

# ***URBAN DIRT***

**Published for the Harris County Master Gardeners**

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## **HARVEST TIME IN HOUSTON**

Time to get out your cookbooks and discover some new recipes for your harvest vegetables.



Now that the mornings are a little cooler, it's time to think about those fall gardening chores. You might consider a fall crop. This is the time of year to plant:

Beets, brussel sprouts, cauliflower, cabbage sets, carrots, garlic, head lettuce, mustard, onion sets, potatoes, radishes, some types of tomato sets and turnips. You can also plant the following herbs:

Chervil, chives, coriander, dill, fennel, marjoram, mints, oregano, parsley, rosemary, sage, thyme and winter savory.

Here are some other chores for this time of year:

Clean up beds, weeding them and adding mulch. Make sure that you destroy old leaves and branches that may be diseased. Healthy trimmings can go in the compost heap. Take cuttings of tender perennials and pot them for replanting in the spring. Divide violets, plant spring flowering bulbs according to instructions for each variety. Remember not to plant tulips before late December. Many people find they have more success with bulbs by adding a little bone meal mixed with soil when planting bulbs.

For a fall flower garden plant: Alyssum, calendula, chrysanthemum, cosmos, four-o'clock, gerbera, hollyhock, lupine, marigold, pansy, petunia, phlox (Louisiana), verbena, violet and zinnia. You can sow the following seeds: Alyssum, Texas Bluebell, Coreopsis, Cornflower, Daisies, Delphinium, Everlasting, Four-o'clock, Mallow, Pansy, Petunia, Pinks, Poppy, Salvia, Blue, Scabiosa, Snapdragon, Stock, Viola, and Wallflower.

### **SEPTEMBER MEETING: 9/17/96**

Executive Board	5:30 p.m.
Dessert and Coffee	6:30 p.m.
General Meeting	7:00 p.m.

#### **SUBJECT:**

**"Antique Roses - Their History, Culture and Beauty "**

Speaker: Clyde Cannon

### **OCTOBER MEETING: 10/15/96**

Executive Board	5:30 p.m.
Dessert and Coffee	6:30 p.m.
General Meeting	7:00 p.m.

#### **SUBJECT:**

**"Growing and using herbs Productively."**

Speakers: Madeline Hill and Gwen Barkley



**FROM THE BUZZ...**

by Arthur E. Busby, III, MG President

In the last issue, I mentioned that your board would hold a brainstorming session to develop ideas for the coming year. We had that session on July 1, and I believe that we came up with some great plans for the coming year.

The following are just some of the ideas from that meeting, *remember, that implementation depends on membership support. Thinking of ideas is easy, implementation is the hard part:*

- Host the first annual Master Gardener's Day, this will be an open house for the public. It will be held at the Extension Service. Iona Alphonso is the committee chairperson. **Two more members are needed.**
- Host a Master Gardener reunion for all prior graduates. Schedule a meaningful program and lunch.
- Participate in radio programs and public television educational spots.
- Develop a program on horticultural therapy for hospital officials.
- Establish displays in public areas showing our major programs, such as: cylinder gardening, dialysis programs, test gardens, etc.
- Establish a scientific research function.
- Establish an awards committee and a publicity committee.

(Continued on page 4)

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## FROM THE ORCHARD...

By Yvonne Gibbs



To Master Gardeners, Martha Brem and Robert Midkiff, I want to thank you for pitching in and helping with The Fruit Study Group's duties. Bob, thank you for managing volunteers in the Orchard. Martha,

thank you for organizing the telephone committee for us and also for getting volunteers for the Fruit Study Function in June. This represents a lot of effort and time expended by both of you.

Thanks also to MG telephone volunteers, Linda Andrews, Becky Bachtel, Leslie Banks, Richard Benner, Bernard Benson, Karen Ferazzi, Nell Watson, Leslie Raney, Nancy Kubnick, Christine Bruce, Kathleen Davis, Sheryl Hickey, Rose Kimball, Suzanne Longley Morton, Gay Pattillo and Jane Szymczak for making the calls to our members.

