

# The "DIG IT" News



A PUBLICATION OF THE HIGHLAND LAKES MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION

**MARCH MASTER GARDENER MONTHLY MEETING**

**WHEN:** Tuesday,  
 March 15, 2016  
**TIME:** 3:00-5:00 pm  
**WHERE:** Marble Falls  
 Church of Christ  
 711 Broadway  
 Marble Falls

**PRESENTER:** Rachel Cywinski of Landscape for Life, San Antonio  
**TOPIC:** "The Edible Native Landscape"

*Refreshments will be served*

**PRESIDENT'S CORNER BY ROXANNE DUNEGAN**

*"The flowers of late winter and early spring occupy places in our hearts well out of proportion to their size."* - Gertrude S. Wister

A few of you have visited our place on County Rd. 200 and over the driveway is a sign "Heartsease". The day we bought the property 22 years ago I knew this place would ease my heart for many years, and it still does every time I go up the driveway. Heartsease is an old fashion name for the small pansy called Viola or Johnny Jump-up. The saying above, and this time of year, reminds me that spring is just around the corner and I hope to get a couple of 6 packs of pansies this week.

As I mentioned during our membership meeting in February, this is a busy time for the Board. We have reviewed our membership status and will be advising our state organization, Texas Master Gardeners Association, that we have 98 members. This does not include our brand new class of 20. The Board attended the first day of class on the 18th, introduced ourselves and got an opportunity to meet our new Associates. They are a great group of people from

all over the US. Missy Henneke, our Class Coordinator, along with Christy Stephens and Marsha Ruzicka, Assistant Coordinators did a fantastic job of making our new members feel at home and began introducing them to the organization. Kelly Tarla introduced AgriLife and it was great to see Wade Hibler instructing on how to take soil samples. Looks like a great start! Please make an effort to introduce yourself to the Associates at the upcoming meeting. You will know them by their paper name badges.

Another point about our membership. Our new 2016 membership directory should be posted on the website by the time you read this column. Thanks goes out to Allison Bennett and Sherry Robitson who have been very busy taking pictures of us at the membership meetings for our new photo directory that will be posted in addition to our regular directory. This new picture directory they are creating will be very helpful. Our new Associate directory will also be posted around this time.

I am getting quite a few suggestions for our Long Range Planning

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activity. For those, not at the meeting, we are asking for members to submit ideas as to how to use our excess revenue. Ideas can be big or small dollars. Please continue thinking about this and submit to me any ideas you have prior to the March meeting. My email and phone are listed below.

The Highland Lakes Lawn & Garden Show is only a month away. As Irene mentioned at the meeting, if you have any nice garden themed items that you would like to donate for the raffle, please contact Quannah Green or deAnn Geery. You still have time to volunteer. Sign up sheets will be at the March meeting.

WOW – just as I was about to send this off to Lyn I saw the article in the Burnet Bulletin about Sammye Childer's award. Please read below about the wonderful recognition Sammye received. What an outstanding volunteer.

Take care everyone.

Regards,  
Roxanne Dunegan  
[roxdunegan@gmail.com](mailto:roxdunegan@gmail.com)  
512-756-9396

## ***Congratulations Sammye!***

Sammye Childers has received the nation's highest award for volunteers, the President's Lifetime Achievement Award, and personal commendation from President Barack Obama. The award recognizes those who contribute more than 4,000 hours of service in their lifetime. The award is accompanied by an official eagle pin and congratulatory letter from President Obama. Sammye is a member of Highland Lakes Master Naturalist, Highland Lakes Bird and Wildflower Society, Highland Lakes Native Plant Society, along with our organization HLMGA. Congratulations – Sammye !

*Volunteers are the only human beings on the face of the earth who reflect this nation's compassion, unselfish caring, patience, and just plain love for one another. – Erma Brombeck*

# Musings from Stonebridge

By Sylvia Williams, Master Gardener

(A reprint from Sylvia's March 2015 Column)

As March arrives gardeners start to think about the spring vegetable garden. When the danger of frost has passed, it is time to plant seeds and transplants of warm-season vegetables. Many of us are anxious to get a jump start on our vegetables, however, be prepared to cover your tender plants when a cold snap is expected. The weather in March is always unpredictable, so don't let those warm sunny days fool you....we have had freezing temperatures late in March!

Another way to get a head start on your vegetables is to start transplants and seeds indoors. On warm sunny days you can move the transplants outdoors, then bring them back inside as night temperatures fall. This process can be time consuming but worth the trouble to have tasty vegetables early in the season. Tomato transplants can be started early indoors in a gallon container and, by the time all frost has passed, they can be planted directly into the ground. This method is very successful as they have developed a good root system and are starting to set flower buds promising early production before the summer heat arrives.

