

# UrbanDirt

IN COOPERATION WITH THE TEXAS COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

## Fall Cylinder Gardening Program a Success

By Carol Cammack, CEA Horticulture

### School Cylinder Garden Volunteers

**Susan Adkins**  
**Carol Baez**  
**Stephanie Baker**  
**Frank Brocato**  
**Amy Bryant**  
**Darrell Cornwall**  
**Jean Fefer**  
**Amy Fintel**  
**Joyce Flott**  
**JoAnn Franklin**  
**Nancy Fuentes**  
**Gretchen Gemeinhardt**  
**Jessica Gonzales**  
**Max Gonzalez**  
**Glen Graves**  
**Mary Ellen Hahn**  
**Pat Hall**  
**Sharon Hughes**  
**O. Scott Hume**  
**Debbie Kennedy**  
**Cynthia Kiang**  
**Richard Klein**  
**Lynda Lane**  
**Bernard Mahoney**  
**Janis McIntosh**  
**Phyllis Mook**  
**Jennifer Navarrete**  
**Gudron Opperman**  
**Ross Palmie**  
**Melissa Pour**  
**Sherry Prince**  
**Mari Red**  
**Kelli Sullivan**  
**Valerie Tschaar**  
**Christine Valente**  
**Mary Ward**  
**George Williams**

The Fall Cylinder Gardening Program is off to a roaring start. At last count there were 5,060 children from 48 schools enrolled. This program is an amazing success due to the special efforts of the Master Gardener Association and MG volunteers.

For anyone who is unfamiliar with the program, Cylinder Gardening is a school gardening program designed to teach vegetable gardening from seed to harvest to the youth of Harris County. The HCMGA graciously donates all of the seeds, fertilizer and cylinders for this program. Seeds and fertilizer are individually bagged by Master Gardeners in the phone room and on Tuesday work days. **Scott Hume** and MG intern **Larry Brouwer** have spent many hours cutting the 5 gallon buckets Scott picks up from the Blue Bell Creamery to serve as cylinders.

Volunteers are what really make this program special. Many teachers are interested in gardening with their children, but are nervous about attempting it. When they find out that they will have the support of a Master Gardener they are more willing to give it a try. Master Gardeners give their time by delivering materials and reassuring teachers they can do it! They also assist on the chaotic but exciting planting and harvest days.

This is a great group of volunteers this semester and I'd like to thank each of them individually. There have been a few glitches (as always), but they've really made a huge difference to the youth of our county. Thanks goes to everyone who has contributed to make this program a success!



# President's Thoughts

By George Williams

Our Fall Plant Sale on September 28 was another success thanks to the leadership of **Ken Dorman**. There were many of our group who volunteered on both Friday and Saturday. I wish that we had the space to list each one by name, but that is just impossible. I should point out, though, that our current Master Gardener class turned out in record numbers, so their presence is certainly noted and appreciated.

The red wagons that were used by our customers did not come to us assembled. Now, who would want to put those things together? I gave up on that one Christmas morning many years ago. But we had some folks really come through for us and had all of them completed prior to the sale. **Carl Meyertons, Bernard Benson** and **Mario Torres** took care of that, and their efforts are very much appreciated.

**Bonnie Morrow, Jean Fefer, Charlie Reass, Barbara Finney** and **Harold Galloway** are Master Gardeners who also happen to be ex-Exxon employees. Through their efforts, they are successful in obtaining grants for our organization each year from the **ExxonMobil Foundation**. We appreciate the generosity of ExxonMobil and the work of those Master Gardeners listed above. This money certainly helps our budget situation, and we definitely wanted to take this opportunity to thank those involved.

Last June, **Jennifer Lowenthal** was elected to serve a two year term on our Board of Directors. She told us that she really didn't have time to do so, and as it has turned out, she really doesn't. We have agreed to allow her to "step down" provided that she will continue her work and leadership in the flower gardens. She has assured me that she will do so. At our October meeting, **Douglas McLeod** was elected Director for the remainder of the two year period. You can usually find Doug in the orchard if he isn't fishing.