For those of you who did not make the self-drive to tour The Kings Orchard, you missed something (pardon the humor here as there wasn't a lot of fruit to be had). We did pick blue berries and some raspberries, but getting to visit with Dan Copland, the orchard manager, more than made up for the foibles of nature that we all have to deal with. He answered all of our questions and went into great detail explaining how each crop was managed. We were given details on the varieties and root stocks which they were using.

One very special demonstration by George McAfee, "Greenwood Grafting," was worth the trip. I refer to McAfee as our "grafting guru." George has given many grafting demos at our meetings over the past 10 years. He is very meticulous to details and is always looking for better ways to do things.

He shares his interests and knowledge with all.

Strawberries are a major crop at the Kings Orchard. After the berries have produced, the beds are torn down. The mulch is removed, and the soil is fumigated. Peas are planted there for the summer to nitrate the soil. The beds are then solarized. In October, they are rebuilt and covered with new black plastic. About the week of October 20, they plant the new plant plugs. The planting operation is machine (tractor) assisted. 1,000 plants are planted in 30 minutes. Holes are made in the plastic and the plant plug drops into the hole. This is a lot of work.

Many thanks to Bill Adams, Tom LeRoy and Jo Lynn Jennings for the fruit preservation demonstration held in the Extension Auditorium. There was a down pour that day, but all in all a good turn out for the event. George McAfee did his greenwood grafting for everyone to see.

### FRUIT STUDY MEETING: TUESDAY, OCTOBER 20, 1996

Subject: "Kumquats" by Dr. Alfred Loeblich. Dr. Loeblich is one of our members, we enjoyed his previous slide presentation on Rio Farms Citrus Variety Collection. I know that we are going to enjoy the October program immensely. We will be providing handouts on the subject matter in order to allow you to enjoy and learn without all that note taking. This is an innovative program, be sure to thank our member for being so thoughtful.

Dr. Loeblich is a professor and is Head of the Biology Department at the University of Houston. He is also the Chairperson for the citrus interest group, NAFEX. He and his wife Sandy are the author and illustrator of the citrus publication, *Hesperidia*, which, by the way, is the plural of *hesperidium*, the botanical term for the type of fruit produced by citrus plants.

(Continued on page 4)

## MORE BUZZ... FROM OUR PRESIDENT

(Continued from page 2)

- Buy portable radios for contacting members and others while they are working in the many Extension Service areas.
- Build an arbor between our building and the Community Center to create a shady picnic area.
- Have more weekday and Saturday field trips where private cars are used..

Well, that's enough. There are more, but the major ones are listed above. Admittedly, this is a very ambitious list of projects. Some we will do immediately and some we will not do for several years, if at all. As I said last month, the key is involvement by **YOU**, our membership. The one thing we tried to remember is our primary reason for existence: "to increase knowledge of horticulture to its members and the general public." That's what we are all about...and, of course, to have fun doing it.

Please think seriously about getting involved in one or more of the projects listed above. Give me a call at 370-6521, if you have any questions or would like to work on a project.

## (Fruit Study Group, continued from p.3)

Please bring fruit to our meeting on October 29. We want to have a Show and Taste Test. Bring fruit to taste, especially citrus, jujube, figs and persimmons. Bring them either fresh, candied, jellied or dried. You may display jars, and also bring other fresh fruit. Thank you. I'll see everyone at the meeting and in the Orchard!

### EASY GARDENING SELECTIONS:

#### FIGS AND PERSIMMONS

by Yvonne Gibbs

Some of the easiest fruits to grow are figs, and there are so many to choose from. They are also easy to propagate, just take a tip cutting when the plants are dormant. They do not need fertilizing, spraying, pruning, mulching nor watering.

Another very productive fruit is the persimmon. There are many varieties to choose from both astringent and non-astringent. These fruits will develop even when there is no pollination. Some trees have only female flowers and some have both male and female flowers. So you could have a lone tree and still have a crop. We are learning about the culture of the different varieties. They are small trees and most yards can handle a couple. This is a greatly under appreciated fruit, I hope you will give it a try.

