

MG Wood Works

Wood County Master Gardeners



July / August 2011

WC Master Gardeners website: www.wcmgtx.org

Newsletter E-Mail: mgnewsletter@hotmail.com



2011 MG Officers
Connie Amsden—President
Jim Willis—Vice President
Shirley Boles—Secretary
Karen Anderson—Treasurer

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Vision

To be the premier 21st Century outreach and continuing education organization in Texas responding to the needs of the people.

Edited by:

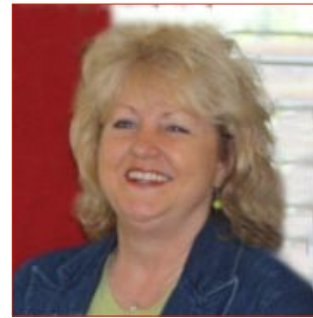
Sylvia Johnson

Mission

To improve the lives of people, business and communities across Texas and Beyond through high quality, relevant Education

President 's Corner

Connie Madsen
President



Independence Day honors the birthday of the United States of America and the adoption of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776. It's a day of picnics and patriotic parades, a night of concerts, fireworks and a reason to fly the American flag. (usa.gov)

Happy 4th of July! Celebrate the greatest country in the world with a

fabulous fun-filled holiday!



Please remember our military and their families during your celebration.

They sacrifice daily to secure our freedom and way of life.





Like the Jerry Reed song lyrics....."When You're Hot You're Hot". And we are hot! The air is dry and the sun is sweltering. Can you believe just a short time ago we had snow? It is already mid-year, Winter is gone, Spring breezed by and Summer is sizzling and the heat is on. There are a few important garden tips for this season. Keep you and your plants hydrated and avoid stress. Be observant and mindful of the heat and its effects. Work wisely and early. Do gardening in moderation. Pull a few weeds daily rather than spend all afternoon picking weeds that are out of control. Mow the lawn to remove only 1/3 or less of the blades. Keep your tools sharp, clean and in good condition. The best tip yet is to just stay inside in the cool a/c and dream of cooler temps and pleasant gardening conditions.

WCMG monthly meetings....July 21 and Aug 18



Despite the hot, dry summer we managed to have the best "first veggie garden". We put all our best learned master gardener skills to good use in our planning and location - near water, near the patio door, and enclosed in rabbit guard fence. It paid off tremendously. We have a bountiful garden. And never doubt Clint's magic tomato fertilizer guaranteed to produce enough delicious tomatoes and peppers for you and all your neighbors.

It pays to be observant, listen and talk to the master.....gardeners, that is. This is the best shared secret ever. Hope your garden is just as successful!

May your garden always flourish....And your weeds wither.

July and August Speakers

By: Jim Willis

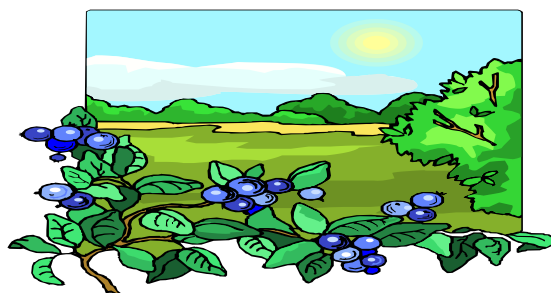


Our July and August speakers will help us with overall garden design and planning.

.In **July** we will hear from James Wilhite, president of Wilhite Landscaping & Lawn Care, Ltd. in Tyler. You will remember Mr. Wilhite from his presentation at the WCMG Spring Conference this year. In August he will talk to us about home irrigation. He has a Bachelor of Science Degree in Horticulture from Stephen F. Austin and received the outstanding Student of the Year Award in 1979, He is a Certified Landscape Professional #4. Mr. Wilhite helped develop the Certification program for the Texas Nursery & Landscape Association (TNLA) and served as Treasurer, Vice President, and President and Past President.

