



## Aransas/San Patricio Master Gardeners

### The President's Corner



Ellen Reisinger

At the August 3rd general meeting we will distribute **The Member Interest Survey Form** for 2011. This form is a pivotal part in helping us organize the important events that begin every year in August! Starting in August there will be a flourish of activity around Green Acres. We are beginning the process to elect new officers for 2011. At the August general meeting, members attending that meeting will elect the Nominating Committee. This Committee consists of a chairperson and two additional members who are not currently serving on the Executive Committee. (The Executive Committee consists of the President, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Presidents, Secretary and Treasurer and immediate Past President). The Nominating Committee will then begin the task of providing a list of one willing candidate for each office at the September general meeting. Officers will be elected at the October general meeting (additional nominations will be accepted from the floor as well). Once the officers are elected, they begin preparing to assume their duties on January 1, 2011. Starting in October, work begins on the budget for the coming year. The incoming and outgoing officers and committee chairs will meet jointly to develop the budget for 2011. This is where **The Member Interest Survey Form** plays such a vital role. This form greatly aids the President and new officers in soliciting standing committee heads and members. As you know we need everyone's help to keep our wonderful organization running smoothly and efficiently. When we pass out **The Member Interest Survey Form** at the August general meeting, please take the time to fill it out and turn it in as soon as possible. Think about where you would like to serve and what you can do to make 2011 a great year! Thank you, Ellen

Educational programs of Texas AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, or national origin. Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating.

August, 2010

**GA Garden Days**  
August 6th & 20th  
8:00 - 11:00 am

**Master Gardener Meeting**  
Tuesday, August 3rd,  
9 am  
Texas AgriLife  
Extension Office  
611 E. Mimosa

**August Brown Bag**  
**Tuesday, Aug. 17**  
12:00-1:00 pm  
**Top 10 Favorite Plants of Hummers and Butterflies**  
By Ernie Edmundson,  
Master Gardener  
Aransas County  
Library, 701 E.  
Mimosa, Rockport

### Happy Birthday !

Carole Howard, 2<sup>nd</sup>  
Judy Goodner, 4<sup>th</sup>  
Ellen Reisinger, 9<sup>th</sup>  
Sarah Shugart, 10<sup>th</sup>  
Frankie Fox, 11<sup>th</sup>  
Chris Kelly, 16<sup>th</sup>  
Teresa Cipra, 21<sup>st</sup>  
Elayne Arne, 23<sup>rd</sup>

#### 2010 Officers

**President: Ellen Reisinger**  
**1st VP: Gay Hejtmancik**  
**2nd VP: Loretta Brandt**  
**Secretary: Francis Frizzell**  
**Treasurer: Beth Wilson**  
\*\*\*\*\*

**Extension Agent:**  
**Ginger Easton Smith**  
**Extension Office Manager:**  
**Ernie Edmundson**  
**Secretary:**  
**Thea Edmundson**  
\*\*\*\*\*

**Website:**  
[www.aspmastergardeners.org](http://www.aspmastergardeners.org)

### Seeking Serious Plant Lovers

Texas Master Gardeners are a team of volunteer horticulture educators who are under the auspices of:



Green Acres is our award winning demonstration garden located at 611 E. Mimosa, Rockport, Texas. The gardens showcase plants and landscape schemes suitable for the Coastal Bend. For help with plant problems, or for class information, please call (361) 790-0103, or email [aransas-tx@tamu.edu](mailto:aransas-tx@tamu.edu)

#### Editors

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**Our Mission:** *Improving the lives of people, businesses, and communities across Texas and beyond through high-quality, relevant education.*

## From Our Writers

### GREAT PLANTS FOR ATTRACTING HUMMINGBIRDS

By Ernie Edmundson, Master Gardener

Thousands of Ruby-throated hummingbirds are migrating through our area beginning this month on their way to their wintering grounds in Mexico and Central America. Everyone loves to watch their antics as they vie for their favorite food to sustain their rapidly beating hearts and wings. They zip and zoom around fighting for the best spot at the hummingbird nectar feeders. During the major migration, which runs from mid-August to mid-October, we can all invite the feisty little birds into our yards just by hanging out a feeder; generally the more feeders, the more birds will come to our back yards. But there are a couple of other important things that will keep them coming back; providing trees for resting, and roosting at night, and keeping the nectar feeders clean and filled with fresh nectar every two or three days. So if you are doing that why does the neighbor still have more hummingbirds in their yard? It could be that they have the right plants to provide the preferred nectar. Given a choice, the hummingbirds will pick a flower any day over a nectar feeder. That is why in high rainfall years, less birds come to feeders. They are checking out all the native flowers that are blooming all over the area. The tiny wonders glean not only nectar but also insects, a major portion of their diet, from local native plants. In exchange for the nectar and insects, hummers return the favor by pollinating the flowers that they visit.

