



# The "DIG IT" News

## Growing young **GARDENERS**

How the Doerflers turned quarantine time into quality time

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## HIGHLAND LAKES MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION

# President's Corner

*Appreciating new opportunities and anticipating exciting innovations.*

I hope that this edition of the Dig It finds you safe at home, maintaining your plantings whether they are flowers, vegetables or turf. Your day is probably similar to ours: watering duties and chores start early in the morning, before the heat chases us back into the house for lunch and occasionally a nap. We are getting lots of little projects finished, which is a good thing, but sometimes I would like to spontaneously jump in the car and go to the ice cream parlor in Burnet for a scoop of butter pecan. Instant gratification! Hmmmmm, not happening any time soon.

I recognized myself as a Facebook character last week as I sat on the sofa with Suki, my cat, melted across my lap. The TV controller was juuuust out of reach, so I asked Jim to get it for me as he walked by. He gave me that "you are spoiling that cat" look and slid it over within reach. Too late... she is already spoiled and blissfully unaware of the virus that is keeping us home every day. She lounges in my lap at every opportunity, resembling a calico scarf draped across my legs. When we feel safe going out in public again, I am sure Suki will miss us. Well, maybe. You just never really know with cats.

As Suki and I contemplate 2020 being such an anomaly, it is nice to know that extra efforts are being made by AgriLife to ensure that Master Gardeners' good works will continue. It is so important that all members have opportunities to work on their AT and volunteer hours, and this downtime has allowed new ideas to surface. More workshops are now webinars, and new avenues for learning are being examined. The HLMGA board is

looking at our association and trying to ensure we keep everyone engaged.

Our board will meet soon again and look at several different activities providing additional ways to earn volunteer hours. One way, involving your computer, will be the training program being developed by AgriLife that will start in early September. We were one of just a few associations invited to take part. Pats on the back all around! Another opportunity is for a consultant with phone and outdoor contact in a community garden activity. Details will be passed on as they are approved and available.

Some members of the board and The Garden crew met and pulled together a plan for a fundraiser that would showcase successful gardening tips in a safe manner for those who were volunteering and attendees. The plan has been approved by Burnet County Extension Agent Kelly Tarla and, when local guidelines allow, we can spring into action with a three-to-four-week lead time. Until then, we are prepared and we wait.

I personally am looking forward to our upcoming HLMGA chatroom. Kelly is providing the technology for those who want to be involved and do not have internet access to call in and take part with audio access to the conversation. This will be an experiment, and I hope that everyone is patient with the process and me.

Please be safe out there and give me a call if you are in need of anything. Continue to take care of yourself and others.

*Lida Woodul*

### Find the latest HLMGA news online!

[burnetcountyhighlandlakesmastergardener.org](http://burnetcountyhighlandlakesmastergardener.org)

 [facebook.com/HighlandLakesMasterGardeners](https://facebook.com/HighlandLakesMasterGardeners)

The "Dig It" News is a publication of the Highland Lakes Master Gardener Association – written by gardeners, for gardeners! Please send all content for publication to editor Gail Braymen at [gebfoto@gmail.com](mailto:gebfoto@gmail.com). Deadline is the 28th of the month for the following month's issue. The "Dig It" News is published every month except February and August.



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## Upcoming HLMGA Meetings

The July meeting has been cancelled due to the increase in COVID-19 cases.

Tuesday, July 21, 2020 • 2 p.m.

## ZOOM CHAT

Join in our first-ever Zoom Chat! Not a program or formal meeting, just a virtual HLMGA get-together! Watch your email for details.

The August 11 meeting is on hold due to the AgriLife directive of no face-to-face meetings. Watch your email for updates.

## JULY/AUGUST 2020

From the MG Membership Committee

Again, there are no meetings or presentations scheduled for Advanced Training credit during July and August from any of the local nature-oriented organizations.

Also, there are no classes scheduled at Backbone Valley Nursery, the Wildflower Center in Austin or The Natural Gardener in Austin.

However, there are three DISTANCE LEARNING classes scheduled for July and August from the San Antonio Botanical Garden. Go to [sabot.org/learn/adult-classes](http://sabot.org/learn/adult-classes), find the class you want on the July or August calendar, click on "REGISTER," and follow the instructions to register and pay. Note the instructions about refunding your deposit/fee.

**JULY 23** — "How to Wildscape: Landscape Design for Wildlife – Distance Learning" with Emma Jones, Landscape Designer, 9:30-11:30 a.m. (2 hr credit). Fee: \$10 deposit, refundable upon completion of the post-workshop survey. Computer and internet connection required. Web link and instructions will be sent prior to the start of the class.

**JULY 28** — "Intriguing Plants of Central Texas and the Edward's Plateau – Distance Learning" with Michael Eason, Director of Plant Conservation and Research at the San Antonio Botanical Garden, 10-11:30 a.m. (1.5 hr credit). Fee: \$10 deposit, refundable upon completion of the post-workshop survey. Computer and internet connection required. Web link and instructions will be sent prior to the start of the class.

**AUGUST 11** — "Caterpillar Gardening Is Butterfly Gardening – Distance Learning" with Emma Jones, Landscape Designer, 10-11:20 a.m. (1.5 hr credit). Fee: \$10 deposit, refundable upon completion of the post-workshop survey. Computer and internet connection required. Web link and instructions will be sent prior to the start of the class.

**SPECIAL NOTE:** Watch for notices during the month about webinars, Zoom class, etc., that are approved for MG advanced training credit.



**ABOVE:** I planted this cestrum bush from a one gallon container about three years ago, and it is over 5 feet wide and tall now. I believe the plant is toxic for deer; I have never had them even take a leaf. It loses its leaves in the winter, but comes back beautifully in the spring.



**TOP RIGHT:** This ice plant is a succulent I put in the garage during the winter. It dies back to just about nothing, but then comes back in full by May. It drapes really well and has tons of small bright red flowers. It takes little care and loves full sun.



**BOTTOM RIGHT:** This citronella isn't the showiest plant in the world, but not bad, and they really do seem to keep the mosquitos at bay. I have two on the porch and have had very little problems with skeeters this year. I keep both plants in full sun, and they have thrived there.

~ David Waldo



## Volunteer Service Opportunities JULY/AUGUST 2020



From the MG Membership Committee

HLMGA members are encouraged to follow social distancing protocols to protect themselves and others during volunteer activities.