Several of us have commented about how good the herb garden looks, and this is after a hot summer. It took some work to keep it in such good condition. There may be others but most of the work was done by **Jeanette Powell, Becky Kern, Lee Ann Van Den Bold, Toula Hagidimitriou, Elizabeth Williams**, and **Nancy Verwest**. And, of course, **Heidi Vaughan** is always there.

We try to recognize some of our people in each issue and will continue to do so. You really do make a difference in our organization! Just keep up the good work!



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**Board of Directors**

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**Ancillary Positions**

- MG Advisors:**
- CEA - Horticulture** ..... Carol Cammack  
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  - CEA - Horticulture** .... Michael Morrison  
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  - Horticulture Secretary** ..... Becky Deasy  
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  - Greeting Committee** ..... Margaret Mason  
Gloria Robb
  - Hospitality Committee** ..... Bea Patterson
  - Book Committee** ..... Anne O'Neil  
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  - Urban Dirt Layout** ..... Tami Pipkin  
UrbanDirt@houston.rr.com

# Upcoming Events

## Coming up at Precinct 2

The Harris County Master Gardeners, Precinct 2, First Wednesday Program will be held **November 6th** at 1202 Genoa Red Bluff. We are excited to welcome **Lana Simms**, Master Gardener, and co-owner of Our Family's Herbs & Such in Pasadena. Lana will share "Herbal Ideas for the Holidays" with us. With her quick and easy ways to use herbs for gifts, decorations and holiday food you'll be sure to get in the spirit this holiday season! This class is free and open to the public, but please call (281) 991-8437 and leave a message to reserve a spot.

Registration begins at 9:30 a.m., the class is at 10 a.m.

## Annual Christmas Party at the Garden

**December 4th** at 11 a.m. the Harris County Master Gardeners at Precinct 2 will gather for their annual Christmas celebration in the Genoa Friendship Garden. **Johnny Jones** will be cooking us a very special lunch, a shrimp boil with all the trimmings! A \$3.00 contribution and an RSVP is all that you need to attend. All Precinct 2 Master Gardeners are invited. Please email [pmitrowski@msn.com](mailto:pmitrowski@msn.com) or leave a message at the office (281) 991-8437. We'll also be doing a plant exchange as part of the celebration, what better gift for gardeners to share!

*Precinct 2 programs are held at HCMGA office at 1202 Genoa Red Bluff. Please call to reserve a spot (281) 991-8437. Stay and enjoy lunch with us for \$3.00.*



Photos provided by Carol Cammack

## Bear Creek Events

### November 5 – Hamburger Tuesday

**8:00 am** Work up an appetite  
**Noonish** Home cooked burgers, then Evelyn Robinson on *Orchids*.  
**A selection of orchids will be available for sale after the meeting.**

### November 19 – General Meeting

**6:30 pm** Potluck dinner. HCMGA will provide the meat dish. Please bring a side dish, salad or dessert to share with others.

**7:00 pm** Suzanne Chapman on *Indoor Potted Plants*

### December 3 – Hamburger Tuesday

**8:00 am** Work up an appetite  
**Noonish** Home cooked burgers, then Carol Cammack on *Southern Landscape Plants and Holiday Decorating*.



Photos provided by Carol Cammack

## MG Meetings

Hamburger Tuesday will be on **November 5th**. *Orchids* will be the topic of the day. Several of you have requested more information on growing orchids and the varieties. Our own **Evelyn Robinson** will be the speaker. There will be some orchids for sale after the meeting.

Our General Meeting will be on **November 19th**. **Suzanne Chapman** from Mercer Arboretum will bring us the latest information on *Indoor Potted Plants: helpful hints, varieties, and how to arrange and care for them*. Winter will soon be here and we will need to bring many of those plants back indoors.

Hope to see you at both of these meetings.

**John Teas** was our speaker for the October Hamburger Tuesday. He presented *Trees for Houston* in a very interesting way—incorporating the types of trees for Houston along with the history of how our city has grown horticulturally.