The eggplant is an interesting vegetable you might try this spring. The many colors, sizes and shapes of the eggplant are so intriguing. It has an ancient history and Thomas Jefferson purportedly experimented with growing eggplant in his gardens at Monticello.

The different types of eggplant range from globe, elongated, round, oval, miniature. When growing eggplant always start with transplants. If you want to try the many diverse types, purchase seeds from a reputable source to start indoors. Eggplant is tropical, so it thrives with warm days, warm nights and plenty of sunshine. Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds [www.rareseeds.com](http://www.rareseeds.com) offers seeds of the various types.



By the end of March seeds of annual flowers such as zinnias, sunflowers, cosmos, and marigolds can be directly seeded into beds. A favorite choice of mine is to plant zinnias around the edges of my raised vegetable beds. The vibrant color of the zinnias surrounding the vegetables make a colorful statement, and the zinnias bring the butterflies to your garden. My grandmother planted flowers amongst her vegetables, so probably this is the reason I love this look. It is so old fashion and these days, that is a good thing!

**Sylvia Williams has "retired" this column. Her wisdom and counsel will be sorely missed. A new Master Gardener "Guru" is being sought. Are you the one? Please consider contributing to the community with your gardening wisdom. Contact: Roxanne Dunnegan**

## BUDS & BARK:

*EARTH-KIND® IN THE PARK*



# **2016 TEXAS MASTER GARDENER CONFERENCE**

**May 17 – 19, 2016**

*The Landing at Myers Park & Events Center*

*7117 County Road 166*

*McKinney, TX 75071*

*Come play in the dirt with the*

*Collin County Master Gardeners Association!*

CCMGA cordially invites you to join us for the 2016 Texas Master Gardener Conference, which will be held at the beautiful Myers Park & Event Center in McKinney, Texas. Whether a novice or a veteran, a gardener's education is never complete. Cultivate new ideas and learn from renowned horticultural specialists at Buds & Bark: Earth-Kind® in the Park.

### Registration Information

For more information or to register, please visit:

<http://www.ccmgatx.org/txmg2016>

#### Registration Fees

Early Bird: *Now through Dec. 31, 2015 ~ \$175*

Regular Registration: *January 1 – April 15, 2016 ~ \$200*

Late Registration: *April 16 – May 17, 2016 ~ \$225*



# Project Pics and Updates

## Burnet Middle School Greenhouse



Lavona, Rose, Irene and Linda helped the students seed 6500 cells of vegetables for the March plant sale. It was a fun day helping at the greenhouse.

From cuttings to plants to dollars: In October, Master Gardeners worked with the students to propagate plants for the big March plant sale. There are plants under the tables and more beautiful hanging baskets on the other side.

Photos contributed by  
Lavona Fry

## The Oaks Nursing Home Garden



Spring has sprung when the Jonquils come!

(More Project Pics Continued on Page 6)

## Green Thumb Program



Photos contributed by  
Lavona Fry

Rose Lackey presented a Green Thumb program at the Bertram Library: "You Can Grow Artichokes in Texas." We all quickly became convinced that the statement is CORRECT – see the bucket full on the table!!

## Gardening Event Enhances Library's "Community" Connection

This Llano County Library, located on the west side of Lake Buchanan and appropriately named Lakeshore Library, serves the rural communities of Lake Buchanan, Bluffton, Tow, and Lone Grove. Offering books, movies, CD's, newspapers, magazines, WiFi connection, and educational programs, this vibrant and dedicated library is also a rural community center. Exercises, quilting, dominoes, POA meetings, summer children's activities, to name only a few activities, draw together the people of this northeast corner of Llano County.

And a recent gardening event again demonstrated that idea of providing a place to make "connections" for active and involved people. This time members of the Friends of Lakeshore Library and of the Highland Lakes Master Gardeners came together to reclaim the beauty of the Library's front façade. Digging up the old worn out plants, rejuvenating the soil with cotton burr compost, planting some new colorful Texas Sage shrubs, and covering the area with hardwood mulch involved us all together in this fun and interesting, activity on behalf of the Library. Installing a new watering system and planting some other blooming plants will complete the gardening work; and the "community" we shared will stay with each one of us for a long time.