Project sites are under the supervision of the Project Chairs. Therefore, no one should show up at a project site expecting to do Volunteer Service unless specific permission has been obtained from the Project Chair. Availability of VS activity as well as schedules, etc.. at each project site are up to the Project Chair exclusively.

• Harth Foundation (Greg Cockrill – [jgcockrill@yahoo.com](mailto:jgcockrill@yahoo.com))

• Horseshoe Bay Church Garden (Vicki Adcock – [txrunner55@att.net](mailto:txrunner55@att.net))

• King's Gate Garden (Keith Atwood – [keithatwood@hotmail.com](mailto:keithatwood@hotmail.com))

• Oaks Nursing Home Courtyard Garden (Christy Stephens – [cnt78611@yahoo.com](mailto:cnt78611@yahoo.com))

• AgriLife Extension Office Building (Amy Parke – [steveamyparke@yahoo.com](mailto:steveamyparke@yahoo.com))

• The Garden (Suzy Rowley – [suzyrowley@gmail.com](mailto:suzyrowley@gmail.com)).



What's growing, blooming and producing in YOUR garden? Show it off in What's Growing On! Send pictures of your plants and projects, plus a little information, to Gail Braymen at [gebfoto@gmail.com](mailto:gebfoto@gmail.com).

# Gardening

~Lindley Karstens~

is about the smell of things *growing* in the soil, getting *dirty* without feeling guilty, and generally taking the *time* to soak up a little *peace* and *serenity*

# When the world gives you a pandemic, make a panacea!

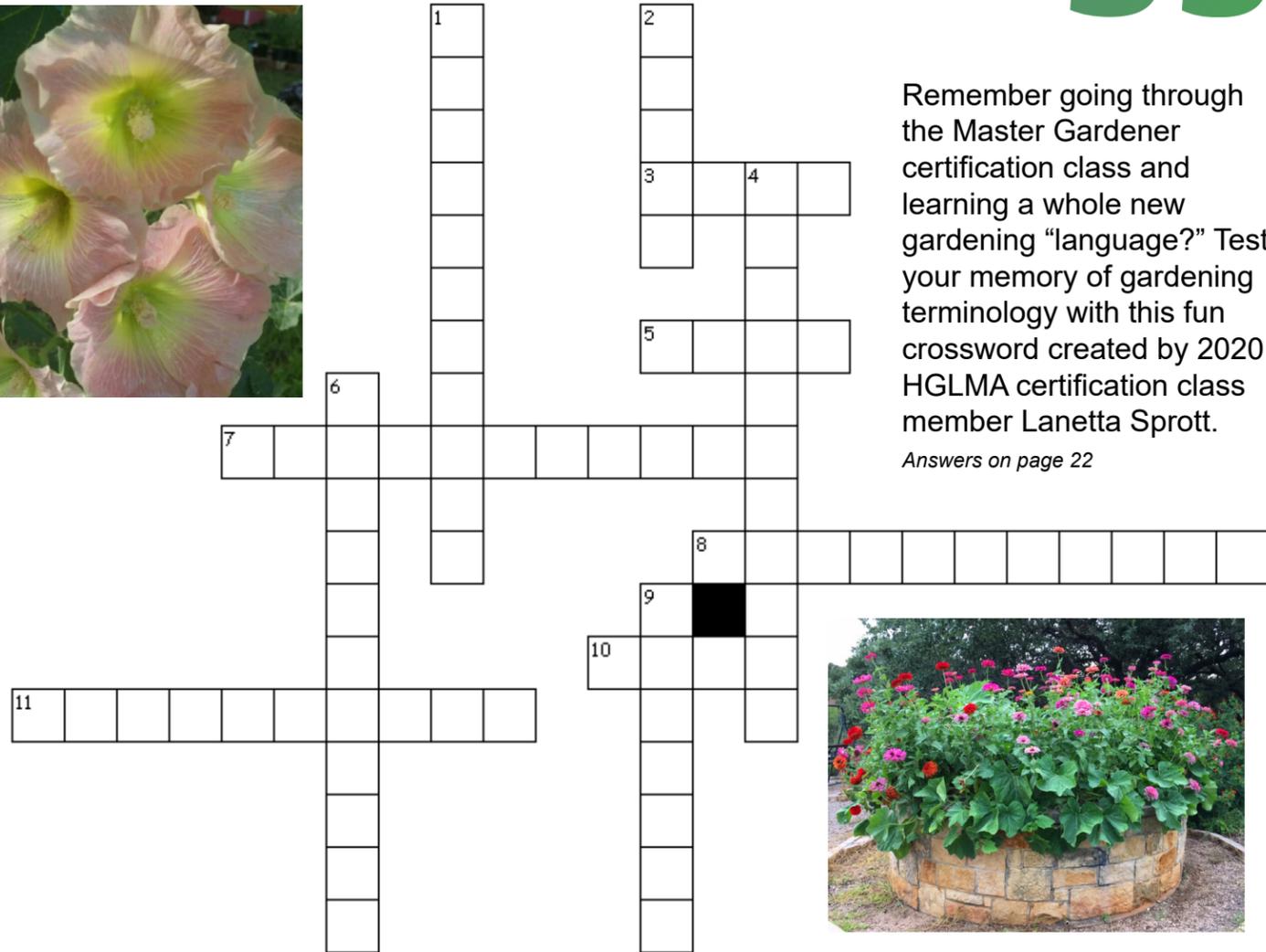


Mary and I recently have had the opportunity to garden for several weeks with our two grandchildren from Fort Worth. Due to COVID-19 issues, our daughter, Marisa, and her children, Cole and Elizabeth, hunkered down in Marble Falls and assisted us with the gardening chores. What a great opportunity to teach the wonders of veggie gardening with future gardeners.

**Story and photos by Andy Doerfler**



# Gardening Terminology



Remember going through the Master Gardener certification class and learning a whole new gardening “language?” Test your memory of gardening terminology with this fun crossword created by 2020 HGLMA certification class member Lanetta Sprott.

Answers on page 22



## across

3. Type of soil that is very sticky and plastic, hard to break when dry
5. The combination of air, minerals and organic matter
7. Materials containing nutrients supplied to plants
8. Sprouting of a seed or spore
10. Type of soil that is gritty, smooth and slightly sticky
11. Patios, paths, stonework

## down

1. Grouping plants with similar water requirements
2. Organic or inorganic materials placed on top of soil
4. The classification of flowering plants
6. The process to intentionally create new plants
9. Nature’s product using decomposition of organic materials

# shedding a little (BLACK) LIGHT on a pest problem

This summer we haven’t had leaf-footed bugs on our tomatoes and the squash vine borers have skipped over our zucchini, but we’ve seen a plethora of tomato hornworms. We have seen tiny ones in their first or second instar, medium-sized ones and some that are surely in their fifth or sixth instar. I don’t know if some female *Manduca quinquemaculata* moths

laid the minimal 250 eggs or had the favorable conditions to lay nearly 1,400, but new caterpillars keep appearing every few days.