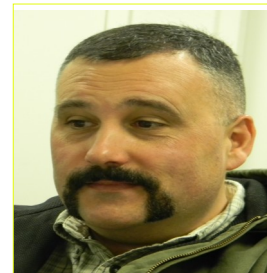


The speaker for **August** will be landscape architect Mica Perez and she will speak on Landscape Design. She joined Breedlove Nursery & Landscape Co in Tyler in 2004 specializing in their new division "Landscape Plans To Go," which offered professional design service at quick turnaround and low cost. She is a 2002 graduate of the Department of Landscape Architecture and Urban Planning, College of Architecture at Texas A&M University



Clint Perkins Gardening Corner

email wood-tx@tamu.edu



Fall Landscape/Using Compost

This time of the year offers an excellent opportunity to evaluate the home landscape and begin making preparations for fall planting. Vegetables and herbs can be used in imaginative ways to add beauty, interest, and utility to our landscapes. Midsummer and early fall offers us a good second season for growing these plants if you can motivate yourself to provide a little extra care during the long, hot days of late summer. Hanging containers of parsley, mint, thyme, rosemary, and tomatoes can all be started now. These plants may be available at nurseries, but with a little extra effort, they can be grown from seed. Each has a drooping growth habit which makes it especially appropriate for hanging container use. An even larger variety of herbs and vegetables may be grown in the more down to earth containers, such as clay pots and wooden tubs. Tomatoes, peppers, lettuce, eggplants, carrots, and radishes are just a few of the many available. Even small porches and decks of apartments can be made more attractive and interesting with groupings of containers filled with herbs and vegetables.

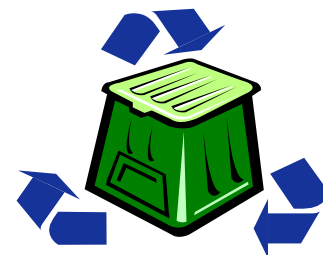
No matter when you decide to have a garden, the benefits of organic matter to soils or plants is well established. Compost is an organically rich soil amendment produced by the decomposition of waste materials from landscapes, animal feeding operations, municipal wastewater treatment facilities, and food industries. It is a partially stabilized product of microbial decomposition of organic materials. It can increase water and nutrient holding capacity of sandy soils; increase aeration and internal drainage of clay soils; add nutrients; increase populations of earthworms and soil microorganisms; and suppress some plant diseases just to name a few attributes. A properly composted product is dark colored and does not resemble the original parent materials. It is generally composed of 50 to 80 percent hemi-cellulose and lignin, which are stable and slow to decompose plant components. The remaining 20 to 50 percent are water-soluble compounds that soil microorganisms quickly break down. Fully decomposed materials do not tie up plant nutrients when mixed with soil or produce any undesirable odors. Compost provides a slow release source of nutrients; hence, in the past it was called "black gold" by farmers. Compost has many benefits to it such as:

- 1.) Environmentally sound method of recycling plant and animal wastes.
- 2.) Compost improves the overall soil physical properties, such as water retention, water infiltration, and gas exchange in the soil.
- 3.) Slow release form of plant nutrients
- 4.) Increase in nutrient retention in the soil.
- 5.) Suppresses plant diseases such as fusarium and rhizoctinia

One advantage of compost is that nutrients are released over a long period of time. However, this can also be a problem, because it is difficult to tell how much to use. Most compost contains less than 1% each of nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium.



If the compost is stable and of good quality, then incorporating the material is the most effective method of adding organic matter to the soil profile. Prior to application, kill any existing perennial weeds, such as Bermuda grass, with an appropriate herbicide. After the weeds have been controlled, cultivate the soil to loosen the soil. Apply a one to four inch layer of compost to the cultivated soil and incorporate to a depth of 8 to 12 inches. Initially, determine nutrient content of the soil and compost, and if necessary, apply other soil amendments at this time if necessary. Rake and level the soil surface to establish a smooth, firm planting bed and finally, plant seeds or transplants directly into a prepared soil.



If plants are already established, compost can be used as a mulch. Apply generous amounts of a compost product around each plant. Compost is an excellent way of recycling organic products. Mother nature produces these products for a reason. So, lets use them and not put them in a landfill. **Happy Gardening !!!**

Extension programs serve people of all ages regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, religion, disability or national origin. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating

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Tips and Tricks

By: Sylvia Johnson, editor

From Home Digest/Family Handyman:

“If you use your wheelbarrow to haul tee limbs, lumber , or yard tools, you may be struggling to keep it balanced when it’s full.

