

UrbanDirt

IN COOPERATION WITH THE TEXAS COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

Fall Plant Sale & Free Symposium

**Saturday,
September 28**

8a.m. – 2p.m.

Volunteers needed:

- Setup on Friday
- Work the sale on Saturday
- Lead tours
- Work in the Q&A booth

Plant Sale

8:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Available plants include those discussed in symposium lectures, and more. We suggest you bring your own wagon, so you can load up on:

- Unusual & hard-to-find plants
- Antique Roses
- Butterfly & hummingbird garden perennials
- Louisiana Iris
- WaterSmart plants
- Herbs
- Compost/cottonseed meal soil supplement
- Daylilies (see photos, below; descriptions, page 7.)

Landscape Design Symposium

9:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Carol Cammack, Ph.D., CEA Horticulture

Learn the basics of landscape design in a two-part series in the morning and how to save water in an existing landscape in the afternoon.

- 9:00 a.m. Landscape Design Process
- 10:30 a.m. Principles & Elements of Landscape Design
- 12:30 p.m. WaterSmart Landscaping Tips

Composting for All Your Landscaping Needs

Ray Wallace, HCMGA, GCCTMN

9:30, 10:30, 11:30 a.m.

Guided Garden Tours

9:00, 10:00, 11:00 a.m.

The HCMGA Fall Plant Sale & Symposium includes many named daylily cultivars. Three of our featured daylilies shown here are Pure and Simple (left), Bayou Bride (center), and Imperial Edge (right.)

Full descriptions of these and a list of additional cultivars available are on page 7.



President's Thoughts

By George Williams

Sure hope that you were present for Hamburger Tuesday on August 6. If you were there, I believe you will agree that it was one of our best programs ever with the best attendance. As usual, the hamburgers were delicious, and **Dawn Parish** made a super presentation on Proven Plant Winners. I feel that you will be hearing much more from her in the future. I know that **Dave Parish** is quite proud of her and he should be.

Someone has to put these programs together and for the past three years or so, that person has been **Mary Ann Wagner**. It was her idea to have a program each "first Tuesday". Even though she had excellent assistance

from **Tom Robb** and **Charlie Reass**, someone had to "take charge", and she was the one to do so. So, please thank her for an outstanding job in that position. Now, **Katherine Peterson** chairs the Program Committee which consists of **Patty Adamik**, **Bridgette Goss**, **Jean Fefer**, **Charlie Reass** and **Roy Wood**. They are already doing a good job of obtaining speakers for future programs in addition to planning several field trips that will be announced later.

As I write this, it is still the first part of August, and it is hot and muggy. August is still one of my favorite months because I can hope for nicer, cooler weather in September. Now that

doesn't always happen, but I can hope anyway. Last year the average daily high temperature in August was 93 degrees, but that number declined to 86 degrees in September. Remember, that is just an average which may not hold true this year, but we usually do have a cool, not cold, front sometime during the month. September is for gardening, fishing and other outdoor activities, and a few degrees under 90 sure make it more pleasant.

Don't forget our **Fall Plant Sale on September 28**. More about that later from **Ken Dorman** and others.

The Folk Art of Bentwood

By Steve Wood

Some of you may remember when I began bending limbs and saplings into trellises several years ago, and went on to present classes in trellis making. Well, since that time I have become fascinated with the concept of utilizing our natural resources for making garden art of all kinds. From the bentwood trellises I found that bentwood art can be used in many different forms, such as; arbors that you can walk through or sit under, bentwood benches, cottage garden fences, an arbor with a gate, and even hanging baskets to plant in. There seems to be no limit to what can be created from limbs and trees, sometimes practical art forms, and a lot of times whimsical.

The list of material available has grown too. By utilizing the natural resources on hand where the art piece is being created, I used huisache and mesquite Ft. Bend County, a thorny

proposition. In Tyler County it was dogwood and chalk maples, and in Austin County, Eastern red cedar, youpon, and even bodark, while it is still green of course. So the next time you remove a tree from your yard or trim the lower branches of an understory tree, remember that this stuff might just become a garden gate, corner fence, or trellis in your garden.

The original concept of passing this art form on through teaching workshops, rather than marketing bentwood pieces, is still intact. The popularity of these classes never seems to diminish, and as Fall approaches look for upcoming workshop classes in newsletters and the Lazy Gardener monthly calendar in the Chronicle. I have noticed more and more bentwood trellises and other pieces for sale in Garden shops at outrageous prices, but why spend lots of money when you can create your own art for only pennies.

My son and I have even taken the concept of hands-on a step further. This Fall we will be offering a full day of bentwood instruction, on-site, at a 112 acre ranch conveniently located in the beautiful rolling hills of Austin County. In the morning class, each participant will be able to go out with us to gather the limbs and trees to be used later in their very own bentwood project. After a morning of gathering and exploring the many nature trails, an old fashioned picnic lunch will be provided at the farm house. The afternoon session will be a hands-on workshop in the many forms of bentwood artistry with instruction and help. Each participant may make one or more bentwood pieces to take home, as well as all the materials collected.

