

The Compost Bin

October 2014

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



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Cover Photo:
Piercing, sucking
harlequin bugs
can do consider-
able damage if
not controlled. By
Bruce Leander

Right: 'Maggie'
By Liath Appleton



Oct Meeting - Damon Waitt

Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center: Programs and Activities

Damon Waitt earned his doctorate in botany from the University of Texas at Austin where he studied the evolutionary ecology and population genetics of Phlox. He has been very involved in the Wildflower Center's Native Plant Information Network, the largest online database about native plants in North America. He is a past president of the Texas Invasive Plant and Pest Council, and past chair of the National Association of Exotic Pest Plant Councils. He is actively involved in establishing tools for tracking non-native plants in Texas.

The Wildflower Center is a treasure in our own back yard. The Center is the ultimate demonstration garden for Texas native plants. Recent additions like the Luci & Ian Family Garden are fun and informative for kids and adults alike!

Fall Plant Exchange This Month!

As you clean up your gardens for the fall, pot up those extra plants that would make your gardening friends happy. It's time for the plant exchange after the October meeting. Please label your plants and don't bring any muddy messes. Also, plan to take home any of your plants or items that don't find a home. Don't forget to bring those extra seeds, garden magazines and pots that you'd like to share with other master gardeners.

Master Gardener Meeting information:
Wednesday, Oct 1, 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

October is a busy month for vegetable gardeners as we continue planting cool season crops, and begin the harvest of quick-growing beans, squash and cucumbers that were planted in August. The weather has cooled just enough that lettuce and spinach won't shriek when we plant them in the garden. Use seeds or transplants or both - the transplants will have you picking leaves in about 30 days, and the seeds will prolong the harvest. The substantial rain most of us received last month (over 6 inches in my Oak Hill garden!) brought plenty of weeds. So that brings us another task - along with perfect green material for the compost pile.

Here is the vegetable gardener's checklist for October:



Plant cilantro, dill, thyme or other favorite herbs this month.

- All of the hearty greens, cole crops and root crops can be planted now; take advantage of nursery grown transplants to jumpstart your garden.
- If you enjoy the process of growing from seed, and you have the time and the space, start some more transplants so you'll have a ready supply as mature plants are harvested and space becomes available in the garden.
- Thinning is crucial for success with root vegetables. Beets and turnips should be spaced 4-6 inches apart, radishes and carrots can be a little bit closer.
- Plant garlic in sunny, well-drained soil. Set the cloves so they are just below the soil surface, 6-8 inches apart.
- Grow your favorite herbs. Cilantro, dill, oregano, parsley, sage, and yes, rosemary and thyme can be planted now. All require full sun and good drainage. For a fresh supply of herbs all winter long plant in a bucket with a handle and place near the back door. When freezing weather comes along just move the bucket to a protected spot indoors or in the garage.
- Feed vegetables with a water-soluble fertilizer every 2-3 weeks to maintain vigor. Sidedress once a month with ½ cup of organic fertilizer for every 10 feet of row. Work it in lightly along the outer edge of the row to avoid damaging tender roots.
- Be on the lookout for caterpillars and harlequin bugs - they just love plants from the brassica family. Caterpillars chew holes in the leaves, and can ravage a plant if left unchecked. Harlequin bugs will pierce the leaves and suck the plant juices leaving yellowing, wilted leaves behind. Products containing Bt and spinosad are natural and effective pesticides for caterpillars, but harlequin bugs can be more difficult to control, especially when they reach the adult stage. Spinosad and insecticidal soap are labeled for harlequin bugs but remember that these bugs will be most susceptible when they are in the nymph stage.

In the Vegetable Garden

Continued...

- Scout for pests frequently and make timely applications of insecticide before damage gets out of control. Follow the label for application instructions and note that sometimes it may take more than one application to get control.
- Be kind to predators. Encourage birds, toads, spiders and wasps to hang out in your garden.
- Harvest winter squash and pumpkins when the rind is hard. Cure in a warm (80-90°), dry location for 7-10 days before storing. Acorn, delicata and spaghetti squash do not require curing and should be eaten within 6-8 weeks.
- Sweet potatoes should have reached an edible size and can be harvested this month to make room for cool season plantings. Cure in a warm, shady spot for about a week for best flavor. Wipe the dirt off but do not wash until you are ready to cook them.