At the time of writing this article, we are looking forward to our General Meeting. **Barney Lipscomb** from Fort Worth will speak on *Murdurous Plants*. His presentation is known to be comical and dramatic.

In December there will be only the Hamburger Tuesday meeting on **December 3rd**. **Virginia Joiner** is coordinating the decorating of the Master Gardener tree for the foyer. Be sure to save your items and prepare them for decorating the tree (dry your beautiful flowers, collect pods, etc.) If you have any questions, contact Virginia Joiner. Our speaker for the day will be our own **Carol Cammack**. She will bring us up to date on what plants we can incorporate into our landscape and later use for making holiday decorations for our homes or for gifts.

# Michael's Corner

By Michael Morrison, CEA Horticulture

**C**lothespins ready!  
We are in Texas you know!  
I still laugh when I think about a few months ago.

A few of the Master Gardeners one Tuesday were out back when we decided to mix up a bunch of peat, potting soil, compost, and cotton seed meal. After mixing it up on the asphalt, we then bagged it up in clear plastic bags. After a few days, I opened up one and nearly fell over from the aroma.

The cotton seed meal was at work and the heat had intensified the smell just a bit. We tried poking holes in the bags with a pitchfork to "air out" the mix.

Even mulch can smell foul, like decaying grass clippings. Manure and poultry litter do have their strong points and often smell is one of them.

One of the speakers for the Master Gardeners said that rabbit stuff is the best, while others say sheep manure is king of the hill.

The University of Minnesota has an Odor Rating System measuring downstream plume! Something about estimate setback distance requirements. So, do I keep my flowerbeds back twenty feet from the sidewalk? Too much bat guano you say?

My dad and I spread out some fresh material out in the garden and we diverted traffic just by smell alone. But the results later were worth all the passers-by noticing the garden and the flowers abound.

Organic matter and compost can also turn your nose up towards the sky.

Usually the great thing is the smell is gone in a few days or a week at most and the benefits are astounding and makes the mission a success. Good things in your garden sometimes just don't smell that great, but the results are incredible. Even in a pile of manure, a flower will grow.

I hope there's manure in Heaven  
I know that sounds a bit strange  
But some folks might agree with me  
If I'm given a chance to explain

Now by outward appearance, manure  
Is a smelly goo, no doubt.  
But think about what went into that cow  
Before that manure came out

That cow might have grazed in a pasture  
Filled with clover and grass green and lush  
And that sweet smelling pasture on which that cow dined  
Was transformed into this foul smelling mush

Or maybe she dined with a range herd  
On a wide open prairie somewhere  
Making meals of scattered bunchgrass  
Leaving a pile here and there

That cow might have grazed in the mountains  
Beneath pine trees that whisper and sigh  
And the grass and wildflowers from meadows  
Are contained in that cow's special pie

So I hope there's manure in Heaven  
Cause that means there'll be cows when I die  
And pastures and prairies and meadows  
Beneath mountains that reach toward the sky.

by Mark Seeley

# Web Surfin'

## Tech news for Master Gardeners

By Tom H. Robb, Jr.

It seems that a large number of Master Gardeners and Interns are either discontinuing or changing their email providers without letting us know their new addresses. I usually wait until after two or three returns before removing anyone from the list. If you do have a new address, email or otherwise, please let me know at [trobbs@hal-pc.org](mailto:trobbs@hal-pc.org). Also if you are currently receiving the paper copy or snailmail version of Urban Dirt and want to upgrade to the beautiful color of the email version, which we refer to as eDirt, let me know and I will add you to the list. Copies of eDirt from March through September are available on the Harris County Master Gardener site at <http://harris-cnty.tamu.edu/mg/hcmga/index.htm>. Just click on the *Urban Dirt* button and select the month you want.

Now that that (double intended) business is over, how about some gardening links for this month? Texas has many gardens and many gardening related sites. It's impossible to refer to them all at any one time, however for this issue I've selected several that appeal to me for one reason or another.

