



# Master Gardener Gazette

## Nueces County, Tx



The mission of the association shall be to organize and promote volunteer efforts that support AgriLife Extension programs advancing sound horticultural practices in Nueces County (<http://NUECES.AGRILIFE.ORG>)

The 2016 Nueces Master Gardener Annual Plant Sale and Auction was GREAT! There were over 400 plants that were available for the NMG's to choose from. And did they choose; in total, a whopping \$867 was collected.



Our very own Nueces CEA Jason Ott did his usual, more than fantastic, job as the plant auctioneer. Well done indeed.



This year, to accommodate the large number of plants that were submitted, there was a table with plants that were sold at fixed prices



The amount and wide variety of plants that the Nueces Master Gardeners contributed to the auction was truly impressive and it covered the full botanical spectrum.



The bidding continued on at a hectic pace.



The money takers worked at a frantic rate.



The lucky bidders watched as their purchases were made and their booty piled up and up.



### Issue 11 – Nov. 2016

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Kevin O. Gibbs, CEA - Horticulture  
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Nueces County

Agents  
Notes

TEXAS A&M  
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**Texas**  
**Master Gardener**<sup>SM</sup>  
**Presidents Corner**

Debra Martin—President 2016

## SPEAKING OF GERMAN BEARDED IRISES

The town I grew up in was only 1,300 people, but it was full of some of the kindest folks ever. One day when I was in elementary school, my mom said that we were going over to the Burleson's house. Tiny and Flossie were a retired couple, I don't remember a whole lot about them, but I remember that they were a very nice couple. Tiny was a very large guy, hence his nickname and Flossie was a little bitty thing. Seems they had a million irises and they needed to be divided. I had never heard of irises before and certainly didn't have any idea that they were German bearded irises.

So off to their house we went, shovels in hand. They weren't lying, they had irises on every side of their house. I remember Flossie, telling us about the different colors. "Dig here, if you want blue", she said. "The bronze ones are over here and the yellow ones are right here, I think". We gathered all kinds of irises and went home to plant them. They just looked like a green sword leafed plant to a young kid. Secretly, I thought, "Why would anybody want these?", but, I planted them, wherever my mom wanted and then didn't give them another second's thought.

Spring in West Texas, arrives with 60 mph winds. Sometimes, it rains, sometimes it snows. You never know what you're gonna get. To my surprise, the green leafy sword plants began to do something. You can imagine my astonishment, when the first iris began to unfurl its' glorious blossom. Soon, the beds were full of blooms; yellows, blues, bronzes and even a few surprises. Flossie had done a good job with the colors. At that moment, I understood very easily, why people planted the German bearded iris; they are simply glorious and incredibly tough to boot; now I think, "Why wouldn't people plant them"? Sometimes, when I go home in the spring to visit my mom, the irises are blooming in her beds and I think about that sweet couple from Lorenzo, Texas, who introduced me to the German bearded iris.

Thanks Tiny and Flossie!

Howdy,

Its Fall in South Texas, that mean mums for me. I love the look, choice of colors and that they are fairly maintenance free. But when I moved to Texas I learned that it meant huge fake mums for homecoming. The first time my son ask me to get a corsage for his for his homecoming date I was surprised to learn a lovely wrist corsage would not work. This has become just another reason to love the Texas culture. Only in Texas, we can make it bigger and better. Yes Sir.....

**History of Mums** - Fall in Texas means football, and for any high school or college team, football season includes homecoming. Homecoming means a celebration, and that means a gigantic homecoming mum featuring a chrysanthemum. Most Texans received their introduction to the chrysanthemum through homecoming when they buy their girlfriend or mother a homecoming mum. While the origins of a "homecoming" celebration go back just over a century in Missouri, the first chrysanthemums were grown about three and a half millennia ago in the Far East.

**The origin of the chrysanthemum** - The first recorded information about chrysanthemums can be traced to China about 3,500 years ago. Chinese scribes in China first wrote that chrysanthemums were first used as flowering herbs – their roots were boiled and used as a headache remedy. The sprouts and petals were used in salads by ancient Chinese culinarians. Ancient Chinese people called the flower the "chu" named after the city of Chu-Hsien (chrysanthemum city).