Us a couple of ordinary bungee cords to keep everything tucked in: Simply stretch them over the top of the load and hook them under the lip! You now have a secure load.”



“The best way to protect delicate seedlings while you mulch is to cover each new plant with a nursery pot once they’re all in the ground. Distribute the mulch (or compost) around the pots without worrying about decapitating or crushing any expensive or delicate plant.”





Congratulations Everybody! We Won!

The Wood County Master Gardeners were notably recognized at the TMGA State Conference in Glen Rose, April 27-29. We have a great organization and it shows in the awards we receive for our hard work. The awards are based on projects and work that was accomplished in 2010. The awards were as follows:

1. Project - **First Place** Gov. Hogg Park Arboretum and Botanical Gardens



Wood County Master Gardeners
2011 Spring Conference

Legacy Gardening -
from Heirlooms to the Moon

March 12, 2011
8:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
Mineola Civic Center



Texas Master Gardeners
2011 State Conference

2. Education - **First place**
WCMG Spring Conference

3. Newsletter - **First Place** MG Wood Works

MG Wood Works
Wood County Master
Gardeners

4. MG Association - **Second Place**



5. Poster - **Third Place** Arboretum and Botanical



6. Individual MG - **Honorable Mention** Linda Avant

Good job and congratulations to all our hard working members. It sure was fun making that trip to the front of the banquet arena to collect all these awards (they get heavy too when you are carrying them out the building). Someone asked me if I needed a dolly. Had a great time at the conference and everyone should attend at least once to soak up the fun and camaraderie with other Master Gardeners from around the great state of Texas.



Awards Accepted by Karen Anderson, WCMG Treasurer



Master Gardener Class 2011 !

By Gail Newman

I can't tell you what a joy it was to be with the 2011 Master Gardener Class each Tuesday. We had 12 1/4 students this year. I'll explain later. They were all so enthusiastic about the classes. They came from all walks of life. Some are working on getting small farm operations started, others just moved to the area recently & wanted to know how to grow in this climate. We even had a baby in the hatch. Valerie McWhorter had her daughter Lilli about a month before class was over. Lilli is our official half pint 3rd generation Master Gardener. Valerie's mom is a Master Gardener in Austin & Valerie is following in her footsteps. Many just wanted to make friends who enjoy gardening & do something to help the community. We even had a clown (a real clown). The common thread was their love of gardening & being around other gardeners.

Seven out of this class had all their volunteer hours by graduation. That's quite a feat! It took me most of the next year to get all of mine. I believe this entire class will be a great asset to the Wood County Master Gardeners! Lets all welcome them with open arms!

**You all were great & made my job easy.
Welcome!!!!!!! I'm so glad you decided to join us!**

Graduation Day Part II

Valerie McWhorter and her daughter Lilli our 1/4 member!



“The love of gardening is a seed that once sown never dies.” From: *Gertrude Jekyll and the Country House Garden* by Judith B Tankard.



Golden shovel awards were handed out by the new class to their mentors and teachers.



The event was well attended. Thanks to all who cooked, to all that brought, and to all that ate!



Below is a link to the Texas AgriLife Extension's partial cost recovery initiative guidelines for the Texas Master Gardener program. If you have questions or comments, please visit with me or your Master Gardener Coordinator.

jbfry@ag.tamu.edu

Thank you,

Jayla Fry

**Texas AgriLife Extension Service
State Master Gardener Coordinator**



Right click on above hyperlink to access the E-mail account.

Sylvia, editor

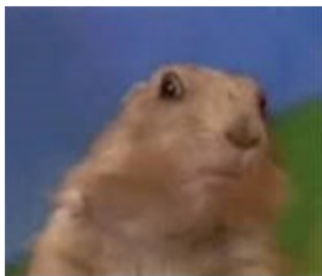
I Grew Up in Zone 7a...