Any such list would have to be headed by the link to the site found in every search engine when gardening is selected as a topic. And by that I mean *Aggie Horticulture* found at <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/wildseed/tamuhort.html>.

Many of you are well aware of the splendid Arboretum and

Gardens at Stephen F. Austin located at Nacogdoches. Their website *ASFA MAST Arboretum* is found at <http://www.sfasu.edu/ag/arboretum/index.htm>. If you attended the August Hamburger Tuesday lecture, you will recognize a certain young lady pictured at this web site. If not, just ask **David Parish**.

*Central Texas Gardening* by Jenny Rasmussen is a beautiful site. Click on the dragonfly photos link and see some of the most spectacular photos of dragonflies that you will ever see. See them at <http://www.mindspring.com/~roadrunner1/garden/TexasRing.html>.

A super, must see site is *Higher Ground* located in Southeast Texas. This site located at <http://www.lanset.com/pathline/default.htm> is chock full of wonderful gardening information and beautiful pictures.

For wildflower lovers, I've selected three sites. First the *Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center* located in Austin gives a lot of information about wildflowers at <http://www.wildflower.org/>. Be aware, however, that in order to read the master list of wildflower varieties, you must have Adobe Acrobat Reader, just as you need it to open and read eDirt. As I've mentioned several time before, more and more PDF files requiring Reader are appearing on the web and you're going to be missing out if you don't get a free copy.

Another wildflower site is *Wildflowers in Bloom* at <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/wildseed/tamuhort.html>. Be sure to check out the photo album. Clicking on the thumbnail photos bring up larger views. And another nice wildflower photo site is <http://www.k5kj.net/texas.htm>.

Last, but not least is <http://www.texasmonthly.com/archive/top-100.html>. Back in August 1996, Texas Monthly Magazine published *Texas 100 best websites*. Their website still contains that list. They are not all gardening sites... in fact few are but if you want to know why I'm partial to this list, take a look at Number 19.

Happy surfin'

### MG Web Tip:

**Need to download Adobe Acrobat Reader?**

Click on the icon below or go to <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep.html>



# Garden Gifts

## News from our Outreach Gardens

By Kenneth Dorman

Normally I just talk about our gardens here, but this month I want to say a little regarding the outstanding helpers I had for the Fall Plant Sale the end of September. The Harris County Master Gardener Association has a number of sales each year that raise the money we use to finance numerous public services we provide for the county. I have had the privilege of chairing the Fall Sale since its inception and I think we have a unique approach to our event. Every year we have divided the sale into sections; Louisiana iris, daylilies, herbs, native perennials, roses and plants from our own greenhouse. Each section is headed by an expert in that field: **Glen Graves** and **Virginia and Grady Joiner**, iris; **Diane Ballentine**, daylilies; **Dave Mason**, herbs; **Clyde Cannon**, roses; **Ann O'Neil** and **Mary Ann Wagner**, perennials and **Billy Duncan**, **Jean Fefer** and all the other ladies from the greenhouse. Of course, there was **Marge** with the wagons and gourds, **Bea** with the lunch, **Ann** with the morning doughnuts, **Ray** with the compost, **Linda Carlson** with publicity, **Becky** checking everything, **Bob** roving about selling his excellent heirloom multiplying (bunching?) onions and **Doug** and all the just plain wonderful volunteers that came and did the work. Each of these folks make up their own plant list, contact the suppliers and buy the plants for the sale using a budget decided upon by a committee that usually meets at least one time each year. We make a lot of money at this sale and as anyone can see it is because of all the non-supervision that is involved. Good people present themselves and a smart coordinator lets them do all his work. I am a smart coordinator and I thank all the good people that did all the work. I am also smart enough to know I missed naming some of the key players, but you know who you are and what you did and get the good feeling for it. Thanks.

Those of you that missed the sale entirely, either as a participant or customer missed a great day outdoors. The weather was perfect, the gardens and grounds beautiful and we had a large crowd of happy people that seemed to

be enjoying themselves. It was like an old-time, small town street sale, but without the raspa and cotton candy.