Top Left: Harvest sweet potatoes this month.

Top Right: Grow your own transplants so you'll have a ready supply for the garden.

Bottom Right: Delicious, nutritious beets love our fall weather.



In the Vegetable Garden

Continued...

- Pull up any summer vegetables that have finished producing or are past their prime. Discard any that are diseased or show signs of pest infestation otherwise chop them up and add them to the compost pile.
- If you do not plan to cultivate your garden during the winter plant a cover crop or "green manure" such as Elbon rye, hairy vetch or crimson clover. Grow for the next 2-3 months, then cut them down in early spring and leave the roots in the ground to enrich the soil.



A 3-5 gallon bucket with a handle makes a portable pot for herbs and leafy greens.

Top Right: Watch for cabbage loopers on broccoli, collards, cauliflower and other brassicas.

Bottom Right: Harlequin bugs nymphs and their barrel shaped eggs



Photos by Bruce Leander

Hackberry Psyllids

by Wizzie Brown



Late summer into fall, people may notice tiny insects that are mottled grayish-brown collecting near windows, especially if hackberry trees are nearby. Hackberry psyllids (pronounced sill-ids) look like tiny cicadas and are actually closely related to them. Adults are about 1/8 an inch long.

Another name for hackberry psyllids is hackberry nipple gall maker. Adults lay their eggs on hackberry leaves in the spring. When eggs hatch, the psyllid feeds on the leaf and the leaf responds by developing a small pocket around the insect. The pocket is called a gall. Hackberry trees do not show long term damage from the galls or feeding of the psyllids, but the galls can make the tree unsightly.

These insects are not harmful to humans or companion animals. In the fall, the insects are searching for overwintering sites. They normally overwinter under the bark of trees, but sometimes they will utilize whatever crack or crevice they can find. This, along with the psyllids being attracted to lights at night, can lead them near doors and windows, and sometimes they end up inside the home.

To manage fall invasion of hackberry psyllids:

- Use fine mesh (18) screening.
- Reduce outdoor lighting, or use bulbs that are less attractive to insects.
- Use sealant to seal cracks and crevices.
- Insects that find their way indoors can be vacuumed up.

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

Meet the Master Gardeners: Kathie and Wayne King, Class of 2003

by Jean Love El Harim



Kathie and Wayne at the Garden Center
Photo by Jean El Harim

Kathie and Wayne King both grew up in Michigan, though not in the same town. Kathie used to spend time with her dad in the garden. She tells a family story of when she was three or four years old. Her father was planting a victory garden, dropping beans as he walked down a furrow, while Kathie walked behind him, unnoticed, picking up the beans and eating them. Wayne grew up with his grandparents who raised pigeons, and had a big garden. In high school and as a young adult, Wayne "was a jock, quick and strong." He played football and basketball and was on the track team. He continued his athletic activity and lettered in wrestling. Kathie was a musician, playing oboe, clarinet, and piano.

They met when they were both attending the University of Michigan, where Kathie earned a degree in sociology before beginning her career as a teacher. On a Navy ROTC scholarship, after earning a degree in engineering, Wayne began his career of working with computers, first as a Navy supply officer, participating in laying underwater listening devices, then as a Navy aviation supply officer. Afterwards he worked for IBM, and then as a consultant helping American Airlines with the year 2000 conversion. Kathie smiles and shakes her head at the irony of Wayne's "making boatloads of money helping to fix the problem he helped to create."

Kathie and Wayne lived on the East Coast, then in the Chicago area for 25 years, and have been in Lakeway for the past 20 years. They have two daughters and four grandchildren. Wherever they have been, since their first

house in the Ohio River weather system, they have had gardens, and Wayne notes that after gardening in the north and east, "moving to Texas is like moving to a different planet."