Luckily, killing the hornworms is very entertaining. I am in the garden a few times a day, and the hens wait on the other side of the garden fence hoping we all get lucky.

The largest caterpillars frighten our

rooster. But we have a couple of hens that will snag a big one and run to sit under a peach tree and enjoy a large snack. Unfortunately, peer at our plants though we do, Hubby John and I always miss spotting a hornworm or two.

However, John has a great new toy: an inexpensive ultraviolet light (thank you internet research and Amazon). The hornworms really glow when the light hits them.

John is the mighty hunter armed with a pair of clippers and his trusty light. In the photos you can see one of his many victims and his new weapon. John trained at nighttime varmint hunting in his grandpa’s East Texas garden, and he has been diligent and effective in the last few weeks with a shockingly high number of victims. And, as an added benefit, scorpions glow under ultraviolet light, too.

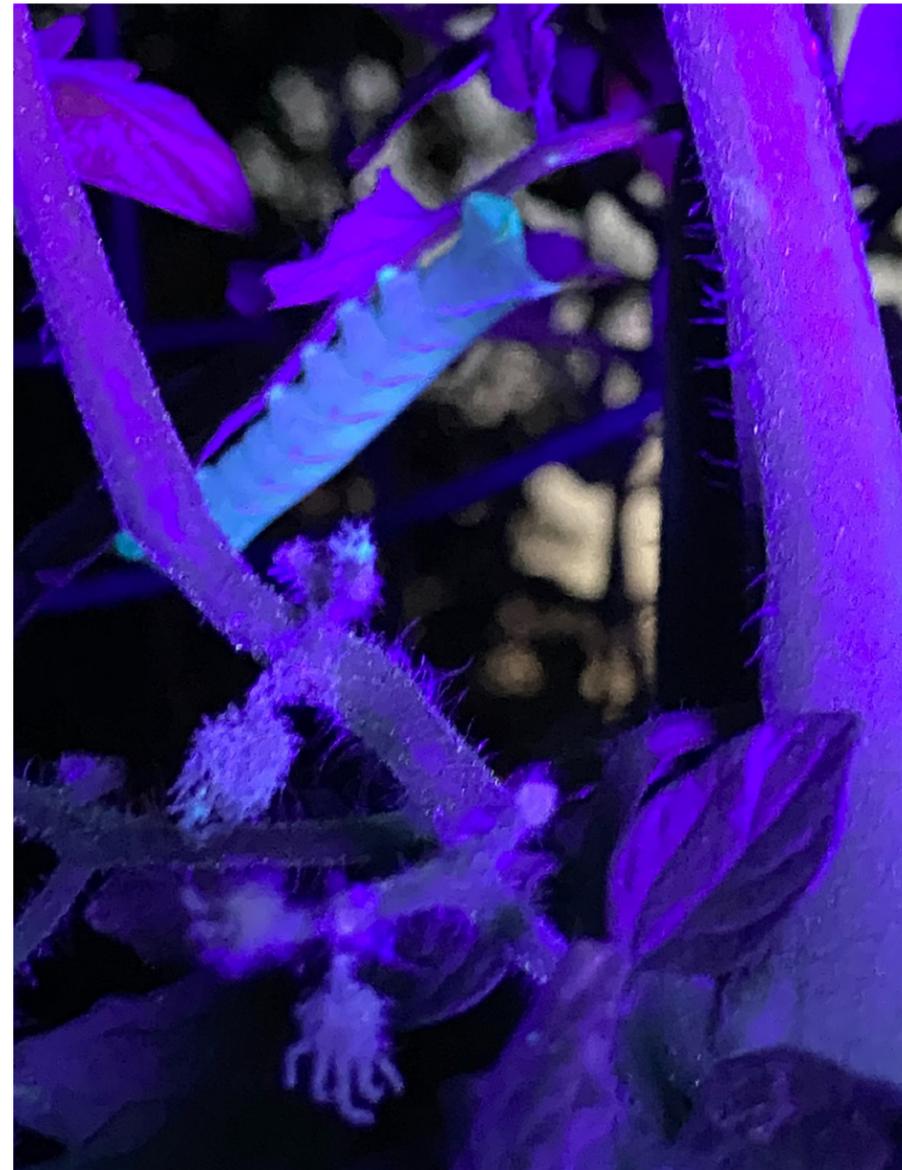
I am currently cutting back vines on my indeterminate tomatoes, hoping for a great fall crop of fruit, but you can bet this year I won’t put those vines with their lurking eggs into the compost pile, though it goes against my nature to put plants in the trash.

Anyway, if you want some nighttime garden fun, this light might be for you! Plus you just might spot a leopard frog or two.

Tomato hornworms can’t hide at night from the revealing rays of a UV flashlight!



Story and photos by Carolyn Crouchet





# Luedecke Lessons

By Bill and Martelle Luedecke

*Keep your souls and soles in your garden! Remember the True Master Gardener: Jesus said, "I am the vine; my Father is the Gardener." John 15:1*

## Helpful Hints for Summertime

- Is there a spot of land that you want to clean up for fall gardening? Solarize it. Lay a piece of plastic down, secure with rocks, and let the sun do the work. If it is a small spot, you can use a lawn/leaf trash bag, but clear plastic is best. Underneath it will get hot, like getting into a dark-colored car when you couldn't find a shady parking spot.

- Prune herbs to encourage growth. For instance, you want to prune your basil before the flowers emerge. Pruning your mints makes for some wonderful sun tea. Isn't it fun to cut sprigs, place them in water on the kitchen windowsill and watch them grow? Sure, makes the kitchen smell yummy, too.



- Water fruit and nut trees often and deeply to avoid fruit drop-off. Water in the early morning long and deep. Never water in the middle of the day. If you water in the middle of the day in Texas, the water will get hot and you might fry or steam your fruit and nut trees.

- Plant: corn (mid-July), eggplant (transplants), greens (warm season), okra, southern peas, pepper transplants (mid-July), sweet potato slips.