With the plant sale and the potential hurricanes causing me to go to the beach several times to move boats and

help secure houses I feel like I have neglected the gardens, but **Walter** and **Sharon** have taken care of them nicely. I have mentioned Sharon several months now; she is a member of the present Master Gardener class, a great help and has adapted

Our way is the way of three grumpy old men, but she is reasonably gracious about it.

to our way of gardening quite nicely. Our way is the way of three grumpy old men, but she is reasonably gracious about it. Another member of the present class is **Marion Reed** who donated a shredder to the CCSC garden. Good class!

The field peas finally gave out and we put them in the compost pile and fertilized the beds they were in and prepared them for the transplants from the greenhouse later in October. The okra is out performing all expectations as expected and the sweet potatoes are preparing themselves to be dug. We obviously missed some white potatoes when we dug them as some are coming up in the field pea beds we just cleared. I guess they can grow in with the cabbages and broccoli. We can offer up the vegetables for a great winter boiled dinner of cabbage, potatoes, carrots, onions, winter squash and parsley. The clients will have to add their own salt pork or brisket or corned beef. And corn bread. I can't believe it is ten o'clock at night and all of a sudden I am hungry!

By the time you read this the CCSC and Bonita Street gardens should be completely planted with their fall and winter crops except for the onions which means that if it rains properly I am going to get some fishing time in. We won't begin harvesting anything for another month after that.

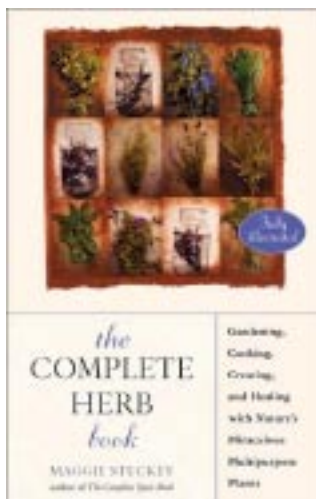
Marcus Annaeus Seneca said, *True joy is serene*. Fall and winter in the Houston garden is a time for serenity so get in the garden, be joyful and smile at your neighbors.

# Herb Garden News

By Heidi Vaughan

## Fall Herbs for Houston Gardens

**Parsley**  
**Marjoram**  
**Salad burnett**  
**Cilantro**  
**Borage**  
**Fennel**  
**Dill**  
**Camomile**  
**Stevia**  
**Arrugula**  
**Sorrel**  
**Sage**  
**Lavendar**  
**Patchouli**  
**Swiss chard**  
**Calendula**  
**Mustard**  
**Onion**  
**Nasturtium**  
**Poppy**  
**Chrysanthemum**  
**Nigella**  
**Lettuces (especially Asian varieties)**



What an exciting day we had on October first! Nine of us gathered in the greenhouse for a day of seed sowing, and we sure filled some flats. Thank you to everyone in the greenhouse for being so helpful and patient, and thanks to all those who helped from the Herb Garden: **Becky, Margaret, Nancy, Dee, Pat, Marian** and **Zahira**. And thank you to **Dave Mason**, for helping us sort out some herbs from **Janice Teas**.

Just two weeks later, we already have planted some of the little seedlings in the garden. The next couple of weeks we will be busy planting and re-labeling the plants in the beds. We welcome any of you to come join us, especially those of you who have come out in the past but haven't been by for awhile. And we really are grateful for all the outgoing Master Gardener Interns who have been coming out to work with us. Thanks!

And if you are thinking of planting at home now, and wondering which herbs will do well this time of year in Houston, you might consider those listed below. By the way, we have been asked about some of the plants in our garden and what makes a herb a herb. One description I like is a plant with more than one use. So nasturtiums, for example, fit into our herb garden because they have a beautiful flower and because the flowers and leaves are edible. Incidentally, according to Maggie Stuckey's *The Complete Herb Book*, Nasturtium leaves make one's hair grow faster and tighten skin pores!