For more info and registration for this exciting event, contact me at yoohoo@pdq.net, or (281) 890-3226.

Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens

Volunteer Job Fair

Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens is seeking volunteers, and is hosting a Volunteer Job Fair Saturday, **September 7**, from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. This job fair offers an opportunity to learn about the diverse opportunities and rewards of volunteering at Precinct 4's nationally renowned arboretum and botanic gardens. Novice gardeners and master gardeners are welcome.

Lunch Bunch: Herbal Mysteries

Wednesday, **September 11**, from noon to 1 p.m., enjoy a lunchtime program presented by **Suzanne Chapman**, Mercer greenhouse manager. Find out which herbs are easy to grow in our area, the species of annuals for the winter, and year-round perennials. Bring a sack lunch to enjoy during the program.

Volunteer Training

Thursday, **September 12** or Saturday, **September 14** from 8 a.m. to noon., learn what it takes to become a Mercer volunteer. **Greenhouse Training:** 8 a.m. to 10 a.m.; tour the greenhouses and potting shed and receive hands-on instruction on propagation and general care of plants in greenhouses. **Horticultural Training:** 10:30 a.m. to noon; tour the gardens and receive hands-on instruction on "spotting", fertilizing, and planting along with general plant care.

Program: Carnivorous Plants

Saturday, **September 14**, from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m., join Mercer program manager **Greg Harmison** as he explores the world of plants that bite back. These fascinating plants have adapted ways to turn the tables on the insect world. Come find out how they do it and how you can grow these exotic plants. Watch your fingers, they like green thumbs!

Piney Woods Wildlife Society: 20th Anniversary Celebration

Saturday, **September 21**, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., join the Piney Woods Wildlife Society as it celebrates its 20th anniversary. Exhibits representing programs supported by PWS and collections of its members will be available for viewing from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Visitors will enjoy displays of butterfly photography by **Carlos Hernandez** of Spring, Texas and selected photos by **John and Gloria Jones** of Oak Creek Village who have traveled extensively throughout Texas.

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. On the web at <http://www.cp4.hctx.net/merc>.

Urban Harvest Classes Offered

How to Start a Community Garden

Monday, **September 9**, 4 – 6:30 pm
Monday, **September 16**, 1 – 3:30 pm
Both classes will be held at the Urban Harvest office. Pre-registration is required for these free classes. Call Urban Harvest at (713) 880-5540 to register.

The Permaculture of Sustainable Land Design

an eight class series, begins Wednesday, **September 11**. For information contact Urban Harvest at (713) 880-5540.

Backyard Composting will be taught Tuesday, **September 10**, 6:15 – 8:15 pm by UH President John Cleveland. This is one class of a 4-part **Hands-On Gardening Series** being held at the Urban Harvest office. Individual classes are \$20 (\$10 for Urban Harvest members). Call Urban Harvest to register. (713) 880-5540.

Working with Soils and Mulches, the second class of the **Hands-On Gardening Series** will be taught Tuesday, **September 24**. 6:15 – 8:15pm by John Ferguson. Call Urban Harvest to register. (713) 880-5540.

Registration & Location

Call Urban Harvest at (713) 880-5540 to register or for more information. Event information is on the web at <http://www.urbanharvest.org/upcoming/index.html>

Urban Harvest is located at 1900 Kane Street in the Old Sixth Ward, just west of downtown Houston.

Michael's Corner

By Michael Morrison, CEA Horticulture

Hats off! Busy as a bee and hot too! Things have been hopping around the Extension office. Becky has been receiving lots of calls and the Master Gardener fall program is looking good. The fall class starts on August 29th at the Extension office.

The yearly budget was approved by the Master Gardeners. Yeah!

Larry Tischler and Douglas

McLeod in the orchard area are hard at work analyzing the orchard, and we should see some additions of new fruit trees later this year. We also will donate a few trees to the county later this year for plantings in county park areas.

Hats off to Ken Dorman for his contributions at the Central Presbyterian Church commu-

nity garden, and the great article in the newspaper. He also has been volunteering for the Burnett Bayland home and getting that garden off the ground and growing. We need a few other Master Gardeners for a project upcoming at the St. Vincent Village in north Houston. They are a transitional housing program that wants to start a garden. If you are interested, let me know.

Hats off, to Clyde and his work in the garden in several areas. Laying pavers to make paths and repairing other various items in the garden and

upgrading the sprinklers in the greenhouse.

Hats off to Doug Smith (our local agriculture agent in the office) for transporting the soil and peat from New Waverly that Louisiana Pacific donated to us. Many thanks go out to Robert Grove at Hines Nursery for donations for the fall sale that is on September 28. Thanks also to the County for their help in mulching the orchard and the

front beds and pruning too. The County is moving forward on greenhouse renovations and some upgrades that we should see by the end of the year.

