

# The Compost Bin

July 2014

A Publication of the Travis County Master Gardeners  
a volunteer program of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

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White Grubs

Meet the Master Gardeners

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Cover Photo: Zilker water pond. By Liath Appleton

Right: by Liath Appleton



## July Meeting - Jason Avent

### **If Plants Could Build Cities...This is How They'd Build Them: The Benefits of Recirculating Water Systems**

Speaker: Jason Avent - Genetic Engineer, Inventor, Agricultural Consultant

Very high productivity/area agriculture is possible by meeting all of a plant's needs. This presentation will provide an overview of the "flood and drain style system" that has become the gold standard for productivity, efficient fertilization and water conservation. These systems offer numerous advantages to the gardener beyond the "plant's eye view" of ideal conditions. Pest and weed control become much simpler in these elevated grow beds. In addition, the ergonomics of waist-high gardening and automated watering create a very accessible system with reduced wear and tear on the gardener's body. We will also discuss the systematic depletion of water soluble nutrients in our diets (such as selenium and iodine) and how water recycling flood and drain systems can enrich plants

with these nutrients.

Jason Avent grew up on his father's ranch near Corsicana, TX. He has a B.S. in Genetics from Texas A&M- College Station. Jason spent 8 years as a botany Ph.D. student at the University of Texas Austin, where he learned the art of teaching as a TA. Jason's research interests during graduate school included the ALS/PDC neurological diseases of Guam and betalain pigments as oxidation indicators.

**Master Gardener Meeting information:  
Wednesday, June 2, 2014 starting at 7 pm  
Zilker Botanical Garden**

Master Gardener meetings are open to certified Master Gardeners and trainees only.

## In the Vegetable Garden

by Patty Leander

Thank you, Pam LeBlanc, for validating what most industrious gardeners already know: gardening=workout! Pam, a self-avowed fitness junkie, writes an inspiring weekly column for the Austin American Statesman called Fit City. Recently a caption for her column, "Cross-training at Home, With a Shovel", caught my eye. I imagined her creating some kind of exercise routine utilizing garden tools, but she really was using that shovel for its intended purpose – digging out grass and planting native plants in the hell strip between the sidewalk and the curb. She called it a first-rate exercise session, and a kick-butt workout. And the best part about it? Getting a physical workout without paying for a gym membership, AND having a newly landscaped bed to show for all her work! Pretty plants that are more interesting than grass and use less water – a big win all around!

If your garden chores beckon you outdoors be sure to hydrate when you are working in the summer heat. Heat exhaustion and the dizziness, weakness and nausea that come with it, are no fun. And don't forget your sun protection and mosquito repellent.

### **Here is the vegetable gardener's checklist for July:**

- Continue to water vegetable plants regularly, giving them a thorough soaking, rather than a light sprinkle, so that water penetrates the soil and reaches the roots.
- Prepare the garden for fall planting by removing spent or diseased plants and adding a fresh layer of mulch to help conserve moisture and moderate soil temperature.
- Winter squash, summer squash and corn can be seeded later in the month, but pumpkin seeds should be planted the first week of July for harvest before Halloween.
- Eggplant, peppers and tomato transplants can be planted in late July.
- Use fast-maturing, determinate tomato varieties for fall production so fruit will be ready to harvest before that first cold snap. Recommended selections include 'Tycoon', 'Solar Fire', 'Phoenix', 'BHN 444', and 'Bella Rosa'.
- Use PVC hoops or small A-frames covered with shade cloth, burlap or row cover to provide temporary shade for newly planted seeds and transplants.
- Start seeding cool season vegetables like broccoli, cauliflower, kale and cabbage the last week of July so you'll have transplants ready for the garden in September.
- Visit the new Luci and Ian Family Garden at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center. Even better, take some kids! This new garden is an amazing outdoor space where children are encouraged to roll in the grass, climb on the rocks, get wet, get dirty, explore, sweat and have fun! The 4.5 acre garden includes a creek, a grotto, a waterfall, a nectar garden, rain gardens and giant bird "nests" woven from grapevines. And if that doesn't pique your interest, I've included a few photos that Bruce took just before it opened to the public. Enjoy!