Herbs to consider for fall in Houston include many varieties of: parsley, marjoram, salad burnett, cilantro, borage, fennel, dill, camomile, stevia, arrugula, sorrel, sage, lavendar, patchouli, Swiss chard, calendula, mustard, onion, nasturtium, poppy, chrysanthemum and nigella. We also have planted a selection of lettuces, especially Asian varieties.

And if you need help deciding what to do with your bountiful harvest, try this recipe:

### The Cook's Garden Green Sauce #2

1 ½ cups mixed greens and herbs (try spinach, nasturtium leaves, tarragon, chives, or any other of your choice)

4 shallots, peeled (or 1 tablespoon minced onion)

½ cup mayonnaise

1 cup plain yogurt

½ c sour cream

½ cup lemon juice

Makes about 3 cups of sauce, great as a vegetable dip or sandwich spread.

# Volunteer Hours

See below for instructions.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Period covered – from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Date	Facility or Garden Name	# Contacts	Hours
<b>Total hours this worksheet</b>			

**Submitting your volunteer hours** Please drop off completed forms in the inbox on **Scott Hume's** desk. Scott can be reached at (281) 855-5600 or [oshume@taexgw.tamu.edu](mailto:oshume@taexgw.tamu.edu).

**Want to fill out this form on your computer?** The volunteer hours form included here is for printing out and filling in by hand. But we've posted a spiffy version on the MG website, which you can fill out on the computer in Acrobat Reader before printing to save you all that tedious handwriting. The downloadable version even prints the current date and totals your hours for you. Get it at <http://harris-cnty.tamu.edu/hcmga/urban.htm>.

# November 2002

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
27	28	29	30	31 	1	2 Bulbs for Spring — Mercer page 10
3	4	5 Hamburger Tues. at Bear Creek — Orchids page 3 Orchid sale after the meeting.	6 First Wednesdays at Precinct 2 — Herbal Ideas for the Holidays. page 3	7	8	9 Mercer Garden Tour page 10
10	11	12	13 Alternatives to Pest Control — Mercer page 10	14	15 Newsletter deadline 5pm	16 Winter Annuals: Plant Now for a Beautiful Spring — Mercer page 10
17	18	19 Monthly meeting & Potluck Dinner at Bear Creek — Indoor Potted Plants page 3 Bring a side dish, salad or dessert to the potluck.	20	21	22	23 Chrysanthemum Show — Mercer. page 10
24 Chrysanthemum Show — Mercer. page 10	25	26	27	28 Thanksgiving 	29	30

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eDIRT NOVEMBER 2002

# Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens

### Garden Workshop: Bulbs for Spring

**Saturday November 2**, from 8 a.m. to noon, join Mercer horticulturist **Greg Grant** and take part in “spotting” and planting bulbs for spring blooms. Learn which bulbs do well in our area and how to incorporate them in your landscape. Master Gardeners can earn four hours of field credit.

### Mercer Garden Tour

Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens staff lead a guided tour of the gardens **Saturday, November 9**, from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.

### Lunch Bunch: Alternatives to Pest Control

**Wednesday, November 13**, from noon to 1 p.m., join **Eddie Holik** from the Cockrell Butterfly Center as he discusses alternatives to pest control. Make your landscape butterfly friendly while keeping pests away. Bring a sack lunch to enjoy during the program.

### Winter Annuals: Plant Now for a Beautiful Spring

**Saturday, November 16**, from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m., join Mercer greenhouse manager **Suzanne Chapman** as she discusses winter annuals for the Houston area. Learn what to plant this winter for a beautiful spring bloom.

### Chrysanthemum Show

**Saturday, November 23**, from noon to 5 p.m., and **Sunday, November 24**, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Greater Houston Chrysanthemum Society's fall flower show is the perfect place to take your holiday company to see show stopping mums.

*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 physical ability. Anyone requiring special assistance to participate in any program, or for more information, please contact Mercer at (281) 443-8731 or [mercerarboretum@cp4.hctx.net](mailto:mercerarboretum@cp4.hctx.net). On the web at <http://www.cp4.hctx.net/merc>.*