You can attract hummingbirds to your landscape, not just during the fall migration, but all through the year by planting their favorite nectar producers. There are many native and adapted plants to choose from that have the trumpet-shaped nectar-filled flowers in colors of red, orange, pink, yellow, blue and purple. Highlighted here are some of the best hummingbird plants for local gardens.

Number one on the list is Turks Cap, *Malvaviscus drummondii*, a native hibiscus-family shrub that is a



primary food source for migrating hummingbirds. Scarlet blooms summer through fall look like miniature turbans, and are filled with nectar. This small semi-evergreen shrub two to four feet tall grows well in dry to moist sandy or clay soils and is often found growing tucked under the shade of live oaks or on sunny salt flats close to the bays.

Many salvias are winners in a hummingbird's eyes with their rich nectar and easy care, also appealing to any gardener. The most readily available best choices for our area start with our natives Scarlet Sage and Mealy Blue Sage. Scarlet Sage, *Salvia coccinea*, is also known as Tropical Sage. Scarlet sage is a perennial salvia that grows up to three feet tall in dry shade to full sun. Its scarlet red flower spikes attract hummers spring through fall. A bed of scarlet sage can be maintained as a ground cover by trimming periodically. A garden cannot have too much scarlet sage to feed the hummers and it obliges by reseeding readily.

Mealy Blue Sage, *Salvia farinacea*, is an evergreen perennial that can reach three feet tall bearing blue flower clusters spring through fall. Mealy Blue Sage thrives in low water spots in sun or part sun. A recent selection found growing in a Central Texas cemetery called 'Henry Duelberg' Mealy Blue Sage is much more drought tolerant. Mealy Blue Sage should be cut back periodically to allow new growth from the bottom.



The very popular 'Indigo Spires' Salvia, an evergreen perennial hybrid of Mealy Blue Sage and another native *S.*

*longispicata*, sports long purple flower spikes spring through fall, spreading to six feet wide requiring medium water and partial sun.

A true south Texas trooper, Cenizo is a sun-loving dry garden plant surviving without rain for months on end and then blooming profusely with lavender or white flowers following a rain. Cenizo, *Leucophyllum frutescens*, is a native evergreen, or ever-grey, shrub reaching eight feet tall. Several selections of the species offer smaller overall size such as 'Silverado', or greener leaves 'Green Cloud', and profuse blooming.

Crossvine, *Bignonia capreolata*, a native evergreen vine, sports large orange and gold trumpet shaped flowers mostly in springtime. Growing in low to medium moisture and rich soil areas, it has a unaggressive behavior, but will climb into trees for its support.



Crossvine is well adapted to grow in sunny or shady areas.



## From Our Writers Continued

Coral Bean, *Erythrina herbacea*, is a native prickly deciduous shrub that grows throughout the area in woods or in open areas in dry to moist sand or clay soils. If not cut back in the very early spring, it can reach up through the trees to 10 feet tall. Gardeners shouldn't hesitate to prune it to the ground in very early spring. Clusters of red trumpet shaped flowers feed hungry spring-migrating hummingbirds. Twisted seedpods follow flowering with attractive pods of coral-red poisonous seeds.



An African native, Cape Honeysuckle, *Tecomaria capensis*, is well adapted to south Texas with orange-red blooms spring to winter. This hummingbird favorite can easily reach ten feet tall in one season with very low water in full sun.

Bottlebrush, *Callistemon rigidus*, is an import from Australia that has adapted well to our area. This evergreen tree reaching twelve feet tall blooms early spring through summer with red bottlebrush shaped flowers. In addition to the hummers, spring migrating orioles will flock to the bright red flowers making this tropical plant seem to come to alive. Bottlebrush likes low water and full sun, but can tolerate occasional flooding.

Red clusters of small trumpet-shaped flowers on Firebush, *Hamelia patens*, never fail to draw in the hummers. This tropical root-hardy perennial in our area, native just across the border in northern Mexico, can reach twelve feet in height in one season and thrives with low water in sunny or partial sun areas of the garden. During cold winters, it will freeze to the ground, but come spring, after cutting back the dead wood, it will re-sprout from the ground to grow back stronger than ever.

Esperanza, *Tecoma stans*, a south Texas native perennial sun-loving shrub grows to ten feet tall with clusters of yellow trumpet shaped flowers spring through fall. Its low water requirement makes it a prime candidate for our climate. The 'Gold Star' selection of Esperanza is the profusely blooming kind most often found in nurseries.



To attract wintering hummingbirds, gardens are not complete without Shrimp Plant, *Justicia brandegeana*. This Mexican native root-hardy perennial has red shrimp shaped flowers that bloom spring through winter on three foot tall plants in part sun or sunny sites.



Texas native Flame Acanthus, *Anisacanthus quadrifidus var. wrightii*, comes into bloom in June and keeps on blooming through the hummingbird migration into fall with small bright red trumpet-shaped flowers. This small deciduous shrub thrives with low water in sunny or part sunny sites and seeds readily following blooming.