## In the Vegetable Garden

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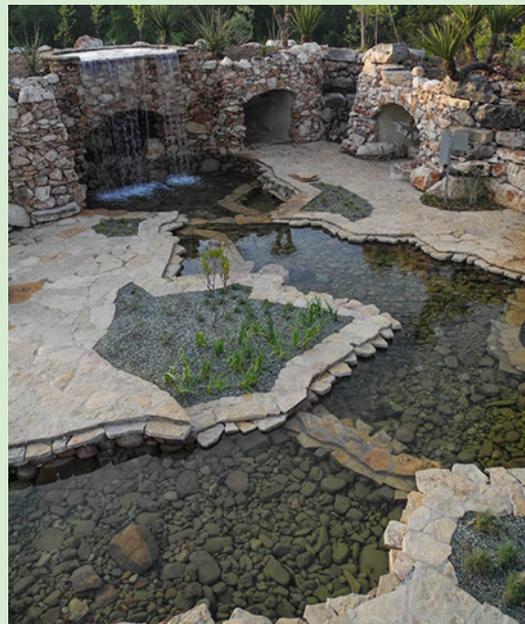


Top left: The entrance to the Luci and Ian Family Garden.



Top right: A bird's eye view of the Hill Country Grotto and Dinosaur Creek, with the Wildflower Center Administration building in the background.

Bottom left: The Hill Country Grotto was created using native stone unearthed during construction.



Bottom right: The Giant Bird's Nests, woven from thick grapevine, are 8 feet wide and 5 feet tall. Each nest took one week to complete.



Photos by Bruce and Patty Leander

## White Grubs

by Wizzie Brown

White grubs are creamy-white, C-shaped larvae with six legs and a brownish-orange head capsule (Fig 1). The larvae become May and June beetles (and other closely related species). Grubs feed on the roots of turfgrass, causing it to lose vigor and turn brown. These insects can cause turf to have brown patchy areas. When there are heavy populations of white grubs, turf can often be rolled up like carpeting because the grubs eat all the roots leaving no attachment to the soil.



Figure 1. White grub. Photo by Wizzie Brown.

To inspect for white grubs, cut several 6 inch square blocks of turf in various areas of the landscape. Make sure to include areas of suspected white grub damage. Examine grass plugs in the root zone for grubs. Treatment is justified when there are more than 5-8 white grubs per square foot. It is possible that some lawns can withstand higher numbers of grubs without noticeable damage.

White grubs treatments should be applied approximately 6 weeks after the heaviest flights of May and June beetles. Due to rainfall this time period can vary from year to year, but typically in Central Texas treatment falls mid-July to early August.

Beneficial nematodes are available for managing white grubs, but need moisture to move through soil. Nematodes are small worms that attack grubs and other soil-dwelling insects. If you choose to use nematodes to control white grubs, make sure that the soil is irrigated on a regular basis to allow enough moisture so the nematodes can move through the soil to locate a host.

Insecticidal treatments may also be used to manage white grubs. You can spot treat infested areas instead of treating your entire lawn. If soil is very dry, water about ½ inch the day before treatment to encourage grubs to move closer to the soil surface. Liquid or granular formulations are available for white grub management with active ingredients such as bifenthrin,

carbaryl, imidacloprid, clothianidin or halofenozide. Do not apply pesticide treatments if rainfall is expected, and sweep up any spilled material from driveways, sidewalks or streets. Always read and follow all label instructions and application rates.

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-ipm.blogspot.com](http://www.urban-ipm.blogspot.com)

## Meet the Master Gardeners: Jack Campbell, Class of 2001

by Jean Love El Harim



Jack Campbell in the garden at Bannockburn Church. Photo by: Martha King

Born and raised in Florida, Jack Campbell was an influential member of the Florida agricultural community for 40 years, and is a member of Florida agriculture's Hall of Fame. He came to Austin with his wife Carolyn in 1998. He has been a Capital Area Master Naturalist and volunteered with Texas Parks and Wildlife, and has served as a docent at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, guiding tours there. In 2005 he received the President's Call to Service Award for volunteer service, and so far has logged 16,000 hours of volunteer service as a Travis County Master Gardener.