In their garden in Lakeway, Kathie and Wayne have adapted to the shallow, rocky, hill country soil. They have created several raised beds in their sloping back yard where they grow wildflowers, natives, and vegetables. Kathie likes plants that reseed, and often lets them grow where they sprout. Her favorite plants to grow are tomatoes and Earth-kind roses, and her main interest is gardening during the winter when she grows beets, carrots, cabbage, broccoli, lettuce, and spinach. As Wayne says about gardening in Central Texas, "The good news is: you can garden year round, and the bad news is: you garden year round." Digging into the rocky ground, Wayne built a water feature, a cascading series of six small ponds that curve into a seventh, larger pond.

Their biggest gardening challenges are "the soil of the hill country, and the heat." Wayne's garden tip is to use a drip irrigation system. Since the area behind their fence is forested, plenty of critters visit their garden: raccoons, possums, armadillo, deer, squirrels, rabbits and a fox who thinks he owns the place. They set traps for the raccoons and possums when these beasties become a problem, and "take them on vacation," releasing them in a distant location. Once Wayne and Kathie accidentally caught an armadillo, which for the longest time

Meet the Master Gardeners

Continued...

refused to leave the trap when they set it free. The fence keeps the deer out as long as the gate is closed, except for the occasional fawn that slips through the bars. The squirrels aren't a problem for the Kings, and Wayne and Kathie welcome the fox because he has solved their rabbit problem.

In addition to gardening at home, Wayne and Kathie participate in many and varied activities. As MG Firewise specialists, they are members of Lakeway's Firewise Committee, and offer consultations to people who are interested in knowing what they can do to protect their homes from wildfires. "For example," Kathie says, "Mountain laurel is very flammable, so if we see that someone has a big mountain laurel right in front of a picture window, we let them know that if the mountain laurel catches fire, it could easily break the picture window and the fire would spread into the house." Giving another example, Wayne speaks of a news report they had seen about wildfires in California where "a house that was surrounded by succulents was untouched, but the house next to it, that was surrounded by bushes, burned to the ground." At the time of this writing, May 2014, Both Wayne and Kathie are currently completing their volunteer hours as First Detector specialists, and are making a photo album of plant pests and diseases in the Demonstration Garden at the Texas AgriLife Extension Office.

Kathie attends book groups and volunteers at the church library. Wayne has created stained glass windows, does woodworking, and keeps the home computers running, in addition to volunteering with the Service League of Greater Lakeway, which loans medical equipment to people who need it, and helps with transportation, for example, to and from the hospital. As members of Friends of the Park, Wayne and Kathie maintain the butterfly garden at Lakeway City Park, though Wayne notes that recovering from hip surgery limits the help he can give with spreading mulch for the time being, a situation that is not easy for a person accustomed to being active. To illustrate his impatience, he describes his favorite cartoon about "two vultures sitting on a tree branch. One vulture says, 'Patience, patience.' The other vulture says, "Patience, h---. I'm gonna kill something."

Kathie and Wayne also enjoy traveling. They have been to every continent except Australia, and visited gardens on the east and west coasts of the U.S. Talking about the gardens of Alcatraz, they note that not only the prisoners, but also the officers and their families lived on the island and maintained gardens. After the prison was closed, the island was abandoned, but garden conservancy organizations in partnership with the National Park Service have restored and maintain the gardens. Wayne and Kathie also noted their particular appreciation for the gardens created by the du Ponts of the Brandywine Valley: Winterthur Garden in Delaware and Longwood Gardens in Pennsylvania. Wayne and Kathie have visited Longwood Gardens several times, close to where their daughter lives. They appreciate Longwood Gardens' year-round maintenance of flowering plants, and the fact that this institution is a center for horticultural research and exploration.

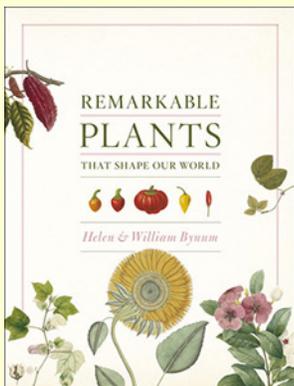
Master Gardeners since 2003, their favorite activity is doing plant clinics, which they used to organize. They enjoy sharing common interests with other Master Gardeners and listening to their gardening ideas.

Weeds and Reads: A Gardener's Book Guide

by Liath Appleton

There's a lot of reading material out there, and new books are being published faster than anyone could ever possibly keep up! Hopefully these lists will help myself and others find fun and insightful new books to enjoy between the weeding and the watering.