We visited the satellite office at Precinct 2 and saw all the hard work they are doing there and the work done in the gardens and the greenhouse. Way to go!

Thanks to Scott, Carol, and Becky for making

my orientation to the office a wonderful one and all their hard work.

Most of all, I want to thank all the Master Gardeners. You make it happen by disseminating horticultural information to the community through demonstration gardens, taking the phone call requests for horticultural information, community garden projects, teaching, public speaking, and your bright smiles and warm hearts. It is your efforts that increase the quality of life through horticultural projects for Harris County and I wanted you to know that we appreciate you!



If we could see the miracle in a single flower clearly, our whole life would change. —Asian Wisdom



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Web Surfin' Tech news for Master Gardeners

By Tom H. Robb, Jr

This past month has been a month of glitches in computers: programs, emails, printing. First, several people received multiple copies of eDirt while others seem to have received none. An updated program that produced the eDirt made it unrecoverable to some. Then I send out an e-mail and those with last names ending with "T" through "Z" receive as many as ten copies while, as far as I know, the rest received only the one copy that they should have received.

Some people got very unhappy – some got downright rude. We're sorry that these things happened, but they weren't intentional. Several with small storage allowances got their mailboxes filled. But several who did, somehow or another always seem to have a filled mailbox. One thing we have to realize—cyberspace still is not perfect. Strange things happen out there every once in a while.

I get multiple copies of e-mail on occasion. I'll admit that I haven't gotten *ten* copies but I have gotten as many as six. So I had to delete 5 extra copies – so what? And the problem with opening the eDirt files primarily occurs because the version of the Acrobat Reader used is too old. Unless you have version 4 or 5 it just won't work beginning with the August issue. That issue was created using Acrobat version 5, which allows for an additional number of features to make a great publication.

Several of you have mentioned that you did not receive the August issue of eDirt. I have posted the August issue on our website along with all issues beginning with March. Also posted are a tutorial and tips for using the .PDF files used to transform the original document, that Tami creates so masterfully, into the beautiful eDirt that can be transmitted over a telephone or cable line.

The website—and if you haven't put this address into your Bookmarks or Favorites, depending upon your browser, you should—is located at <http://harris-cnty.tamu.edu/mg/>. One of the two buttons on the left side of the page allows you to see what is still left of the old website. It is labeled **Current** which it was when the new version was begun. The other button, labeled **New Version**, allows you to visit the new version and really is the one that should be called current.

Clicking the **New Version** button will bring up a page, which has six blue buttons under the banner. With this you can see the listing of the **current officers, current committees, life members, history, events**, and **Urban Dirt**. Click the Urban Dirt button and you open a page giving a short history of our newsletter. On the left side of the page are six blue buttons, which will download the issues from March through August in PDF format. On the right side are four odd shaped buttons. The first three also download PDF files: a **tutorial, tips** for reading Urban Dirt online, and the **volunteer hours** worksheet. The fourth button, labeled **pdf help** takes you to a **Help Page** containing links to a number of Adobe help pages and files.

Under the Master Gardener logo is a **Get Acrobat Reader** button. If you want the latest version of Reader, click this button and it will take you to the Adobe Acrobat Reader download page. Scroll down to the bottom of the page where you will find three column boxes titled Step 1, Step 2, and Step 3. In Step 1, open the box called Platform by clicking on the **Choose a Platform** button. Select your operating system from this list (*i.e.* Win98 or Mac OS X). At this point you can skip Step 2 and click on the Download button at the top of Step 3. On Windows, Reader

should download and install itself in C:\Program Files\Adobe\Acrobat Reader 5. It's a large program and should take quite a while to download.

Go back to the MG website by clicking the Back button until you get to the new main page again. From here, click the **Events** button. All meetings presently scheduled for the entire Master Gardener year are now posted, including the four big annual sales.

You say that you don't see any buttons when you access the first page of the website? Chances are that you are using a very old version of your browser. For free downloads of Netscape Navigator or Netscape Communicator (my preference) go to http://wp.netscape.com/download/?cp=myupgrd_my. For free downloads of Microsoft Internet Explorer go to the Microsoft Download Center at <http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/>. Both of these program files are very large and, with dial-up, will take a *long* time to download.

Several of you who were formerly on the email list failed to add an email address on your recertification sheet. I took this to mean that you did not want to remain on the list or that you no longer had an email account. In any event, I removed your old email address and you no longer receive mail. If you did not intend to be removed, simply email me at trobb@hal-pc.org and I will put you back on the list.

Go out on the web as shown above, take a look at the eDirt files—they're really beautiful in full colored .PDF files—and if you'd like to begin receiving them just let me know. Urban Dirt for paper, eDirt for electronic.

Happy surfin'

Editor's note: aw shucks, I'm blushing. Thanks, Tom!