- When watering potted plants make sure that the water is getting to the roots. A good rule of thumb is 3 inches down. You can measure by sticking a wooden ruler into the soil, or a wooden dowel rod or a popsicle stick. Water deeply, then allow it to completely dry to avoid root rot. Then repeat.

- While you have your ruler out, double-check the depths of your mulch. Is your mulch 3-4 inches deep? If not, time to add some on the top.

- Have you started composting? With the heat, compost materials will break down to a wonderful fertilizer. You can put in kitchen scraps, such as coffee grounds and filter, the tops

of celery, apple cores, orange peels and crushed eggshells, for starters, and others like these. Crushed eggshells will cut up the grub worms. Don't use animal products such as grease or trimmings, which break down SLOWLY and attract all kinds of

unwanted varmints. You can also add dry leaves, grass clippings, manure (not dog or cat), sawdust, hay and hedge clippings. If you are doing a pile, make sure to turn it at least once a week. If you are using a tub, rotate often.

- In our gardens we can have two types of insect pests: the ones that chomp away and the ones that suck juices from our plants. To deter these pests, mow around your garden. Keep your plants healthy with fertilizer and watering.

After you have harvested all the fruit and vegetables from the plant, remove the expired plant, throw it in your compost or till it into the soil (unless it is diseased or is harboring insect pest eggs — in these cases, bag the plant and throw it away or burn it). Leaving the old plant continues to attract the chompers and suckers.

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- When to harvest your melons: A ripe watermelon has a dull sound when thumped. Watermelons also lose their glossy color when ripe. A "ripe sign" for honeydew and cantaloupe is when the end of the fruit not connected to the vine softens. Use your thumbs to push down; it should give a little when ripe. One reason you don't want to harvest melons too early is because their sweetness, aka sugar content, does not continue after the fruit has been picked from the vine. Melons are delicious in salsas, sorbets and margaritas.

- Mature yellow cucumbers will have an intense flavor, so harvest your cucumbers while they are green and just the right size. Add dill and vinegar for pickles. Or slice and freeze for your water bottle.



When considering what type of rainwater harvesting system you would like to use, a couple of points to think about: 1) how are you going to get the water to your garden? and 2) how much water would you like to collect and store?

There are equations to help you determine how much rainwater you will "catch" during a rain. However, a good rule of thumb is that 1 inch of rain = 550 gallons from a 1000 sq. ft. roof.

## Rainwater Barrels

Rain barrels are fairly easy to make. But if you don't have all the tools it can be a challenge. You can purchase rain barrels at your local hardware stores or other local or online resources.

When you are installing your rain barrels, place them on a platform. A top over cinder blocks works well. The reason you want to place your rain barrels on a platform is so that you can have your spigot as low as possible to utilize all the collected rainwater. With the barrel off the ground, you can also place a watering container underneath. Of course, you can connect a hose to your rain barrel for watering. Gravity will supply the pressure.

There are several options for diverting water from your gutters to your barrels or container. A couple include shortening your gutter downspout so that it empties directly onto the top of your screened barrel. Or you can tap into the gutter and run PVC to the top of your containers. Or, a third option, drill into the side of your downspout to divert your rainwater to your collector.

## Rainwater Harvesting

Rainwater harvesting is defined by AgriLife as "an innovative alternative water supply approach anyone can use. Rainwater harvesting captures, diverts and stores rainwater for later use."

Did you know that in Israel there are cisterns still standing that were used for storing rainwater runoff for agriculture use that were built in 2000 B.C.?

There are ways to harvest rainwater on many levels: 50-5,000 gallons and more. One level can be a home where you use rainwater to provide all the water needs of your home. (Daddy has this set up.) Another level can be collecting water to water your trees and garden and to store in case of fire. (I have this option.)

Central Texas summers get incredibly hot and dry. Having a supply of rainwater on hand will make our gardens smile.

These sources go into detail about a variety of systems you may be interested in:

[takecareoftexas.org/hot-wire/want-know-fundamentals-of-collecting-rainwater](http://takecareoftexas.org/hot-wire/want-know-fundamentals-of-collecting-rainwater)

[twdb.texas.gov/publications/brochures/conservation/doc/RainwaterHarvestingManual\\_3rdedition.pdf](http://twdb.texas.gov/publications/brochures/conservation/doc/RainwaterHarvestingManual_3rdedition.pdf)



All photos courtesy Texas A&M University

Have questions or comments?

Contact Bill Luedecke at [bill@texasland.net](mailto:bill@texasland.net) or Martelle Luedecke at [Luedeckephotography@gmail.com](mailto:Luedeckephotography@gmail.com).

# TOMATOES:

*A summer love story*



In the beginning.



Do you recognize this nose?



Two for the price of one!



Gorgeous Celebrity



Cherokee Purple



One of the big ones!



First harvest.



First tomato!



Gowing and looking healthy.



Largest single harvest! Picked five bucketfuls and had to share with friends.



July 2 — Nearing the end. What should I do? Pull them up?