Coral Honeysuckle, *Lonicera sempervirens*, is an evergreen mannerly vine native to southeast Texas and can climb to twenty feet in sunny locations, though it will grow in partial sun. Coral honeysuckle bears trumpet coral flower clusters spring through fall inviting hummingbirds in, followed by fruit relished by other birds.

So start planting any of these hummingbird favorites to guarantee lots of visits to your garden when these dynamo birds come around.

## From Our Extension Agent

A few questions about volunteer hours have come up recently, so as a reminder, planting or garden maintenance can be counted only for the three following projects: Green Acres Demonstration Garden, Fulton Mansion garden and Welder Wildlife Refuge (Sinton). These are projects sponsored by the Aransas/San Patricio Master Gardeners, and this is not a change.



The changes that have been made are to simplify the reporting of hours; there are just two categories now for anyone who is recertifying: Master Gardener (MG) and Continuing Education (CE). Only Interns need to keep track of Green Acres (GA) hours. For loads of information on certification requirements and what types of activities qualify for MG and CE hours, please see the second page of the 2010 Volunteer Log (the form that hours are recorded on.) It is online at <http://txmg.org/aransas/files/2010/04/VolHrsForm-2010.pdf>

If you'd like a refresher on how to report your hours, come to the MG class on Tuesday, August 10 when D.J. Chilcoat will be explaining it to the new class. Thank you very much for all the time you volunteer.

# Around the State

## SPECIALIST TRAINING

### Citriculture

September 2-3

San Antonio

Hosted by Bexar Co. Master Gardeners

The MG Specialist-Citriculture training is a comprehensive educational program aimed at preparing Master Gardeners to grow citrus in the home orchard successfully and manage the challenging complex of associated insects and diseases, including Citrus Greening. The two-day course will cover varieties, nutrition, frost protection, propagation, as well as identification and management of insects and diseases of citrus.

Participants for each session must be preregistered by their County MG Coordinator/Agent and approved by the MG Specialist Training Coordinator (Monte Nesbitt, Extension Program Specialist). Fee for the course is being specially priced at \$85/person, because of state grant awards for Citrus Greening prevention. Registration fee includes educational materials and three meals. Contact the Aransas County Extension Office for the registration information. ***The date and location of the third session to be announced.***

## SPECIALIST TRAINING

### **Irrigation Efficiency Training**

October 27, 28, 29

Dallas County Extension

Efficiency training will cover hands-on practices for determining irrigation efficiency, setting controllers, soak and cycle method, minor irrigation repairs, system trouble shooting, catch-can test, converting spray head irrigation to new water conserving heads, converting spray irrigation to drip irrigation and other water conservation practices.

Only 15 participant spots are available for this training. Registration is first come/first served basis at \$200 per person. For more information log on to the Texas Master Gardener website Specialist Training. <http://texasmastergardeners.com/>

## SPECIALIST TRAINING

### **Tree Steward- Preventing and Responding to Insects, Diseases and Abiotic Disorders of**

**Landscape Trees**

September 27-29

Palestine

The 15 hours of training will cover the biology, health, assessment, selection and care of trees. It takes place in Palestine (the one in Texas!). The \$150 fee includes 2 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 1 dinner & social, snacks and drinks). Registration and payment is due by Sept. 13. Contact the Extension Office for more information and registration forms.

### **Landscape Design Study Course: Number I, Series XXII**

September 13-14

College Station

Co-sponsored by Texas Garden Clubs, Inc. (Ms. Suzanne Milstead, Chairperson) and Texas AgriLife Extension Service, Texas A&M University, this is the first course in a series of four. Participants may take the four courses in any sequence. The courses will take place at the Christ United Methodist Church, 4201 State Hwy 6, College Station, TX 77845.

The courses are an opportunity for more in-depth training in landscape design than is normally included in the Master Gardener curriculum. Each course is typically approved by local Master Gardener chapters to qualify for 12 hours of continuing education toward maintaining certification for Master Gardeners.

The tentative schedule, registration form and thumbnail description of each of the courses included in this session may be found at <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu> – Southern Garden - landscape design courses.

Cost of the course is \$100; cost of the textbook (good for 4 sessions) \$40. For more information, contact Tammy Landry, [tlandry@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:tlandry@ag.tamu.edu), 979-845-7342.

# August 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3 9 am MG monthly meeting Deadline– MG Class registration	4	5	6 8-11am Green Acres Garden Day 10:30am Landscape Committee	7
8	9	10 1:30-5 pm MG Class– Timekeeping	11	12	13	14
15	16	17 10 am BOD Mtg. 12-1pm Brown Bag 1:30-5 pm MG Class– Botany	18 10am Tree Team Visits	19	20 8-11am Green Acres Garden Day	21
22	23	24 1:30-5 pm MG Class– Habitat Gardening	25	26	27	28
29	30	31 MG Hours Due 1:30-5 pm MG Class– Earth Kind Gardening				