I grew up in Zone 7a and I never gardened there voluntarily. I was, however, forced to weed and pick strawberries in our huge home plot behind the garage and I felt quite put upon for it. My mother put up endless jars of slimy chard and we were forced to eat it most of each following winter. Then, one youthful summer when I thought I needed money, I got a job picking blueberries. It was dreadfully hot work. However, by listening to older kids in adjacent rows I theoretically learned a great deal about the birds and bees, but not gardening *per se*.



Famous Blueberry Bushes – Cape Cod

When I moved to Zone 7b, New York, I mostly lived in high risers or brownstones. It did not occur to me to garden either on a balcony or in a miniscule back yard. I had not matured enough to take responsibility for any living thing. Finally the city tired of me and I was sent packing across country.



My evil California nemesis!

In Zone 9a, apartment living did not suit as there was so much outdoors to be experienced and the weather was magnificent. I found and rented an old house with plenty of yard. It was time for me to unfold the mystery of gardening. The yard wasn't soil. It was an odd form of dirt. My youngest step-daughter (yes, I eventually settled down) called it, "scotch-guarded vermiculite." Water would stand atop it like a conquering hero—never giving in. Inasmuch as our yard was the largest in the neighborhood, critters also stubbornly took up residence there as a sort of suburban sanctuary. What produce didn't get trodden usually disappeared down mysterious holes that would appear overnight next to any frail plant. The main beneficiaries of my largess were gophers.

After moving here to Zone 8a, determination surfaced and we took the Master Gardeners' course. Unfortunately education is seldom a cure-all, and in my case, it can't trump forgetfulness. Nearly every year we buy a food specifically for my few roses and accidentally hide it from ourselves. Just today I found one in a nonsensical location and have left it out to remind myself to use it.



My Peace Rose appears somewhat resigned.

For me, gardening remains a mystery. Sometimes you fling out seeds and something happens; usually it doesn't. Sometimes you meticulously prepare "soil" and magic explodes; often it doesn't. Sometimes the bugs beat you to everything.

Part 2

For me, gardening remains a mystery. Sometimes you fling out seeds and something happens; usually it doesn't. Sometimes you meticulously prepare "soil" and magic explodes; often it doesn't. Sometimes the bugs beat you to everything. Other items that seem to grow rampant here on our property are holes. Our garden is surrounded by them and they seem to require little care of any sort.



Other items that seem to grow rampant here on our property are holes. Our garden is surrounded by them and they seem to require little care of any sort.



But all is not lost as my Honey has shown me how to begin a gardening project by first introducing potting medium and fertilized water in order to create an ecosystem. I thought my sunflowers would be a joy all summer until I found one laid out dead. However it was next to my new pink flamingo so I suspect her of 'fowl' play.





From the E-mail: Why Texans don't pick bluebonnets.

Just a reminder that during these hot days of summer all kinds of creatures will take advantage of shade provide by plants, wood piles, old tires, etc.





Food in the Quitman Library Flower Bed

It's tough to find 'greens' that stand up to our hot summers. But, here's one for you - Malabar Spinach (*Basella rubra*). You'll find this twining vine traveling up the trellis in the West bed of the Quitman library garden. Contrary to the name, this eatable vine is not actually spinach, but is really a member of the Basellaceae family. It has the flavor of spinach but with a thick, juicy leaf. It's mucilaginous nature makes it useful as a thickener in cooking, too - similar to okra.

Malabar spinach can be used on sandwiches instead of lettuce or cooked like its namesake - stir fry is a common method. The origin of this fast growing vine is India/Indonesia, where it is a commonly used vegetable. It's extremely heat tolerant (does not bolt like spinach) and is somewhat drought tolerant. The seeds have a soft purple coating that stains readily; recommend you leave them on the vine to dry. This tender heirloom may reseed, so you could find 'volunteers' coming up in the spring. They pull/transplant easily. No trellis for support? No worry, just keep the vine cut at a manageable height, and it will continue to thrive.

Contributed by Becky Watts





By:Joan Morgan

The months of April and May have been busy ones with the volunteers at the Wildscape/Mineola Nature Preserve.

Jim Willis completed the Rainwater Harvesting System and photos are included reflecting the actual reservoir and the informational tiles mounted on a stand in front of the system. The tiles are printed with the information on the Harvesting System and also shows the merchants who donated materials for the installation of the system. The next time you are at the Preserve, please drop by the Wildscape area and view the system. We have had some rain since the system was installed, and some rainwater is collected in the tank.