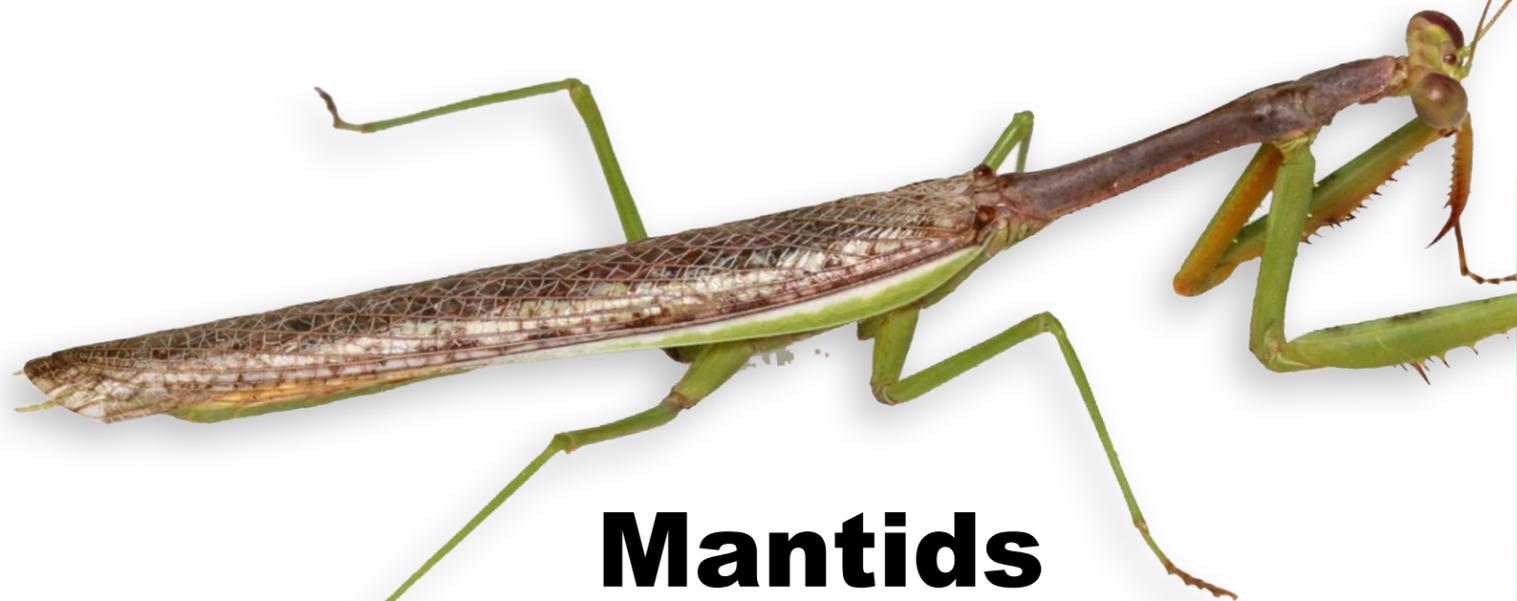
After having a lack of space with sunshine in our previous home of 30 years, we finally have a garden! Brushing off our rusty skills, the garden got underway. It's still a work in progress, but we had some success.

Being a tomato lover, I went overboard. Sixteen weeks later, it's slowed down to only producing okra and, hopefully, cantaloupe.

**STORY AND PHOTOS BY SUSAN YOUNG**

# CREATURE FEATURE

By Wizzie Brown, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Program Specialist



## Mantids

This month I decided to do something a bit different with my article. Hopefully, it will be a nice change of pace for us all. To cover the topic basics, mantids are considered beneficial insects because they are predators. They are known to be highly cannibalistic and generalists, which means that they will eat other mantids and pretty much whatever they can get their raptorial legs on. While they can help reduce garden pests, it can also be that they consume insects that you don't want them to eat, i.e., pollinators. If you have mantids in your garden, try to conserve them, but I would not encourage you to release large numbers of them into your yard.

Now with that out of the way, I can move on to the real topic that I want to explore. What do you call a green- to gray- to brown-colored insect with large eyes and short antennae on a triangular-shaped head that has raptorial front legs? Is it a mantid or mantis? Is it preying or praying? I have wondered this many times as I have presented about these insects over the years, so I decided to dig in and try to figure out what is correct and where the names came from.

First stop for me was to look up the etymology (that's E-T-Y-M-O-L-O-G-Y and not E-N-T-O-M-O-L-O-G-Y) of mantis. I found the following from the online etymology dictionary:

*mantis* (n.) 1650s, "type of insect that holds its forelegs in a praying position" (especially the praying mantis, *Mantis religiosa*), Modern Latin, from Greek *mantis*, used of some

sort of elongated insect with long forelimbs (*Theocritus*), literally "one who divines, a seer, prophet," from *mainesthai* "be inspired," related to *menos* "passion, spirit," from PIE \**mnyo-*, suffixed form of root *men-* "to think," with derivatives referring to qualities and states of mind or thought (compare *mania* and *-mancy*).

The insects, which live in temperate and tropical regions worldwide, are so called for their way of holding the enlarged forelimbs as if in prayer. The mantis shrimp (by 1853; earlier sea-mantis, 1690s) is so called for its resemblance to the insect.

So that seems to be one vote for mantis instead of mantid. That led me to my next stop, which was the Entomological Society of America's website, more specifically their common name database. ESA has a committee of people who oversee the common names of insects and other arthropods. These names are considered to be "official" common names within the scientific community. However, in scientific terms, you should always go with scientific names and not rely on common names, as common names can change quite drastically depending upon where you live.

After perusing the ESA common name database, I found that Mantis was used to refer to a specific genus of Mantodea (the order in which these insects are placed) and that all listed common names consisted of the use of mantid. For example, the commonly named European mantid is *Mantis religiosa* while the commonly named Carolina mantid is *Stagmomantis carolina*. This leads me to the conclusion that

mantid would be more encompassing of the group than Mantis. If you say Mantis, then you would be referring to specific insects within that particular genus, and it would be inaccurate to call a Carolina mantid a Mantis since it isn't in that genus. With "mantid" decided upon, that left me to figure out praying vs. preying.

The etymology website refers to praying mantis, since the insect has front legs that look as if they are in a position to pray. The ESA common name database does not mention anything about praying or preying mantids, but instead names them individually by their common names

(Australian mantid, Chinese mantid, Burmeister mantid, etc.). After much searching, I was unable to come up with any reliable sources referring to preying mantids, but numerous references to praying mantids. I would make the assumption that the etymology of "mantis" at some point caused someone to tack on praying to the name. While preying would technically work for these insects since they are predators and prey on other animals, that does not seem to be the consensus of the people.

So, summing up...it is PRAYING and not preying; MANTID and not mantis (unless you are referring to mantids that are specifically within the genus *Mantis*). Clear as mud?



Is it a praying mantis? A praying mantid? A preying mantis? Or a preying mantid? Wizzie dug deep into reference resources to figure out the correct name for these leggy garden predators.

Photos courtesy Texas A&M University



# THE KING'S GARDEN

## UPDATE



Thanks to an awesome 2,699 pound crop in June, The King's Garden has harvested over 5,800 pounds this year.

Part of this harvest began as seeds in spare rooms, shops, laundry rooms, etc., planted by Linda, Sherry, Keith and Kitty Rawlings. Lavona helped us get free seedlings

from the Burnet Middle School greenhouse. From those humble beginnings, those seedlings have grown and grown and grown into some amazingly large plants.