October 2014:



Remarkable Plants That Shape Our World - October 5, 2014

by Helen Bynum, William Bynum

Imagine a typical morning—munching on a bowl of cereal, sipping coffee, dressing for the day, riding to work. Every moment of this common routine draws on the power of plants, and the centuries of development that brought wheat, coffee beans, cotton, and rubber—among many others—into our daily lives. [\[more\]](#)

The Truth About Nature: A Family's Guide to 144 Common Myths about the Great Outdoors – October 7, 2014

by Stacy Tornio, Ken Keffer

Does moss grow only on the north side of a tree? Is the North Star really the brightest star? Will a mother bird abandon its baby if you put it back in its nest? Will toads really give you warts? The Truth about Nature answers all of these questions and more.

A useful compendium for parents and children to read together, The Truth About Nature sets the record straight on nature myths once and for all. [\[more\]](#)

Trees, Woods and Forests: A Social and Cultural History - October 15, 2014

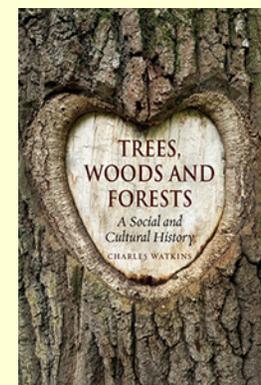
by Charles Watkins

Forests—and the trees within them—have always been a central resource for the development of technology, culture, and the expansion of humans as a species. Examining and challenging our historical and modern attitudes toward wooded environments, this engaging book explores how our understanding of forests has transformed in recent years and how it fits in our continuing anxiety about our impact on the natural world. [\[more\]](#)

The New Sylva: A Discourse of Forest and Orchard Trees for the Twenty-First Century - October 21, 2014

by Gabriel Hemery (Goodreads Author), Sarah Simblet

In 1664, the horticulturist and diarist John Evelyn wrote Sylva, the first comprehensive study of British trees. It was also the world's earliest forestry book, and the first book ever published by the Royal Society. ...The pages of The New Sylva are brought to life with truly breathtaking artwork from artist and co-author Sarah Simblet, who captures the delicacy, strength and beauty of the trees through the seasons in 200 exquisite drawings. [\[more\]](#)



A Gardener's Summer Vacation

by Cher Groody



Lakeside in Lucerne

I haven't yet learned to yodel, but I hear they still do that sort of thing in Switzerland. My annual treks to Zurich are designed to see grandson Oscar, however I do play tourist a few days during each visit.

It's quite normal in summer for the weather to be unpredictable; changing on a dime. The mountains surrounding the city are a remarkable catalyst for rapid atmospheric changes. The perfect days were not too hot and not too cold, with a slight breeze (heavenly). These were punctuated by days of drizzling rain and chilly wind (brrr). If and when you go to this neck of the planet, it's best to layer and bring an umbrella!

A day trip to Lucerne was lovely. We fed the swans lakeside, visited the **The Rosengart Collection** (private Picasso collection), and had the best slice of pizza I've ever eaten outside of Italy. A few days later (sunny day), I took in some of the gardens and parks of Zurich. Turns out my favorite is **Zurichorn park**, which sits beside Lake Zurich, and is where everyone takes lunch breaks on its broad lawns. Zurich is also the setting for the walled **Chinagarten**, a charming oasis that was given as a gift from Zurich's sister city, Kunming, for providing them with a design for a city water supply. Zurich was built around a large alpine lake, and you can get around easily by traveling on trains, buses, or the tram system. The last day, I set out on a ferry to the town of

Rapperswil (wet day) at the northern end of the lake. Boarding downtown, you can enjoy a leisurely coffee and pastry while watching the coastline go by. Rapperswil has a medieval town centre open only to foot traffic, with a rose garden and castle cemeteries, whose flower displays are so overwhelming as to make the headstones seem an afterthought.



The roses of Rapperswil

A Gardener's Summer Vacation

Continued...

As in any urban environment there is a lot of structure, but the Swiss manage to squeeze flowering plants into every conceivable space, under and around windows and signposts. The air smells fresh and clean; the food, wholesome and tasty. If you ever find yourself in Western Europe, it is worth a look.