Karen Anderson will attend a class for installation and use of the system next week, which will then allow us to provide educational classes for schools and others who may be interested in the system. Ideally, this will take place in the fall of this year so watch for our schedule which will be published in a future newsletter.

The wildflowers and other plants are in full bloom, so come out and enjoy the beauty of the flowers with butterflies and hummingbirds buzzing about taking advantage of the nectar. Early summer is a great time of the year, even though we have had higher temperatures than normal. Early morning is an excellent time to enjoy nature at the Preserve.

We were involved with Nature Fest at the Preserve on Saturday, May 28th, and even though the wind gusts were trying, it helped to keep us cool. There were many vendors involved in Nature Fest including the Birds of Prey, which was an exciting demonstration on owls, falcons and various types of hawks. They were set up near our display so we were able to enjoy their activity up close.

Linda Timmons was very popular with her bug collection, providing helpful information about bugs and how they add to nature. The youngsters were especially interested in her bugs and she provided a magnifying glass so that they could view each bug up close. What fun!!

The raffle was held at the Nature Fest of the bird bath that was donated by Karen Anderson and designed and decorated by Nancy Weaver. We will announce the winner at the next Master Gardener meeting which will be June 16th, so be sure to attend. Jim Willis has an exceptional program scheduled.

Again, we at the Wildscape at the Mineola Nature Preserve urge you to come out and enjoy the beauty of nature in full bloom.





Jay Heppner, of the Friends of the Nature Preserve in Mineola presented a check for \$1,000 to the Wood County Master Gardeners Wildscape Project to help with signage and educational projects. Accepting the check are Karen Anderson, Treasurer and Joan Morgan, Project Leader. The Master Gardeners deeply appreciate the Friends of the Preserve for their continued financial support.





Rainwater Harvesting System at MNP



Good rainwater makes beautiful
healthy flowers!

SPRING CONFERENCE Wrap-up

By: Karen Anderson



Well another Spring Conference is wrapped up and put away until next year. I was not able to attend due to a death in the family, but I had a great committee that kept the ball rolling and everything running smoothly. A heartfelt thank you is extended to Ellen Atkins, Marti McAree, Sandra Patrick, Judy Swenson, Cecil Wallace and Adrienne Walters for all your hard work and moral support. I would also like to extend a special thank you to Peggy Rogers for her advice and keeping me motivated. Also a thank you to Jim Willis for stepping in for me when I couldn't be there by doing whatever was needed to get the job done. My thanks also to the members of the WCMG association who provide a great job no matter what the project entails.

I have had feed back from some of the attendees and of course different ones liked different speakers depending on what interested them. We had some new vendors this year and one of them told me they were very happy to have been included in our conference. She appreciated the exposure and really enjoyed our program. So remember when you are shopping in the Wood County area visit these vendors as they are the ones that help support our programs.

But the best feed back I received was for the FOOD. Almost everyone made comments about the good food we had and the amount available. I keep telling everyone we have some darn good cooks in our organization and this just proves it. Thank you Master Gardeners for a job well done.

The raffle items were a big hit and all the tickets were sold. Someone was trying to buy a ticket after we ran out of printed ones and was just wanting us to put her name on a piece of paper. The picnic table was won by Pat Greenlaw, President of the Iris Garden Club in Golden, the 2 benches by Willie Kay Paredez's sister and the necklace set by Lynn Oakes. Congratulations to all the winners.

Now we can start on next year's conference if we decide to present one after all the discussions on "Cost Recovery". Best of luck to the new committee and hope you have a great time working on this project.

Editor's Note: Because of Karen and her committee the WCMG won the Third Place Education Award for the Spring Conference from Texas Master Gardeners. See last issue for pictures of this great event. Thank you Karen and your committee for all you hard work; Way to GO!