Garden Gifts News from our Outreach Gardens

By Kenneth Dorman

High noon, July 15, 2002, and my backyard temperature is a balmy 80°F. By 5:00, after some rain, it is up to 82°F, a light breeze is blowing, the humidity is not too bad, my mosquito machines are functioning properly and it is pleasant on the terrace. God is Good. With just a little imagination you can close your eyes and hear the plants saying, “*thank you.*”

CCSC Harvest

Our harvest figures at CCSC up to August 15, when this was submitted are listed below.

After we took out the tomatoes we planted squash in one bed and green snap beans in the other two. We had one other unoccupied bed so I planted red **Lasoda potatoes** in it and then as the field peas, okra and sweet potatoes

finish we will plant broccoli and cabbage, collards and lettuce started in the greenhouse plus sugar snap peas. After the snap beans finish in December we will plant **carrots** along with more **collard and mustard greens** plants

other young woman, **Sharon**, arrived at our gate and filled in nicely for Walter. He and Mike and Jinx are all back now and I guess Jinx is a new volunteer although Mike says she just comes along to boss him around. If true, she does a good job because he really keeps the garden clean and neat.

On July 24th, two professional photography groups, one from **A&M** and the other from the **Houston Chronicle** along with **Brenda Smith** visited us. We were pleased to have some beautiful black-eyed and cream peas as well as exceptional okra and sweet potatoes, eggplants and peppers for them to photo-

graph. They also got to see Mother Nature in action as lady beetles and their offspring munched on aphids in one bed of peas. In five days time the good bugs ate all the bad ones. We also had some green stinkbugs on the peas that disappeared at the same time. I hope the stinking mockingbirds ate them.

News Flash!!!

The **August 10, Houston Chronicle** had a nice article and some outstanding photography from the garden at CCSC. I hope all of you got a copy. Congratulations to everyone involved, and thank you, Brenda.

With three gardens going (counting my own) and another possibly starting, this saying by Rudyard Kipling that I have used before is more appropriate than ever, “*Gardens are not made by singing, ‘Oh, how beautiful,’ and sitting in the shade.*” Be careful of the sun, love yourself and be joyful.

**Gardens are not made by singing,
'Oh, how beautiful,'
and sitting in the shade.**

—Rudyard Kipling

where the summer squash was. Also in late December we will put out two hundred **1015 onion** sets between the rows of lettuce. And, along the fence where the melon and cucumber plants were we have planted **Butternut winter squash**. The strawberry plants have yielded their space to **arugula** and **coriander**. Does this sound like a lot of stuff? Just writing about it has worked up quite a thirst.

I guess we should let some of these beds rest with a cover crop, but since they are just big pots and we keep adding compost and cottonseed meal we will continue as is until something changes our thinking. If these crops produce as hoped we will exceed 3,000 pounds for the year or over four pounds per square foot in the CCSC garden.

Well, **Walter** went to the mountains for July and **Jinx** took **Mike** to Costa Rica for two weeks at the same time. Plus, **Georgina** moved to the Woodlands. But, even though he got elected president **George** took on Mike's work schedule as well as his own, and an-

	Harvest	Goal (in pounds)
Beans	125	90
Cucumbers	765	100
Eggplant	183	100
Figs	29	25
French Melons	312	150
Okra		50
Onions	162	130
Black-eye peas	17	60
Bell Pepper	77	60
Chili Pepper	90	40
Potatoes	123	120
Sweet Potatoes		40
Tomatoes	390	360
Total	2,273	1,325

Note: We harvested an additional **118 pounds** between January and March when this record was begun.

MG *2* MG

Sharing plants, ideas, and more...

By Ginger Geist

Plant swapping slowed down this summer. Of course it should have, since transplanting in this heat is difficult on both gardener and plant—except for water plants.

On a tip from MG **Vicky Esse**, my husband and I went to our very first pond plant swap. Before heading to the Pavilion at Mercer Arboretum, we checked the web site www.plantmeet.com to find some general info and rules on etiquette for swapping. Not knowing exactly what to expect, we packed lean – only a few plants and a snack. What a fun-filled morning it turned out to be.

Although Mercer does not sponsor this event, the folks there are familiar with Jennifer and Nadine who have hosted large spring and fall swaps (75 tables) for the past five years. This summer swap was their first specifically for pond & bog plants. It continues their serious passion.

Gardeners arrived from 9 am onwards. All told, about 18 groups of families and friends set out their plants on the picnic tables and the surrounding ground. Lawn chairs and ice chests came next. Some plants were neatly potted; others were in clumps as they had been dug that morning. Some gardeners knew the Latin names; others said, “it blooms pink”. Some gardeners gave away plants while others were very serious about bartering for their best ones. The water lily gardeners were awesome. Not only did they bring a diverse number of hybrids to give

away, some referenced personal photo albums that would put plant catalogs to shame. Other gardeners had photos documenting their pond construction and their gardens throughout the year. Questions, answers and plant talk filled the air. For several, this swap was a reunion, while first-timers were welcomed as we looked on in awe.