Jack lives in Southwest Austin and spends his days "gardening - period." When he is not gardening, he enjoys fishing and birding. He also enjoys reading about and studying natural sciences. His unique talent has always been that he "could make things grow and improve agriculture in the community."

Jack shared a quirky story about something that happened to him one day. "I was working with the roses by the church along Brodie Lane when a lady pulled up in a Mercedes and thanked me. She said she comes by this way and loves looking at the garden. She wanted to contribute to the garden, and she wrote a check for a thousand dollars. It blew my mind. I asked if I could offer to help, offer advice for her garden, but she said no and drove off. I don't know who she was and I've never seen her again. A thousand dollars. Out of the clear blue sky. That was the only time in my life I've run into an angel."

Jack attributes his wide-ranging interest in gardening to his mother and grandmother who were both gardeners in Florida. He grew up on a farm where his family grew vegetables, fruits, citrus, and bananas.

As a youngster, he was a Future Farmer of America and rooted papayas. As a young man, he had a plant nursery, grew palm trees, and did landscaping. Then he had a four-acre tropical garden with a bird sanctuary pond and a waterfall. "I spent a lot of time and money on it. Then Hurricane Andrew came and destroyed it. That made me think, maybe the Lord was

telling me it was time to get started on something for Him."

Now he is in charge of the grounds at Bannockburn Baptist Church, which he has turned into a 9-acre garden paradise at the busy intersection of William Cannon and Brodie Lane that was on the Inside Austin Garden Tour a few years back. His greatest gardening challenge these days is getting enough volunteers to help with the garden. Jack goes to people's houses and offers garden consultations,

## Meet the Master Gardeners

Continued...

donating the fee to the church. He also offers free garden consultations to churches, schools, and citizens' centers. Though Jack is interested in everything about gardening, he admits a partiality to roses, water gardens, and ponds. "Tropicals, too," he says, "but you can't do much with them in Austin." When asked for a gardening tip, Jack says to "look after soil moisture. Pay attention to the soil, mulch, and water."

Jack joined Travis County Master Gardeners in 2001 to learn more about the kinds of plants that do well in this area. What does Jack like most about the Travis County Master Gardener Program? "It is so well run and so well coordinated. I look forward to the monthly meetings and come to every one because they are so interesting and informative."

## Austin Area Events

### **Raising and Managing Bees**

Saturday, July 19  
10am - noon

Zilker Botanical Gardens  
2220 Barton Springs Rd  
Austin TX

Chris Doggett, of Williamson County Beekeepers Association, will share his knowledge and expertise in raising and managing bees.

Learn how to provide a healthy and attractive environment for bees, whether you have a backyard hive, or acres of crops needing pollination. A delightful speaker with hands-on experience, Chris will gladly answer your questions and concerns to take the mystery out of beekeeping.

This seminar is free with paid admission to Zilker Botanical Garden. The seminar is presented by the Travis County Master Gardeners, a volunteer arm of the Texas AgriLife Extension Service in Travis County. [www.tcmastergardeners.org](http://www.tcmastergardeners.org). For information, call (512) 477-8672.

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**The Compost Bin Submissions**

We are always looking for Travis County Master Gardeners who are interested in writing for our monthly newsletter, and we would love to see your articles, photographs, book reviews and gardening ideas.

**General Guidelines**

- Please first email the editor to discuss potential article ideas.
- Email contributions as attachments (preferably in Word with a .doc or .rtf suffix).
- Please send images as separate attachments (preferably .jpg suffix). Don't forget to include photographer acknowledgments and captions.

Send your submissions, announcements, questions and suggestions to: [editor.compostbin@gmail.com](mailto:editor.compostbin@gmail.com)



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"Whosoever plants a tree Winks at immortality."  
— Felix Dennis