Text & Photos courtesy Ray Buchanan

# 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Hill Country Lawn & Garden Show

**Saturday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2016  
9 AM – 4 PM**

**Burnet Community Center  
401 E. Jackson St.  
Burnet, Texas  
FREE Admission**



**Plants and supplies for every garden...  
and so much more!**

**Native – Exotic – Herbs – Vegetables –  
Houseplants – Succulents**



**Demonstrations, Chil-  
dren's Activities, Raffle,  
Food Available for Pur-  
chase**

### Demonstrations

- Trees for Central Texas
- Vertical Gardening
- Leaf Casting
- Tomatoes 101
- AgriLife – Canning and Preserving / Fun with Fruits and Vegetables
- Master Gardener Booth – Artichokes
- Rainwater Barrels
- The making of the Master Gardener Quilt
- Gardening in Big and Small Spaces

<http://www.burnetcountyhighlandlakesmastergardener.org>

**SPONSORED BY THE HIGHLAND LAKES MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION**



## Zika Virus

BY WIZZIE BROWN, TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE  
 EXTENSION SERVICE PROGRAM SPECIALIST

**Z**ika virus is transmitted by *Aedes* mosquitoes and there is no specific treatment or vaccine currently available. The best way to avoid getting the virus is to avoid being bitten by infected mosquitoes. About 20% of people with Zika virus actually get ill. Severe disease, requiring hospitalization, is uncommon and death due to the virus is rare.

The incubation period of Zika virus is thought to be a few days to a week, but is still unknown. Symptoms include fever, skin rash, conjunctivitis, muscle and joint pain, and headache. Symptoms tend to be mild and last from 2-7 days. Zika virus can be contracted through the bite of an infected mosquito, through blood transfusions, through sexual contact, and from mother to child during pregnancy.

The mosquitoes that are able to transmit Zika virus are also able to transmit dengue and Chikungunya viruses. These mosquitoes are daytime biters, but can also bite at night. *Aedes* mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water- buckets, tires, tree holes, animal water dishes, etc.

To protect yourself from mosquito bites, wear light-colored clothing that covers as much skin as possible, use insect repellent (read and follow label instructions), use screening on doors and windows, use mosquito netting (if needed) while sleeping, and reduce standing water areas.

Repellent should only be applied to clothing and exposed skin. Do not apply it underneath clothing. If you want to apply repellent to your face, spray your hands with repellent and rub it onto your face. Do not spray repellent directly into your face or near eyes or mouth. Make sure to apply repellent outdoors. Do not allow children to handle repellents. Wash hands before eating, smoking or using the restroom.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends using a product registered with the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) containing one of the following active ingredients: DEET, picaridin, IR3535 and some of the products containing oil of lemon eucalyptus.

Many things can help to reduce mosquito problems around the home. Eliminate all sources of standing water. Containers such as watering cans, buckets and bottles can turn into mosquito breeding grounds. Water should be drained from birdbaths, rain barrels, gutters, flowerpots and pet dishes at least once a week. Children's wading pools should be emptied of water at least once a week and stored indoors when not in use. Tree holes should be filled in with sand or mortar, or drained after each rain. Leaky faucets and pipes located outside should be repaired.

Areas that cannot be drained, such as ponds, can be stocked with mosquito fish that eat mosquito larvae. Dunks can also be used in these areas. Dunks are a small, donut-shaped product that contains *Bacillus thuringiensis israeliensis*. The donut disrupts the life cycle of the mosquito and is non-toxic to humans, amphibians and fish. Dunks are not for use in drinking water sources.

For more information on Zika virus, please see the CDC website here <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/index.html>

For more information or help with identification, contact Wizzie Brown, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Program Specialist at 512.854.9600. Check out my blog at [www.urban-ijm.blogspot.com](http://www.urban-ijm.blogspot.com)

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## News from the Helping Center Garden

By Sherry Robitson , Master Gardener

Sometimes you just have to give it up and let nature take its course as God intended. The broccoli raab was planted in anticipation of cool weather, but you guessed it, the weather hasn't cooperated. The broccoli bolts as soon as it puts out shoots leaving nothing for harvest. At first it was thought the soil was phosphorous deficient, but the warmer the weather, the more it bolted. Has it all been for nothing? Well, no! It has been discovered that when the afternoon warmth peaks, the bees swarm the flowers. A decision has been made to leave the broccoli raab to sustain the bees until spring planting.