There was something for everyone. There were door prizes, and a potluck lunch that included hot dogs, pastas, chips, cookies and drinks. And it turned out I wasn't the only MG at the swap. **Laurie Barrow** collected lots of variety for her brand new pond garden.

As we headed home with a trunk full of water lilies, bog plants and door prizes, we said what a blast this has been!

The web site is <http://www.plantmeet.com> The fall swap is scheduled for November 2, 2002 at the Pavilion in the picnic grounds at Mercer Arboretum. We hope to be there.



Large quantities of pond plants arrive in all sorts and sizes of containers.

Daylilies cultivars available at the Fall Plant Sale

Bayou Bride (Salter, 1995)

Ruffled cream with purple eye. The ruffling on the petals of this large flower adds a note of gracefulness. The eye is soft and feathered onto the petals. (Photo, cover)

Imperial Edge (Stamile, 1993)

A vision of the contemporary daylily cultivar... Soft pink with rose-pink picotée, gold edge and rose-pink eyezone above green throat. (Photo, cover)

Pure and Simple (Salter, 1993)

Ruffled cream with purple eye. The ruffling on the petals of this large flower adds a note of gracefulness. The eye is soft and feathered onto the petals. (Photo, cover)

Additional daylilies at the sale

Adopt Me Joiner, Band of Color, Blackberry Candy, Breed Apart, California Sunshine, Caruso, Cimarron Knight, Coal Miner, Coyote Moon, Darker Shade, Double Cranberry Ruffles, Double Tequila Bunny, Elizabeth Salter, Frank Gladney, Gentle Shepherd, Graceful Eye, Graceland, Honky Tonk Dream, Indigo Moon, Irving Shulman, Jalapeno Pepper, Janet Gayle, Jason Salter, Jean Swann, Jennifer's Fault, Karen My Love, Kent's Favorite Two, Lit Up, My Path, Nebuchadnezzar's Furnace, Paprika Spice, Rooster, Rosy Sunset, Savannah Hannah, Seminole Ruby, Smoky Mountain Autumn, Spider Breeder, Super Double Delight, Tusawilla Dave Talbott, VI Simmons, Whooperee, Wilma Trimpa. We'll also have a number of unnamed cultivars available at the sale.

Note: All daylilies offered at the sale grow well in the Houston area.

Herb Garden News

By Heidi Vaughan

In July and August we have kept busy with weeding and trimming the bountiful beds of the Herb Garden. It is so nice to take snippets home after work, for cooking and drying. And we have so much. Please help yourself any time you are out.

This month I want to mention a thing or two about **Echinacea**, the 2002 Herb of the Year, according to *The Herb Companion*. We have it blooming profusely throughout the Herb Garden, but especially in the **Medicinal Bed**. Echinacea is also known as Coneflower, the purple variety being most common, with bright petals drooping down from a stiff, prickly center.

Many of us know the name Echinacea from the health-food store, where it can be found in little pressed from the roots of *cea purpurea* has been Native Americans and ies have shown it does cold and flu symptoms, a preventative aid at the know that Echinacea is for short periods of time, tive the longer it's taken.



glass bottles. Juice fresh, flowering Echina-used medicinally by Europeans. Today stud-decrease the duration of and it is often taken as start of that season. Do only meant to be taken as it becomes less effec-

Coneflowers are also found in our **Craft and Color Bed**, because they lend themselves so well to floral arrangements both fresh and dried. They shout summer when mixed with hollyhocks and calendula. After the petals have fallen off, the cones, called paleae, can be spray painted for a dramatic effect. Incidentally, Native Americans used the stiff paleae as combs, to brush their hair.

Echinacea loves limestone and rocky soil. It is best grown from plant, as those grown from seed can take two to three years to flower. Divide and transplant roots every three or four years, in the fall.

Thank you to everyone who has come to work in the Herb Garden during the hot weather, and especially those who kept the garden so tidy while I was on vacation. We always welcome anyone interested in herbs to join us on Tuesdays. Stop by and introduce yourself, please! Or call me any time at (281) 579-8995.

Speakers' Bureau Volunteers needed

By Beth Grunden

We welcome anyone who enjoys giving talks and is comfortable in front of people. You need not be an expert on gardening as there are prepared programs and slides. We especially need people in the Bellaire area, southern area of the city, and those that are able to present programs at night. Also needed is a person for vegetable gardening presentations as well as composting. Contact **Beth Grunden** at (713) 461-7159 or egrunden@houston.rr.com.

Herb Society of America



**South Central District Gathering
October 18-19, 2002
Washington, Arkansas**

"The Presidents Speak"

Sessions include:

- The History of Washington, Arkansas: As it fits into the Universe.
- The Lore and Legends of Biblical Plants
- The HSA Headquarters Connection
- District Meeting: an opportunity to meet candidates for District Delegate
- Aromacology: Psyche and Scent
- The History of Herbs in Medicine and Pharmacy: a 5,000 year retrospective

Plus your choice of tours:

- Surrey ride and tour of Old Washington Historic State Park restored homes, buildings, museums and herb garden.
- Visit the Old Columbus Herb Farm garden.
- Rick Evans Grandview Prairie Conservation Education Center and Wildlife Management Area (WMA), an area that's still original prairie.