Zurich's Chinagarten



Ferry to Rapperswil

Austin Area Events

Backyard Basics: Integrated Pest Management

Thursday, Oct 2, 2014
10am - 12pm

Travis County AgriLife Extension
1600 Smith Road
Austin, TX

Wizzie Brown, Integrated Pest Management Specialist for AgriLife Extension Service, will discuss natural pest control in the garden and landscape, as she teaches about pests and the damage they inflict at various times of the year. Learn to encourage the good guys and discourage the bad guys in your vegetable garden in this third course on Backyard Basics.

Part of the Texas AgriLife Extension Backyard Basics Series.
Register at <https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/TravisCounty> or by phone 979-845-2604

Highland Lakes Native Plant Garden Tour and Plant Sale

Saturday, Oct 11, 2014
9am - 12pm

2001 Broadway St
Marble Falls, TX

\$5.00 per person, Children Free
Buy wristband at The Falls on the Colorado Museum

4 homes and 3 public gardens on tour
For more information: www.yantislakesidegardens.com/npsot

Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center Fall Native Plant Sale

Saturday and Sunday, Oct 11-12, 2014
9am-5pm

4801 La Crosse Ave.
Austin, TX

Autumn is a great time to plant in Texas, because new plants have time to establish before the onset of spring. This year's Member Preview on October 10 will feature hard-to-find native plants, staff on hand to answer questions, and a presentation by esteemed Texas architect Ted Flato.

Details at <http://www.wildflower.org/plantsale/>

Food Safety for the Small Acreage Producer

Thursday, Oct 16, 2014
9am - 12pm

Travis County East Service Center
6011 Blue Bluff Road
Austin, TX

Are you interested in learning more about food safety on your small farm or growing operation? AgriLife Extension specialists in College Station will be joining us via web video to present this program.

Part of the Texas AgriLife Extension Small Acreage Horticultural Crops Series.

Register at <https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/TravisCounty> or by phone 979-845-2604

Austin Area Events

**The Austin Area Garden Center
50th Anniversary Celebration**
Saturday and Sunday, Oct 18-19, 2014
10am-5pm

2220 Barton Springs Rd
Austin, TX

Participating clubs include: Texas Bamboo Society, First Austin African Violet Society, Travis County Master Gardeners, Austin Herb Society, Austin Organic Gardeners, and Austin Daylily Society. Overflow parking will be available on Stratford Drive all day on Saturday and Sunday.

Details at <http://www.zilker garden.org>

Central Texas Irrigation/Turf Maintenance Workshop
Wednesday, Oct 22, 2014
9am - 3pm

Creedmoor Community Center
12511 Farm to Market Road 1625
Creedmoor, TX

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service-Travis Co will hold an Irrigation/Turf Maintenance Workshop on Oct 22, 2014. This conference is in response to our ongoing critical water issues. **The general public may attend, but the materials presented will be for turf and irrigation professionals** such as those working with municipalities, including parks departments; golf courses; and large and commercial landscape maintenance firms as well as contractors; retail nurseries and other users of urban water resources.

4 Irrigation CEUs

Register online: <https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/TravisCounty>
Register by phone: 979-845-2604

Violet Crown Garden Club Flower Show
Saturday and Sunday, Oct 18-19, 2014
1pm-5pm

2220 Barton Springs Rd
Austin, TX

Flower show is free with paid admission to
Zilker Botanical Garden
Details at <http://www.violetcrowngardenclub.org/>

The Hill Country Alliance 2014 Rainwater Revival
Saturday, Oct 25, 2014
10am - 4pm

Dripping Springs Ranch Park
1042 DS Ranch Rd
Dripping Springs, TX

The festive day will be filled with informative and entertaining presentations by professionals and users of rainwater, water conservation-related business vendor booths, rainwater system displays, and plenty of experts to provide guidance and services; as well as food booths, shopping, live music, plus much more!

Details at <http://rainwaterrevival.com/>

TRAVIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION

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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



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www.tcmastergardeners.org
<http://travis-tx.tamu.edu>
512-854-9600

"You ought to know that October is the first Spring month."

- Karel Capek