Bee Paradise in the Garden



### The Potato Crop



I've witnessed my first planting of a potato crop! On February 1, a large crop of red potatoes was planted in the Helping Center Garden. Much preparation went into the process. Elbon rye was first grown in the plot and tilled into the ground. When Boy Scouts came to the garden to volunteer, they were given the job of spreading alpaca manure (or poop as we call it) onto the plot. Kitty and Gary Rawlings prepared 105 red potato slips for planting. As an experiment, they dipped half the slips in ash and half in

sulphur. The ash and sulphur help to dry the slips and deter bacterial growth that could cause decay. It will be interesting to see which element works best. The Monday crew worked to dig the furrows and plant the slips. It is now 3 weeks after planting and the potato plants are breaking through the earth with beautiful, healthy dark green leaves. Is it strange to be excited about potatoes? Maybe it's because I'm Irish!



### Garden Tool and Fruit Tree Pruning Seminar



Did you know stone fruit trees are pruned differently than apple, pear, and citrus trees? Did you know that tying a weight on the end of a pear tree limb to make it bend down can stimulate fruit production? Did you know that citrus oil is the best way to clean and disinfect garden tools? We learned these things and many more from Wade Hibler's Tool Maintenance and Fruit Tree Pruning Seminar. This event was the HCG's first public outreach of the year and was considered a huge success. It was attended by 40 people of our community who came eager to learn and equipped with plenty of questions for Wade. Stayed tuned for future information on our next big community outreach project, the Spring Festival.

### Home School Project

The Home Schoolers were back in the garden this month after a 3 month break. These kids really know how to liven up a garden! The first hour was given to harvest. Ricky was good to not harvest for a few days so there would be plenty for them to do. The kids were shown the proper way to snip the greens and they were amazed at how the Brussel sprouts grew. As usual, bugs were a big fascination and several species were identified with Ricky's

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help. Val Klaudt took the second hour with a Junior Master Gardener lesson on vegetables and what parts of them we actually eat. Samples of vegetable parts like carrots and broccoli were given to children to eat and moms being very happy with the healthy snacks. Val then read them an adorable story about a scheming rabbit and a grouchy old bear and their gardening endeavors. This arrangement with the Home Schoolers and the Junior Master Gardener program is a new one.

An hour for harvest, getting hands in the dirt, and expending a little energy before educational activities seemed to work great. With Val's Junior Master Program the children will learn much and be able to become certified Junior Master Gardeners when they fulfill the requirements. I'm so blessed to be part of an organization that sees the importance of exposing our youth to the beauty and value of nature in a garden and teaching them to sustain both themselves and the earth.



Volunteers Ricky Lane (left) and Val Klaudt (right) teach gardening basics to the Home-school children

## Volunteer Spotlight



This month the volunteer spotlight is on Kitty Rawlings. In 1977 Kitty and her husband Gary bought a home in Granite Shoals. It was then that Kitty began a small vegetable garden she tended on weekends when they commuted to Granite Shoals from their home in San Antonio. Kitty and Gary eventually made Granite Shoals their permanent home. Kitty's love of gardening grew as did her vegetable garden. Pictured is Kitty standing beside some of her colossal tomato plants. Gardening is Kitty's passion and I don't think she spends much time inside the house. Kitty became a Master Gardener in 2003, she was instrumental in implementing volunteer hours recording for the HLMGA and is a pioneer in the Helping Center Garden. She and husband Gary donated the garden sink and the elevator door that serves as a counter adjacent to the sink. Besides volunteering in the garden every Monday, Kitty plans the HCG planting schemes, she finds hard to get seeds and vegetable plants for the garden, and starts seedlings for the garden

in her home. She is an expert plant diagnostician and has done much plant research. Thank you, Kitty, for your hard work and dedication to the HCG, and when you find a way to download garden knowledge from your brain to mine, let me know.

Being of Irish decent and in honor of St. Patrick's Day I would like to leave you with this quote taken from an Irish woman's letter to her son. This quote really hits home and might bring a tear to your eye!

***It was so windy that one of our chickens  
laid the same egg four times!***

**Happy Upcoming St. Patrick's Day!**

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## **2016 Associates Appear on TV**

If you were up at 6:30 on Thursday morning, February 26th you would have seen a wonderful photo of our 2016 Associate Class on KXAN TV. David Yeomans, meteorologist for KXAN was a presenter during week #2 of the class. David gave the class a wonderful presentation on the weather in the Hill Country which was enjoyed by all. A picture was taken and he was nice enough to show it during his morning weather report.

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### **Maple-Ginger-Roasted Vegetables with Pecans** *(Recipe submitted by Allison Bennett)*

Total time: 1 hour, 30 minutes

Servings: 12

Be sure to chop these winter vegetables the same size so they cook at the same rate. Toss them at least once while they are in the oven so they brown evenly.