For further information and to register, contact **Tony Scanapico** at (979) 249-3480 or tkscan@cvtv.net. On the web at <http://www.herbsociety.org/calend.htm#south>.

The Flower Garden

By Jennifer Lowenthal

Wow. What a summer. It was thought to be a hot one. But, I have been proven wrong. Instead, we have gotten more rain than previous summers. That cools things down just a little bit. And it can also make the garden flourish into a mass of color. Any gardener would be pleased with Mother Nature's help. Now, if we could just figure out how to totally eliminate all of the weeds. Seriously, the garden looks really good. Many of the plants from springtime have lasted until now. We are just beginning to pull out all of the petunias. Who ever heard of petunias hanging around until August? It is the **Wave Series** that is in the garden. Those can not be beat by other petunias that are around. There is a **Fireman's Cap** in the garden that will not stop blooming. We truly adore this plant with its thorns and all. It has tropical red blossoms that, in a way, remind me of lobster claws. It has been one of the best orphaned plants that we have received. We have not planted that many new plants. Some vincas were given to us from **Hines Nursery**. The name of the vinca is '**Pacific Polka Dot**' I have not seen the blooms on this plant yet. I will give more details about these plants at a later date. They have been planted in front of the building. There have been zinnia plants popping up everywhere in the garden. They are an all-time favorite in Texas. Just watch out for the fungus that the plants attract in this Houston humidity.

Before I go I have one question that has been tossed around by the people in the gardens—*Does anyone know where all the butterflies have been?* If you have any suggestions of why we are not seeing the butterflies please stop by and let us know. We have a few ideas why they are so sparse compared to past summers but we would like to get to the bottom of these unseen creatures. We miss the butterflies. Until next time... keep gardening.

UrbanDirt Advertising

Urban Dirt is now accepting gardening related advertising and plans to publish a maximum of 8 – business card-sized ads per month. The cost will be \$35 for three months, beginning with the issue following receipt of your ad copy and payment unless you specify otherwise. You may send your ad as camera-ready hard copy, on disc, or via email. Deadline is no later than the 15th of each month. Please return the form below, your ad copy and your check for \$35 to:

Harris County Master Gardener Association
 #2 Patterson Rd., Houston, TX 77084

Name _____ Phone _____
 Address _____ Fax _____
 _____ Email _____
 Date _____ Check enclosed Ad copy enclosed

Please begin publication with the: next issue other (specify) _____

Upcoming Events

Bear Creek

September 3 – Hamburger Tuesday
8:00 am Work up an appetite
Noonish Home cooked burgers, then John Stacy, Texas Gourd Society on *Gourds*

September 17 – General Meeting
6:30 pm Coffee
7:00 pm Robert Grove, Hines Nursery on *Cool Season Plants*

October 1 – Hamburger Tuesday
8:00 am Work up an appetite
Noonish Home cooked burgers, then John Teas, Teas Nursery on *Trees & Berries of Texas*

October 9 – Field Trip
 A car-pooling event to Mercer Arboretum and Botanical Gardens. Information available at regular meetings and in the MG office.

October 15 – General Meeting
6:30 pm Coffee
7:00 pm Barney Lipscomb on *Murderous Plants*

Precinct 2

September 4 – First Weds.
9:30 am Registration
10:00 am Dr. Bob Randall, *Organic Pest Control and Soil*
Noonish Join us for lunch, \$3.00

October 2 – First Weds.
9:30 am Registration
10:00 am Clyde Cannon, *Roses*
Noonish Join us for lunch, \$3.00

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.

Genoa Friendship Garden

HCMGA Precinct Two Satellite

By Angela Chandler, Precinct 2 Coordinator

Things have been busy at Precinct Two! We are getting ready for our **Fall Sale**, and are hoping for a successful event this year. The greenhouse is in much better shape, and we have a better venue this year. We have had several good turn-outs for Fall Sale workdays and have more coming up. **Marge Bryan** and **Marsha Christjohn** have been regular troopers in the greenhouse. **Johnny Jones**, Fall Sale Chairperson has things humming right along.

Linda Lain, Master Gardener and Herb Society member, gave a wonderful program for August's First Wednesday. We had a full house and lots of interaction from the attendees. Interest in herbs just keeps growing and Linda gave us some experienced advice on selections for the Gulf Coast gardener.

We were glad to welcome **Michael Morrison**, **Scott Hume**, and **Clyde Cannon** to our garden and First Wednesday program! **Neal Murray** took them on a tour of our gardens and office facilities. We hope you will all join us again every opportunity you get. We are excited about Clyde returning to give a program on Old Garden Roses in October.