Now, our team combs through the beds of mature plants looking for the elusive vegetables three to four times per week. The cukes and squash tried to hide, but failed against Laurel's eagle eyes. Ingrid had the patience of Job as she worked for hours making sure that all the ripe green beans were picked. Keith led the way through the tunnels created by the massive tomato plants, taking tomatoes before the birds. May Miller makes sure that the okra is picked before they grow into tent stakes. Betty usually starts with her friend Laurel, chatting away as the cukes and squashes are placed in buckets. Linda, Sherry, Mary Ann and Mickey

will migrate toward the beds that are the priority of the day, usually ending with trimming and washing the carrots. Hank is the "guy Friday" building the compost bins, tending to the irrigation, repairing things, harvesting as needed, etc.

The pickings are placed on a pallet table, producing feelings of pulchritude as they pile up. They are then loaded into wheelbarrows for Debbie to weigh them at the Share the Harvest center. The volunteers of the day will usually hang around to hear the final weight of the day.

With more than 11,000 square feet of vegetable garden and about 1,500 square feet of pollinator space to tend, it is easy to maintain your "social distance" while experiencing the Joy of Gardening. Contact Keith Atwood (713.203.8846) or Hank Rominski (860.575.8098) for information if you want to help at The King's Garden.

We are at the The King's Garden every Monday, Wednesday and Friday beginning at 8 a.m.; usually someone stays until about 11 a.m. If you want to stop by, come any time. Volunteers are never late, never absent.



STORY BY HANK ROMINSKI  
PHOTOS BY COLLEEN "SISSY" ROMINSKI



## THE KING'S GARDEN POLLINATOR & NATIVE PLANT GARDEN

On June 8, the Kingsland Garden Club presented a beautification award that recognized The King's Garden and its fantastic pollinator and native plant garden that Cris, Manena, Ingrid and Mary Ann built. The KGC gives this award each month to organizations and businesses that enhance the visual appeal of the Kingsland area by showcasing landscaping or gardening efforts. These efforts instill pride in the community. The location is selected by a KGC committee, and the winner of the month gets a certificate and a pretty neat sign for a month. The King's Garden Pollinator Garden received the award for June of 2020.



Since our pollinator garden contains milkweed and nectar sources for butterflies, Cris decided to apply to have our garden certified and registered by Monarch Watch (University of Kansas Entomology program) as an official Monarch Waystation. Monarch Waystations are places that provide resources necessary for monarchs to produce successive generations and sustain their migration. Without milkweeds throughout their spring and summer breeding areas in North America, monarchs would not be able to produce the successive generations that culminate in the migration each fall.

STORY BY HANK ROMINSKI · PHOTOS BY COLLEEN "SISSY" ROMINSKI



# THE KING'S GARDEN TEAM

The success of The King's Garden is only possible through the efforts of our dedicated volunteers. They were drawn to The King's Garden by coincidences in the universe that directed them to be in a certain place at a certain time for a certain reason. Once they stopped by and had an opportunity to experience the ambiance and partake of the "neat feeling" of ownership here, they were hooked.

Each team member contributes what they can, and every effort is truly appreciated. Growing starts, stopping by to weed, harvesting, planting, shoveling compost, watering the plants and trees outside the fence are some of the tasks that we do.

It all began last fall on a dark and stormy night when Keith Atwood brought some of his extra vegetables over to a neighbor. She happened to be part of the "Share the Harvest"

food bank and told him that the gardeners of the First Baptist Church were long in the tooth and no longer able to continue the garden.

Keith saw the need for a Master Gardener PET project, and presented it to the committee for approval.

So allow me to introduce the team and why they volunteer. **Keith Atwood:** "Keeps me out of trouble." "Gives me something to do." "I have a need to garden." Basically, "I don't want to sit (at home) and just take up space."

**Lavona Fry** (not pictured): "Love volunteering as you are with fellow friends that enjoy the same values as yourself. It is always a learning experience while helping the community."

**Betty Goolsby** (not a MG): "I give money to my church to help the needy, but it doesn't seem to be enough." "My heart is heavy because I live on rock and can't garden at home. So



Sherry Robitson



Betty Goolsby



Hank Rominski



Debbie Winter



Meijien (May) Miller



Cris Northup

## STORY BY HANK ROMINSKI · PHOTOS BY COLLEEN "SISSY" ROMINSKI



Mickey York



Mary Ann Holt



Laurel Mesek



Manena (Mena) Rueffer



Keith Atwood



Ingrid Hoffmeister

this is good for my soul."

**Mary Ann (Ma) Holt:** "Good friends helping the community. I love what we do as Master Gardeners."

**Ingrid Hoffmeister:** "Best kind of therapy."

**Doug McCoy** (not pictured): "I enjoy being able, in a simple way, to give back." "Projects like The King's Garden are a major part of why I joined the Master Gardeners — putting my meager gardening skills to use in a meaningful way."

**Laurel Mesek** (not a MG): "I love gardening and helping the needy."

**Meijien (May) Miller:** "I joined to see the magic from seed to abundance and help the community."

**Cris Northup:** "A good pollinator garden is needed to have a good vegetable garden."

**Linda Poerner** (not pictured): "I like to be outside and play in the dirt." "Be around other gardeners." "A way to help the food pantry."

**Sherry Robitson:** "Enjoying people that share the same interest." "I'm blessed in my retirement and like to give back, and the garden is my element."

**Hank Rominski:** "Volunteering here allows me to be an in-

tegral cog in a large wheel and return some of the blessings that I have been given back to my community."

**Manena Rueffer:** "I come for the people and the gardening"

**Mickey York:** "Want to help people and helping them with food." "Master Gardeners is a service organization that has added so many facets to my life."

**Debbie Winter** (our working liaison between the MGs and the First Baptist Church): "We are helping those that need, serving the people of Kingsland."

In closing, I am copying a text message that Debbie wrote to us when we were about to pass the 4,000 pound mark. I believe it says it all.

"Last year when I picked my last pepper and tomato, I shut the gate and thought to myself that the gate would probably not be opened again because I couldn't get help. So I prayed that God would find someone to help me keep the garden going because it helps so many people in Kingsland. And of course God answers prayers!! He brought me people who are dedicated, hardworking, loving people. The King's Garden is so blessed to have each and every one of you and I thank you from the bottom of my heart."

# There's a word for that!



Other folks can keep their fancy perfumes – this is the smell Texans REALLY love!

*Photo courtesy Texas A&M University*

**By Doug McCoy**

**What's it called when you can smell the rain coming?**

When we have a rare July rain in central Texas, it's often accompanied by a pleasant wet dirt smell. Sometimes, if the wind is from the right direction, you can smell the rain coming. There's a word for that smell: petrichor.

