she means to us.

Upcoming Spring Events

Spring is such an exciting time in Houston I hope everyone will be taking part in some or all of these upcoming events:

Water-Wise Landscaping Conference on March 2nd.

The **67th Annual Azalea Trail** on March 2nd, 3rd, 9th, and 10th.

Hamburger Tuesday at Bear Creek on March 5th. Speaker: Karen Breneman; Native Gardening.

Hamburger Wednesday at Precinct 2 on March 6th.

Peckerwood Gardens opening on March 16th & 17th.

Master Gardener monthly meeting on March 19th. Speaker: Lana Sims; Using Herbs to Attract Butterflies.

March Mart at Mercer Arboretum and Botanic Gardens March 22nd & 23rd.

See you in the gardens!!

Friendship Garden News

By Angela Chandler



By the time you read this, the 2002 WaterSmart Workshop will be behind us and will have been a rousing success! However, at this writing, we are busy as **Melody Mixon's** bees making all of the final preparations.

Kay Rose, Olivia Meyer and a list of helpers are finishing up the signposts this week. **Anna Swander** and **Bonnie Steinberg** are typing up plant info sheets for easy reference for browsers at the sale. **Theresa Hollomon** has helped the volunteer plant guides study the plant material. We are really looking forward to this event.

The perennial garden looks better every week. Lots of manure and compost cover the beds. The beds have been extended on both sides of the walkway, and the walkway is being widened in spots. **Kaye Courey** and **Pat Mitrowski** have been busy making a list of old garden roses and are researching organic amendments for the rose beds.

Janice Patrick, Beth Frohme, Pat Mitrowski, and **Josie Watts** were all out last Wednesday doing some pruning and planning. The perennial garden committee has done a drawing of their plan, which is posted in the MG office. The ladies are hoping everyone will bring out their extra perennials when they divide this spring. They would especially like to add some vines along the fence to frame this garden.

Johnny Jones is back from vacation and is studying our options for a new

greenhouse cover. **Jim Franz** did a beautiful job of pruning the oak tree over the greenhouse. Some of the branches were touching the roof and really needed to go before they did any damage, but he did some aesthetic pruning while he was at it and it sure looks better. **Josie Watts** obtained a donation of an entire roll of shadecloth from Home Depot, and we can really put it to good use. Thanks!

Dick Benoit has built up all of the veggie beds. We have some new fruit trees to install and planning is well underway for a pair of berms for the new orchard. **Neal Murray** has been doing a lot of research and networking to help Genoa Friendship Garden have better fruit production. It will be a long but rewarding project.

Jim Franz and **Paul Hicks** were out working on the compost area last week. They are pretty close to having it finished and ready to be used more effectively.

A Word of Thanks

The Master Gardeners at Genoa Friendship Garden would like to acknowledge everyone at Harris County Precinct 2 who make our garden possible. There are too many names and too many kindnesses to list, but we really appreciate everything you have done for us. We hope that the garden becomes a bright spot in the Precinct in the years to come, and that you are proud to have us in your backyard!

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Love to Talk Gardening? Speakers' Bureau Needs Your Help

Wanted: Anyone who likes to speak is invited to join the Speakers' Bureau.

We get a large number of requests from civic and garden club organizations and can't keep up with the demand. Members currently speak several times per month.

We can't keep up
with demand.

In addition to speakers, we also need individuals to help review and organize our inventory of programs.

You do not need to be a pro; you just need to enjoy gardening and speaking about it. While many in the group have their own programs, others make use of the numerous slide and video presentations available. We also have all the necessary equipment. All we need is **you!**

Call **Beth Grunden**, Speakers' Bureau Coordinator, at (713) 461-7159 or email her at egrunden@houston.rr.com.

Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens

The Mercer Society Presents the Annual March Mart Plant Sale

The annual March Mart Plant Sale at Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens is scheduled for Friday and Saturday, March 22 and 23 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., with a Plant Sale Preview program set for Saturday, March 16 from 10 a.m. to noon. March Mart is an annual fund-raising event sponsored by The Mercer Society, a nonprofit {501(c)3} volunteer organization in support of special projects at Mercer.

Conducted by hundreds of volunteers, March Mart is one of the largest plant sales in the Greater Houston region. March Mart features a huge selection of quality plants rarely found at local retail nurseries. Choices range from familiar plants for beginners to hardy Texas natives to tropicals to unusual specialty species for plant collectors. Gardening booths and exhibits add to March Mart's reputation as a great gardening event.

March Mart Preview

This year's March Mart Preview is Saturday, March 16, from 10 a.m. to noon. The program includes a slide presentation of many of the plants offered at March Mart and the unveiling of the 2002 March Mart Plant Guide which lists the plants offered at this year's sale. The Plant Guide is an excellent reference for Houston gardeners since it also lists cultural requirements for all of the plants.