Perennial Garden

Pat Pate has been busy weeding the rose rows and they look much better. **Beth Frohme** and **Janice Patrick** have been cutting back and trimming up some of the perennials that have been bullying their more delicate neighbors. The vines we put in along our chain link fence are covering it well and we have something colorful to see almost all the time.

The plants we rescued from the **Spencer Prairie** have settled in and the coneflowers are putting on new growth. The daylilies we put in this

year have withstood a lot of pressure from our resident rabbits, but they are doing well and blooming sporadically. Janice has been selecting plants that are real Gulf Coast troopers and the Perennial Garden is looking good.

Shade Garden

We have added a shade garden over the summer and have been planting gingers as they become available. This area really needs a little more shade in the summer months, so maybe an arbor with an annual vine is the answer.

Vegetable Garden

We are harvesting cukes, okra, tomatoes, and squash three times a week.

Georgia Lau, **Marsha Christjohn**, and **Barbara Morrison** have been staying after the harvest and making sure it gets to one of our donation spots. We are seeding fall veggies in the greenhouse. **Dick Benoit**, **Denny Denman**, & **Jim Crabb** have been refreshing the beds with compost and manure.

The sweet potatoes are beautiful. I think we will start poking around for some to harvest soon. In this same patch, the blackeyes and purple hull peas are really coming on, and the Christmas limas are topping their poles. We moved the multiplying shallots to a veggie bed when we re-vamped the herb garden and they are thickening very well.

Orchard & Berry Beds

Neal Murray, **Jim Frantz**, and **Paul Perisho** drove T-posts along the berry patch and have started tying up the canes. This area got a little wild and crazy last year, and we hope this will make them more manageable.

Jim Frantz has mulched and cleaned up the orchard wind-rows so we can finish our irrigation project now.

Paul Perisho, **Jack Denman**, **Jim Frantz** and **Neal Murray** have pre-assembled most of the parts for the irrigation manifold and we will install it as soon as this rain lets us!

The grapes we put on our arbors this year are climbing right on up. They are blending with the coral vine and look very pretty at this point.

Thanks... As we begin a new HCMGA year, Precinct Two would like to acknowledge all of you who have helped us this past few months. We had so much work to do, and your support made the task easier. We received much wise advice and cheerful counsel. Thank-you.

Coming up at Precinct 2

For our **September 4th** program we are pleased to announce that **Dr. Bob Randall**, Executive Director of Urban Harvest, will give a presentation on **Organic Pest Control and Soil**. The class will be held at the Precinct 2 Harris County Master Gardeners Office, 1202 Genoa Red Bluff. The program is free and open to the public, but reservations are required, please call (281) 991-8437. Registration begins at 9:30 am, the program at 10:00 am. Lunch is served following the program and is \$3.00. Mark your calendars for this informative talk by one of Houston's leading gardeners.

Coming Oct 2: Roses are one of everybody's favorites and we just can't learn enough about them. Master Gardener **Clyde Cannon** will share his expertise with us at the October Program.

Volunteer Opportunities

By Scott Hume

We are going to start this month's rambles with another trivia quiz...

What was the name of the Secretary of Defense under JFK and LBJ who is remembered for the now infamous term, "Body Count?"

I hope you all have noticed the unbelievable job that the "Tool Man," **Brian Koehl** has done. Those tool sheds are an absolute dream—clean, organized, tools repaired, etc. If you haven't then you should stop by and look in those sheds and the surrounding areas. Great job Brian!!

Another area of "revitalization" is what is going on down at the Precinct 2 grounds. If you live near there and were thinking about dropping by—and perhaps helping out—you will be pleased by the amount of enthusiastic activity that **Angela Chandler** and **Neal Murray** have produced there. It looks like a fun place to help out!

Speaking of enthusiasm, you should meet and follow **Doug McCloud** around on Tuesdays. He has agreed to co-chair the Orchard and things really seem to be popping out there. He is quite hopeful that several of you with an interest in Fruits and the orchard will come out to join him.

Handy with a hacksaw

On a "down note" I must still desperately ask for someone to come forward to help cut the ice cream buckets for the Cylinder Garden School Program.

How you can help

- **Cylinder Gardening** — Bucket cutters needed
- **Phone Duty** — Mon./Fri in Sept. & Oct.
- **Report your hours** — Form, page 10 & the web

Please contact Scott if you can help out in these areas.
(281) 855-5600 or oshume@taexgw.tamu.edu.

We need a lot more by mid September. As always, **Carol Cammack** will need more volunteers to sign up as advisors for the schools. Please don't think that we get a limitless new supply of advisors from the new Master Gardener class—we need you "old pros" to come back and help again.

Phone help needed

And of course... what would this be like if I didn't ask for some more help on the phones. We are still missing help for Mondays and Fridays in September and October. Please give us a hand!!