Petrichor is due in large part to a chemical called geosmin. Produced by actinomycetes and fungi, geosmin is the compound also responsible for the earthy flavor of some vegetables, notably beets.

If you think it's odd that you can smell the rain coming, well, human noses are especially sensitive to geosmin; they can smell it in concentrations as low as one part per billion. Here's hoping we'll get to smell some petrichor soon.

## Call for Content!

The Dig It News is written for gardeners, by gardeners... and that means we need to hear from YOU! You can send material at any time to Gail Braymen at [gebfoto@gmail.com](mailto:gebfoto@gmail.com), but the deadline for the next issue (September) is August 28. You can send content as the text of an email or in a document – whatever works best for you. Cell phone pictures are fine, and photos are welcomed with all types of submissions.

Here's a list of submission categories, but please don't feel limited – if a topic interests you, chances are it will interest other HLMGA members!

- **Articles** - Stories about people, projects, plants, places or anything else you think would interest readers. Those of you with specialized training or knowledge are especially invited to share your expertise with the rest of us! Photos are a plus. (*BONUS: time spent writing articles counts as volunteer time!*)
- **Photos / What's Growing On** - Share pictures of plants, projects, people, you name it. Please include a brief description of what is in the photo and identify any people.
- **Gardener's X-change** - Please include your email address and/or phone number so folks know how to contact you.
- **Q&A with the HLMGA** - Send gardening questions you have, or answer questions published in a previous issue.
- **Diggin' the Dirt** - Share your gardening knowledge and experience by answering the question of the month. Please email your answer to Suzy Buchanan at [docinia@yahoo.com](mailto:docinia@yahoo.com).
- **Garden Hacks** - Share your best tips and tricks.
- **Recommended Reading** - Send the titles of your favorite gardening books.
- **Links & Apps** - Share your favorite online gardening links and applications.
- **Recipes** - Because who doesn't like to enjoy the fruits – and veggies – of their labor?

## Gardening Terminology Crossword Puzzle Answers

*Puzzle on page 8*

### Across

3. CLAY - soil that is very sticky and plastic, hard to break when dry
5. SOIL - the combination of air, minerals and organic matter
7. FERTILIZERS - materials containing nutrients supplied to plants
8. GERMINATION - sprouting of a seed or spore
10. LOAM - soil that is gritty, smooth, and slightly sticky
11. HARDSCAPES - patios, paths, stonework

### Down

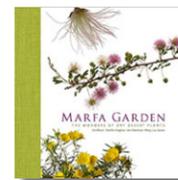
1. HYDROZONING - grouping plants with similar water requirements
2. MULCH - organic or inorganic materials placed on top of soil
4. ANGIOSPERMS - the classification of flowering plants
6. PROPAGATION - the process to intentionally create new plants
9. COMPOST - nature's product using decomposition of organic materials

# Recommended Reading



Know of a great book that you would recommend to your gardening friends? Send the title to Gail Braymen at [gebfoto@gmail.com](mailto:gebfoto@gmail.com). Written reviews are welcomed, but not required.

All the following books — a real smorgasbord of subjects! — are recommended by Ray Buchanan.



### Marfa Garden: The Wonders of Dry Desert Plants

By Jim Martinez, Mary Lou Saxon, Jim Fissel, Martha Hughes

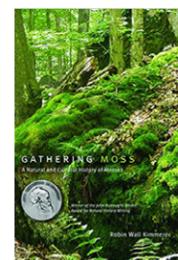
A “full-color celebration” of more than 60 plants, including vines, grasses, trees, herbs and cacti from the Chihuahuan Desert around Marfa, Texas, a region extending from West Texas into Northern Mexico, New Mexico and Arizona. Each plant is featured with photos of a full year-round cycle (buds, complete foliage, unfolding blooms, seed pods and winter texture and color) and a detailed discussion that includes common and scientific names, historical information, garden use and USDA classification. A visual appendix is a helpful addition to this book.



### Entangled Life: How Fungi Make Our Worlds, Change Our Minds and Shape Our Futures

By Merlin Sheldrake

How many times have we heard Jessica Robertson in one of her ever-absorbing talks at Backbone Valley Nursery remind us to buy plant fertilizer with mycorrhizone ingredients? Some 95 percent of plants rely on a partnership with fungi to survive and thrive. Fungi provides water and nutrients and plants provide sugars — just one of the many symbiotic relationships that make fungi useful for recycling, making medicines (penicillin, for example), and the evolution of plants and animals.



### Gathering Moss: A Natural and Cultural History of Mosses

By Robin Wall Kimmerer

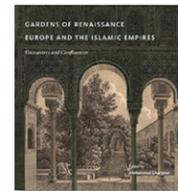
A “cultural” history of mosses? If you have read Braiding Sweetgrass, you know that Kimmerer (a scientist, mother, teacher and writer about Native American heritage) can produce a beautifully written mix of science and personal reflection which explores the elegantly simple lives of mosses and how those lives interact with countless other beings, including salmon and hummingbirds, as well as redwoods and rednecks.



### Plant Magic: Herbalism in Real Life

By Christine Buckley

Do you know how to “wildcraft respectfully and safely and become a steward of the environment” with respect to herbs? Highlighting herbs from catnip and plantain to nettles and rosemary, the author — a practicing herbalist — provides the information you need to know herbs better, understand their environment and respect their habitat.



### Gardens of Renaissance Europe and the Islamic Empires: Encounters and Confluences

By Mohammad Gharipour

Including 10 essays by different academicians and more than 80 illustrations (mostly in color), this \$94.95 book is one you will want to ask your local librarian to order for you on Interlibrary Loan, unless you have recently come into a large inheritance! The shift toward more public gardens rather than private ones during this period of history introduces the influence of politics, economics and culture on landscape gardening in both Europe and the Islamic Empires of Turkey, Persia and India. Fascinating commonalities in design, development and the people's perceptions of gardens and nature highlight the linkages between these two cultural areas during the Renaissance.