Parking and Transportation

Shuttle buses provide transportation for shoppers to and from parking areas. Wagons, secured with a driver's license, are available for shopping convenience on a first-come, first-served basis. Due to the limited number of wagons, the Mercer Society suggests bringing your own wagon. Just be sure to identify it in some way as belonging to you. There are multiple checkout lines and credit cards (Visa, MasterCard, American Express) are accepted.

Volunteers needed

All types of volunteers are needed during March Mart. You don't have to be a botanist to help. Jobs include labeling and pricing plants, stocking and restocking plants, checking out wagons, cashiering, and helping in the office. If volunteers work at least one four-hour shift, they can take part in a plant raffle. Interested participants should contact **Nellene Harvey**, Mercer's volunteer coordinator at (281) 443-8731.



March Events

Monthly Gardening Workshop: Garden Grooming and Planting

Saturday, March 2, from 9 a.m. to noon. Join Mercer staff & volunteers in an educational program on how to prepare and plant your garden in the spring. Master Gardener interns earn fieldwork credit. Master Gardener training is not required and novices are welcome.

Lunch Bunch: Potpourri from the Lazy Gardener's Garden

Wednesday, March 13, from noon to 1 p.m. Join Brenda Beust Smith, the Houston Chronicle "Lazy Gardener" columnist and national award-winning writer and editor, as she discusses and gives away (rootable!) cuttings from favorite plants in her personal garden.

March Mart Preview

Saturday, March 16, from 10 a.m. to noon. Attend a preview by the Mercer Society of the 2002 March Mart plant selections. Experts describe some of the outstanding plants available at the annual plant sale. Plant guides available.

March Mart

Friday and Saturday, March 22 and 23, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Join other Gulf Coast residents at March Mart, the region's largest plant sale and horticultural event.

Palms for Houston

Saturday, March 30, from 10 a.m. to noon. Join Gordon Hintz of the International Palm Society for a program on palms suitable for the Houston area and a tour of Mercer's palm collection.

Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens is a Harris County Precinct 4 facility located at 22306 Aldine Westfield Road, one mile north of FM 1960. Harris County Precinct 4 programs serve people of all ages regardless of socioeconomic level, race, sex, religion, national origin, or disability. Anyone requiring special assistance to participate in any program, or for more information, please contact Mercer at (281) 443-8731.

Herb Garden News

By Heidi Vaughan

The weather has been just great and we're having a fine time in the herb garden. Working in it makes your clothes smell so good!

We're very grateful to **Pete Petre** for picking up cottonseed meal for the whole garden. He even made sure we got it worked in. Many thanks to **Bernard Mahoney**, who joined us one day, along with Pete and **Dave Mason**, to do some hard labor. They dug out old plants, put in new ones, spread mulch and even cleaned it all up. And it turns out that Dave, in addition to being an irrigation specialist extraordinaire, also has a talent for garden design. He developed a lovely bed, criss crossed with parsleys and filled in with traditional culinary herbs. It looks just fantastic with the nasturtiums spilling over the stone wall. Take a look the next time you're out.

We couldn't have gotten all of our new plants without the help of **JoAnne Sapp** and her big van. She drove a bunch of us out recently to Teas Herbs and Orchids, just past Tomball. We had a great time shopping for our herbs!

There are so many of us who love herbs, and even though most of us aren't really experts, the herb garden is really coming together. And we're learning a lot. We now have **Sally Harpole** and **Barbara Lyles**, two good friends, doing a good job together with the western culinary beds. **Becky Kern** and **Nancy Verwest**, thanks to many books on loan from their local library, are tackling the Tex-Mex bed.



Beatriz Nino-Rodriguez, **Carol Adams** and I are getting started with the medicinal bed. We welcome **Sheila Bredemeyer** and **Jean Shanley** to work some magic in the craft and color bed. **Bobby Steed** and **Pat Berger** have signed on for the shade bed. Two more friends, **Toula Hagidimitriou** and **Lee Ann van den Bold**, are going to give the eastern culinary bed a try. There are some lettuces in there that look ready for harvesting. Maybe they can start by making us all lunch!

And our best source of herbal knowledge, and all-around lovely lady, is **Margaret Mason**. She has been planting the lavender and scented-geranium beds. We love you, Margaret!

Of course, we would be totally lost without the advice of the herb garden's departed leader, **Nel Barner**. And even though she has retired from her post, she still managed to write a new booklet describing all the herbs in the garden and their uses. It should be available shortly and we are so lucky to still have input from Nel.

New for the April plant sale will be some crafts made from the herbs in our garden. We plan to sell sachets, soaps, and maybe a wreath or two. All proceeds will benefit the Master Gardener Association.

If you are interested in joining this fun group, stop by any Tuesday, or for more information call me at (281) 579-8995.

Harris County Master Gardener Association
2 Abercrombie Drive
Houston, TX 77084-4233

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