Why your volunteer hours count

Getting back to that body count issue in the trivia quiz. Just last week I got a list of "Hours and Contacts" from one of our very hard working volunteers. Instead of being proud I had to sigh as I realized that was a delinquent report for work that had occurred over the past 7 months. The sad part was that there were almost 1,000 Contacts made over that period! Why sad? Because our CEA's have to make monthly reports that list our contacts. Just as body counts were used to gauge how we were doing in the Viet Nam war, all of us here are being evaluated on how we are doing by a similar measure—the



number of contacts! Although it is not the only measure of how well we—and **we** really does mean **all of us**—are doing, it is one of the most important. If you don't turn in your number of contacts in a timely fashion we can't get credit for them. Remember where we told you that answering your neighbor's questions about his lawn or Photinia does *not* count as volunteer hours? Well it sure *does* count as the kind of "contacts" that the Extension Service is all about. So, tell us about them too when you turn in your hours.

But don't worry, we won't send Robert McNamara out to your homes to show you how to "creatively" increase your numbers of contacts! We only want the numbers of the ones you actually kill—*oops*—I mean to how many you actually extend our horticultural knowledge!

Volunteer Hours

See below for instructions.

Name _____

Phone Number _____

Email address _____

Period covered – from _____ to _____

Date	Facility or Garden Name	# Contacts	Hours
Total hours this worksheet			

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.

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>.

September 2002

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8	9	10 How to Start a Community Garden — Urban Harvest. page 3 Backyard Composting — Urban Harvest. page 3	11 Herbal Mysteries — Mercer. page 3 The Permaculture of Sustainable Land Design — Urban Harvest. page 3	12 Volunteer Training — Mercer. page 3	13 Newsletter deadline 5pm	14 Carnivorous Plants — Mercer page 3 Volunteer Training — Mercer. page 3
15	16 How to Start a Community Garden — Urban Harvest. page 3	17 Monthly meeting at Bear Creek — Cool Season Plants page 9	18	19	20	21 Piney Woods Wildlife Society exhibits & photos — Mercer page 3
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eDirt End Notes

As Tom mentioned in his article, there have been some, *ahem*, challenges getting electronic communications out the past couple of months. It wouldn't be a normal month preparing Urban Dirt and eDirt if at least a couple of things didn't make me want to tear clumps of hair out, claw at the walls and run screaming from the house. But that's just technology for you. One thing's for sure: every month's an adventure!

One of my big challenges is finding a design that provides both a good print and online reader experience. Our current layout looks good and prints well, but doesn't necessarily flow well for online reading.

I'm working on redesigning the newsletter to better accommodate online viewing. To save my sanity—and my hair—I still need one basic design that will work for both print and online versions, or it'll take me *even longer* to produce each month. The easy answer is one-column pages, but reading long lines of text is hard on the eyes, especially online. So I'll have to find another answer. (Okay, anyone who spends as much time on this as I do probably *deserves* to pull their hair out.)

In the meantime, we're taking baby steps. Last month I added page navigation buttons to the online version. Now they're located in the same location at the top and bottom of every page. This consistency should help you move around easier. Look for more changes in the upcoming months.

As always, I welcome your input and feedback. If you've got ideas, send 'em on over to the Dirt desk at UrbanDirt@houston.rr.com. —Tami

eDIRT SEPTEMBER 2002

Scribbles from A Children's Garden

By Cindy Appleman

Although we never got around to putting up the “Gardeners at Work” sign, we're pretty sure you wondered about that as we mulled over what to do with our plot. We felt that you had to watch your step as you passed through on the rock pathway. So... **Kathy King** hauled in red sandstone for a flatter and wider walkway. It's even gorgeous when wet—my favorite job is hosing down the pathway. Of course that also has something to do with being able to splash about with a hose!

Kathy can do amazing things on the spur of the moment with spray paint. Look for her talent exhibited on the frog, rabbit, cat (the cat has found a home with our Cat Whiskers) and our 'Nessie'. Her talents brought Wendolyn the worm sculpture to life and the Bless this Garden fairy ball. With her staff, husband **Scott Mayeax** and daughter, **Chloe**, she has also created a **Toad Abode**, a **Gnome Home**, **flower fairies** and is currently creating a **fairy condominium** and a **Barbie Bog Garden**.

Bill Adams revived our small fences with some wonderful purple paint whose color really sets off the sweet potato vine and even coordinates with the sign shovel. We had a

great crop of weeds among the larkspur while we waited to see what was growing in our garden. It seemed like a good idea to discard the nightshade. Maybe we'll 'raise' your expectations with the addition of our entry arch—Bill is very talented with a screwdriver too.

Carolyn and **Clyde Cannon** restored the green bench to a vibrant violet. **Becky Deasy's** husband, **Tom**, created the grate covering our child-devouring drainage hole and a camouflaged grate to cover a mysterious hole that we 'grew'.

Gardeners are the original recyclers and we are trying to recycle a chair into topiary sculpture. We really appreciate all the support and encouragement.

Come visit and see us grow!