SERENITY CORNER - EILEEN BARTLETT



*“Everything that slows us down and forces patience, everything that sets us back into the slow circles of nature, is a help.
Gardening is an instrument of grace.”*

May Sarton



Mineola Nature Preserve - August 30, 2006 - Solarization

This scene above reminds me of a painting classic in the style of Andrew Wyeth -
“Christina’s World”



WCMG Library

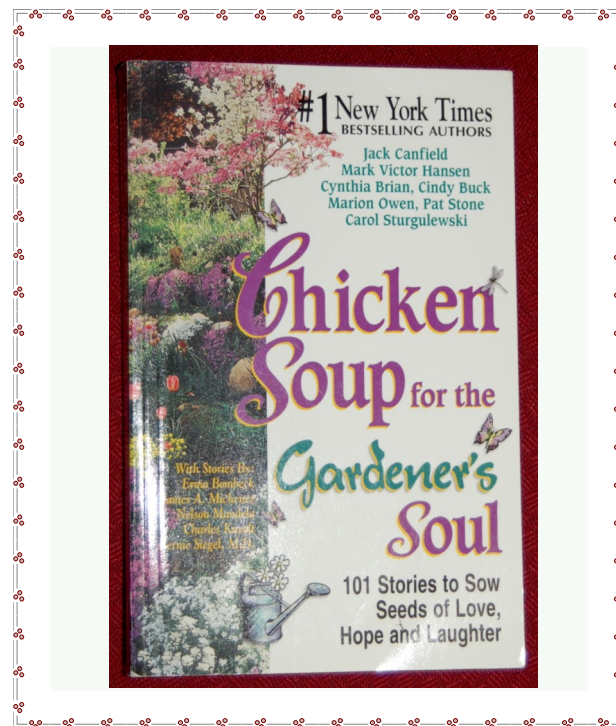
By: Jim Willis

Here's a review for another book that is available in our WCMG library in Clint's office. See him if you'd like to check this out.

Chicken Soup for the Gardeners Soul

For beginning gardeners and veteran green-thumbs-this uplifting collection of stories is filled with what every gardener knows-gardens fill lives with a special richness because they are a living reminder of the beauty in the world.

Chicken Soup for the Gardener's Soul celebrates all the magic of gardening-the feeling of satisfaction that comes from creating something from nothing; the physical and spiritual renewal the earth provides; and the special moments shared with friends and family only nature can bestow. Written by hobbyists and celebrity gardeners, the stories relate the joys and challenges of gardening, with chapters on Blossoming Friendships, The Family Tree, Love in Bloom, The Seasons of Life, Overcoming Obstacles and Potpourri.



Contact List

Wood County Master Gardener Projects 2011

Project	Chair	Email
Quitman Arboretum & Botanical Garden	Pam Riley	pam_riley2003@yahoo.com
Junior Master Gardeners	Linda Avant	linavant@peoplescom.net
Quitman Special Ed Greenhouse	Fran McKinney	mckfran@gmail.com
	Clyde McKinney	mckclyde@gmail.com
Quitman Library	Becky Watts	jbwatts@escapees.com
Mineola Nature Preserve Wildscape	Joan Morgan	cdmorgan@peoplescom.net
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Sunshine	Sandra Patrick	sppat57@suddenlink.net
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Festival Coordinator	Willie Kay Paredez	jwkpared@peoplescom.net
Volunteer Hours Coordinator (Hrs/CEUs)	Ellen Atkins	ellen.atkins@hotmail.com

July 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2 <i>Quitman City Open House at Gov. Hogg Park Farmers Market*</i>
3	4 <i>INDEPEDANCE DAY</i> 	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13 <i>FW Texas Home & Garden Show</i>	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21 <i>MG Monthly Meeting</i>	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

**Reminder: Farmers Market every Saturday in Mineola, and Quitman. Every Sat. and Wed. in Alba.*

August 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6 <i>Farmer's Markets *</i>
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18MG <i>Monthly Meeting</i>	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

**Reminder: Farmer's Market every Saturday in Mineola, and Quitman. Every Sat. and Wed. in Alba*

STOP THE PRESS

Late Breaking News:

Congratulations to the winner of the Mineola Nature Preserve Raffle; our own Peggy Rogers!



June 23—East Texas Horticultural Field Day. For info call Clint Perkins, his contact info is on page 5.