# UPDATE The Garden



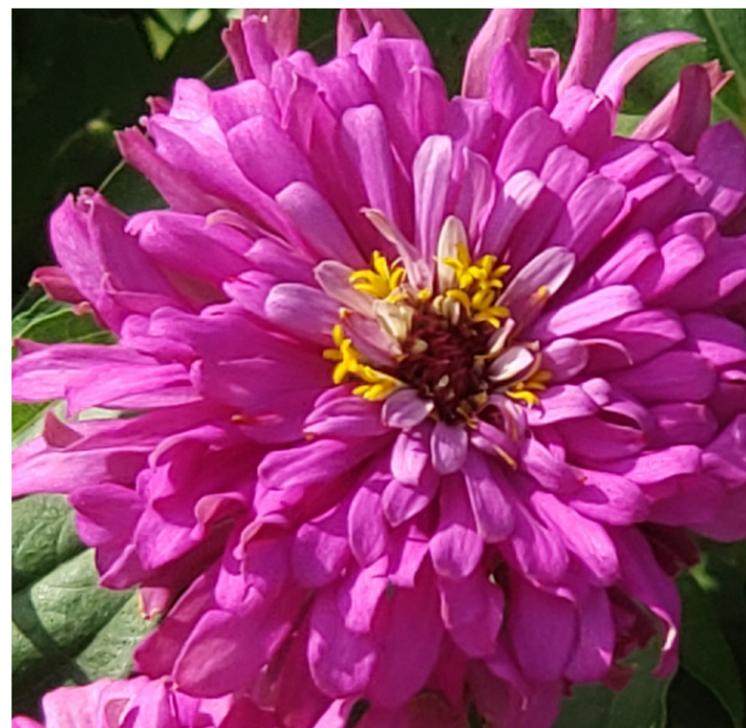
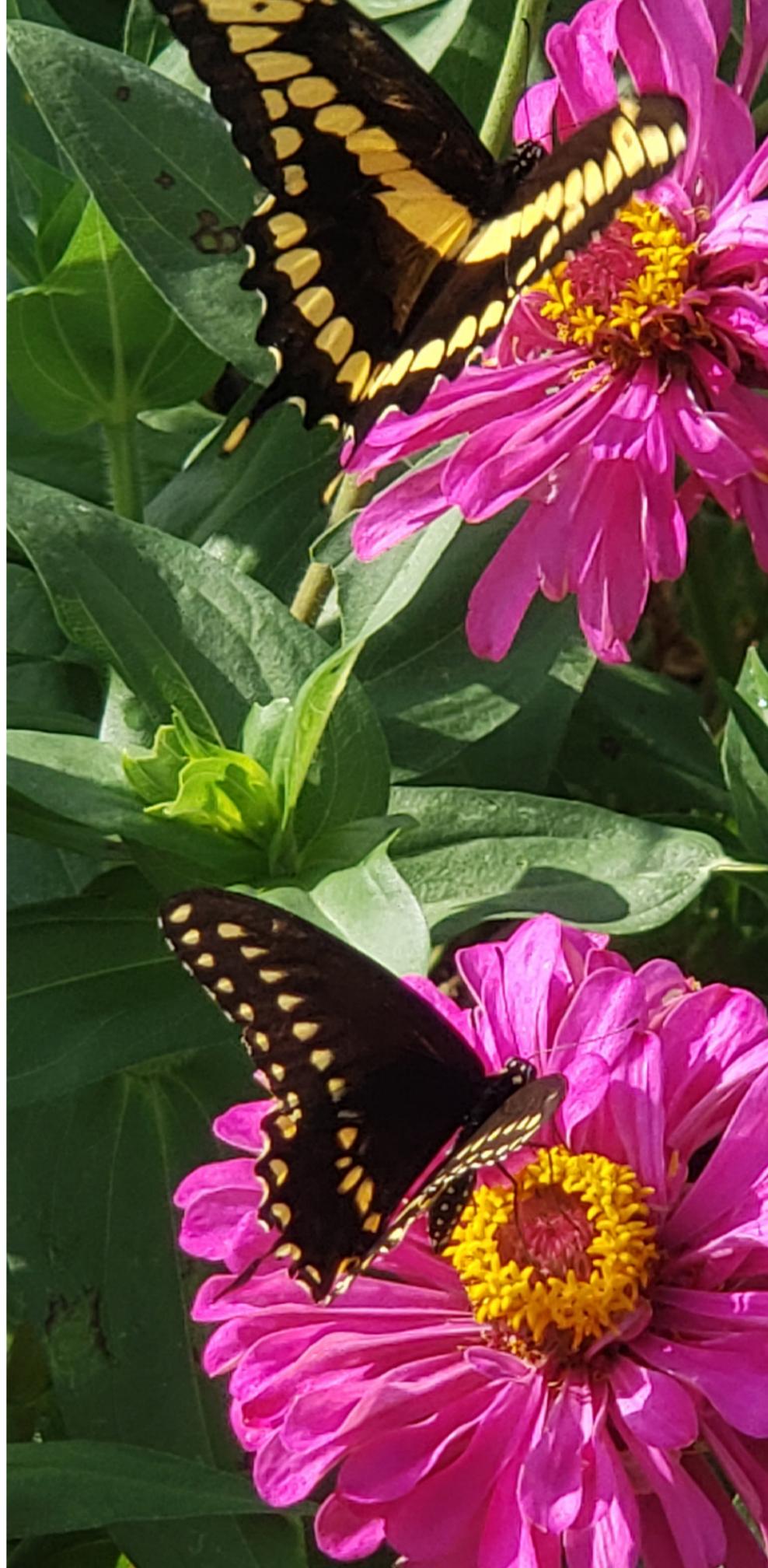
Into the heat of the summer we go! The Garden continues to produce, but with a change in crops. Potatoes are gone, but okra is going great. Squash is on its last legs, but black-eyed peas are producing really well. One nice surprise of sorts is how well the cantaloupe are doing. We have lost a couple to our furry friends, but we are getting a bountiful number for the Helping Center clients.

One thing that does continue is the reliability

of the associates and Master Gardeners who brave the heat to assist with the running of the garden in less than ideal circumstances.

We will continue to tend to the summer crops for the next several weeks as we look forward to planting a fall garden in cooler temperatures. We start work at 8 a.m. Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings and normally finish up before 10 a.m., so feel free to come join the fun!

Story and photos by David Waldo



Most of these pictures are from three beds of zinnias at the front of The King's Garden in Kingsland.

The King's Garden team planted the zinnias for the purpose of beautification and as a pollinator attraction. They are very pleasing to the eye and also seem to be bringing in the pollinators needed for a productive garden.

The white flower is a bloom on one of many, almost 6-foot high, okra plants.

~ Ingrid Hoffmeister

What's growing, blooming and producing in YOUR garden? Show it off in What's Growing On! Send pictures of your plants and projects, plus a little information, to Gail Braymen at [gebfoto@gmail.com](mailto:gebfoto@gmail.com).