The Japanese were introduced to the chrysanthemum about 2,800 years ago. The crest and seal of the emperor and many prominent Japanese families of nobility included a Kikumon, meaning chrysanthemum (kiku) and crest (mon). To this day, the Japanese remain enamored with the mum – they have a mum festival known as the Festival of Happiness.

In 1753, Swedish botanist Karl Linnaeus gave the flower the name of chrysanthemum after the Greek words "chrysos" (gold) and "antheon" (flower). Within about 20 years, the chrysanthemum found its way to the colonies which later became the United States, where its popularity grew over the decades until it became the "Queen of the Fall Flowers."

**Evolution of the mum** - The NCAA recognizes the University of Missouri as the official place of birth of homecoming. In 1911, Mizzou athletic director Chester Brewer encouraged alumni to attend the game, and he gave them incentive to attend by having a huge celebration around the game that included parades and rallies.

*(Continued on Page 8)*





Thur. Nov 3 - Orchidology Class, 7pm  
Sat, Nov 5 - Buck Day - Entrance Fee Only \$1 For Everyone  
Sat, Nov 12 - Water Gardens in Winter seminar, 10am  
Sat, Nov 19 - Getting Ready for Winter seminar, 10am  
Sat, Nov 19 - Members 20% discount on all non-sale merchandise, books and available plants.

[Botanical Gardens 2016 Full Calendar of Events \*\*CLICK THIS\*\*](#)

## **MASTER GARDENERS MEETINGS**

**Tuesday, Nov 15 at Garden Senior Center**

10:00am - Board of Directors Meeting  
 11:30am - Meet and Greet Over Lunch  
 12:00pm - Carrie Harmon with Castro's Flower Shop  
 12:30pm – General Meeting

Many thanks go to the lunch volunteers for this meeting; Deb Holliday, Ola Mae Batteau, Sandra Williams, Norma Hernandez and Beth Spirko,

*To volunteer for future lunches, contact Rita Phillips 991-0750 or email [rnphillipsctcx@grandecom.net](mailto:rnphillipsctcx@grandecom.net)*

[5325 Greely Dr, Corpus Christi, TX 78412 - \*\*CLICK FOR MAP\*\*](#)

Nueces Master Gardeners celebrating a birthday this month include the following. The next time you see them be sure that you wish them a very

### **HAPPY BIRTHDAY!**

<b>11-09</b>	<b>Ray Estrada</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>11-17</b>	<b>Jessica Latimer</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>11-19</b>	<b>Terri Loe</b>	<b>T, 22</b>
<b>11-20</b>	<b>Paula Silva</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>11-23</b>	<b>John McElroy</b>	<b>14</b>

## **NMG TRAINING SCHEDULE - Classes 12:30 - 4:30pm**

Wed. Nov. 2 - #14, Landscape Design/Computer Applications, Del Mar Economic Development Center, 3209 S. Staples, Rm 124, 767-5217 (limited to the first 10)  
 Wed. Nov. 9 - #15, Turf grass & IPM, Robstown  
 Wed. Nov. 16 - #16, Post-test/Wrap up, Robstown

Note - These three classes are the final classes of the 2016 session for Nueces Master Gardener Trainees.

## **ONGOING PROJECTS**

**BOTANICAL GARDENS**, Wednesdays, 7:30 a.m.  
**COURTYARD AT THE GARDEN SENIOR CENTER**, 1st Monday, 9:15 a.m. Contact: Betty Whitt 991-5375  
**FOOD BANK PROJECT** "Outgrow Hunger" Tuesdays 7:30a.m. (Except MG meeting day then Wednesday) Contact: Mary Lambert 813-7596 or e-mail her at [cwlmel@yahoo.com](mailto:cwlmel@yahoo.com)  
**NATURE CONSERVANCY** Mondays, 4:00pm & Blucher Park 5:00 pm until sundown (Behind the Main Library). Contact: Karen Smith 877-9723  
**RAY HIGH SCHOOL GREENHOUSE** Tuesday MG Workday 9:00-11:00  
**COMMITTEE/PROJECT CONTACTS - [CLICK THIS](#)**