1-1/2 cups pecans

4 medium carrots (3/4 pound), peeled and sliced 1/4 inch thick

2 large parsnips (1 pound), peeled and sliced 1/4 inch thick

1 medium head cauliflower (2-1/2 pounds) cut into 1-inch florets

1 small butternut squash (2 pounds), peeled, seeded & cut into 1-inch dice

1 pound Brussels sprouts, halved

1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil

1/4 tsp. freshly grated nutmeg

Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper

2 T. minced fresh ginger

1/3 cup maple syrup



1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Spread the pecans in a pie plate and toast until fragrant, about 6 minutes. Let cool.
2. In a large bowl, toss the carrots, parsnips, cauliflower, squash and Brussels sprouts with olive oil and nutmeg and season generously with salt and pepper.
3. Spread the vegetables on 2 large rimmed baking sheets and roast for 30 minutes until the vegetables begin to brown. Scatter the pecans and ginger over the vegetables and drizzle with maple syrup. Toss well. Continue to roast the vegetables for 25 minutes longer, until they are tender and golden. Scrape the vegetables into a bowl and serve hot or at room temp.

## APPROVED MASTER GARDENER ADVANCED TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR MARCH 2016

### From the MG Membership Committee

- Violet Carson, Master Gardener, ***“Soil, Not Dirt”***, **Wednesday, March 9, 12:00 noon**, at the Kingsland Library, 125 Polk St., Kingsland; sponsored by the Master Gardener Green Thumb Program
- Rose Lackey, Master Gardener, ***“Propagation 101: Growing New Plants in Properly Treated Soil And Making Those Pesky Insects Go Away”***, **Wednesday, March 9, 10:30 am**, at the Bertram Library, 140 S. Gabriel St., Bertram, sponsored by the Master Gardener Green Thumb Program
- Sheryl Yantis, Master Gardener, ***“Butterflies – The Jewels of Our Garden”***, **Thursday, March 10, 1:00 pm**, at the Marble Falls Library, 101 Main St., Marble Falls; sponsored by the Highland Lakes Garden Club
- Presentations at the Native Plant Society Spring Symposium, **Saturday, March 12, 8:00 am - 4:00 pm**, at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, 4801 La Crosse Ave, Austin, to register go to <http://www.npsot.org/springsymposium2016>
- Brandi Clark Burton, ***“Building Effective Networks”***
- John Herron, ***“It Ain’t Easy Being Green – The Nature Conservancy in Texas”***
- Cathy Downs, ***“Bring Back the Monarchs”***
- Linda Campbell, ***“Conservation in the Hill Country”***
- Pat Merkord, ***“Native Prairies Assoc. of Texas Preserves – Maddin Prairie & More!”***
- Laura Zebehazy, ***“Texas Rare Plants & Roads: Opportunities for Conservation”***
- Jessica Robertson, Botanist & Owner of Backbone Nursery, ***“Tomato Growing Seminar with Jessica”***, **Saturday, March 12, 1:00-3:00 pm (2 hr credit)**, at Backbone Valley Nursery, 4201 FM 1980, Marble Falls
- Andy of Fox Farm Products, ***“Vegetable Gardening, Part 1: Soil Preparation”***, **Saturday, March 19, 1:00-3:00 pm (2 hr credit)**, at Backbone Valley Nursery, 4201 FM 1980, Marble Falls
- Amy Sugeno, biologist and ecotherapist, ***“Healing from the Ground Up: Plants and Gardens that Promote Health and Healing”***, **Saturday, March 19, 1:30 pm**, at the Marble Falls Library, 101 Main St., Marble Falls; sponsored by the Native Plant Society
- Staff, ***“SAWS WaterSaver Landscape Series: Designing and Planning Your Space”***, **Saturday, March 19, 9:30 am –12:30 pm (3 hr credit)**, at the San Antonio Botanical Garden, 555 Funston, San Antonio, Free with paid admission, Pre-registration required at <https://22076.blackbaudhosting.com/WSL-Planning-and-Designing-Your-Space-19Mar2016>
- Staff, ***“SAWS WaterSaver Landscape Series: Retrofitting Your Space for Drought Conditions”***, **Saturday, March 19, 9:30 am – 12:30 pm (3 hr credit)**, at the San Antonio Botanical Garden, 555 Funston, San Antonio; Free with paid admission, Pre-registration required at <https://22076.blackbaudhosting.com/22076/Retrofitting-Your-Yard-for-Drought-Conditions-19Mar2016>
- Jessica Robertson, Botanist & Owner of Backbone Nursery, ***“Vegetable Gardening, Part 2: Planting”***, **Saturday, March 26, 1:00-3:00 p.m. (2 hr credit)**, at Backbone Valley Nursery, 4201 FM 1980, Marble Falls