## **OTHER HAPPENINGS THIS MONTH**

Wed. Nov 3 - Coastal Bend Cacti & Succulent Society meeting, 7pm, Garden Senior Center, 687-6474  
Fri. Nov 4 - Master Wellness Volunteer Program first meeting—See page 5  
Tue. Nov. 8 - Garden Council, 10am, GC, 537-8231  
Wed. Nov 15 - Aransas/San Patricio Master Gardener Association, 10am, 892 Airport Rd., Rockport, 361-790-0103  
Thur. Nov 24 - Bromeliad Society meeting, 7pm, Garden Senior Center, 658-8650  
Thur. Oct 27 - Bonsai Society meeting, 7pm, Garden Senior Center, 992-0009  
Thur. Oct 26 - Plumeria Society meeting, 6:30pm, Garden Senior Center, 813-9616

## **FROM BETTY ROGERS** **TIPS ON REPORTING YOUR HOURS**

You may earn up to three hours annually with online training. Each course counts as one (1) hour. Please email me after you have completed each course giving me the name of that course. Also, be sure to record those hours on your online reporting form.

For online CE training go to:  
<http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/earthkind/training/>



**OCT 25TH 2016. NMG BUS TRIP TO THE LADYBIRD JOHNSON WILDFLOWER CENTER**

Nueces Master Gardeners Beth Spirko and Máire McPartland Kelly posted a bunch of pictures on the Nueces Master Gardener Facebook Bulletin Board ([CLICK THIS](#)). Also, our travel companion Winnie Shrum, Master Naturalist sent her online photo album ([CLICK THIS https://goo.gl/photos/Tr2P2TsvBoJARJh97](https://goo.gl/photos/Tr2P2TsvBoJARJh97)) to share with all of you. Shown below are some random, and beautiful, pictures from all contributions.







## Wellness Volunteers Make A Healthy Difference



### Should YOU volunteer?

All that is needed is an interest in living healthfully and helping others do the same.

The Master Wellness Volunteer Program is an engaging series of classes that provides volunteers with 40 hours of training in health and nutrition education. In return, the volunteers agree to give back 40 hours of service to the community.

A certification exam on the final day of training assures that each proud volunteer has the tools and knowledge needed to represent the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. The training focuses on nutrition and dietary guidelines, food safety and food demonstrations, healthy lifestyle choices, and children's health.

#### Program Training Begins:

- November 4, 2016 Face to Face
- November 11, 2016 Online
- November 18, 2016 Online
- November 25, 2016 Online
- December 2, 2016 Face to Face

#### For more information contact:

Norma Muñoz -County Extension Agent—Family & Consumer Sciences Nueces County  
 Norma.Munoz@ag.tamu.edu 361-767-5217

Lynn Mutz or Tara Castillo - Health Agent Nueces County  
 Lynn.Mutz@ag.tamu.edu Tara.castillo@ag.tamu.edu  
 361-767-5217

To register [CLICK THIS](https://AgriLiferegister.tamu.edu/productListingDetails/2131) or go to -  
<https://AgriLiferegister.tamu.edu/productListingDetails/2131>

## Wedding Celebration



I cannot begin to express how happy I am to inform you that on October 8, Nueces Master Gardener Michelle Scott married Mike Garrett on the beach at Port Aransas.



## Earth-Kind Living Expo

### Offered at two locations

ABOUT THE CONFERENCE: This conference will introduce consumers, producers, and volunteers to EarthKind Living, a balanced system using university research proven techniques for quality living, environmental stewardship, and overall wellbeing.

Experts will share information on agricultural production, land stewardship, health and wellness, and EarthKind friendly homes.

November 18, 2016  
 First Baptist Church, 116 Oak Ave  
 SULPHUR SPRINGS, TEXAS OR

December 2, 2016  
 Ben E. Keith 2019 West Oak  
 PALESTINE, TEXAS

Download a detailed agenda for the Earth-Kind Living Expo by Clicking on the following links:

- [Earth-Kind Living November 18, Sulphur Springs, Texas](#)
- [Earth-Kind Living Agenda December 2, Palestine, Texas](#)


[FOR MORE INFORMATION - CLICK THIS](#)

[TO REGISTER FOR EITHER EXPO - CLICK THIS](#)

Nueces Master Gardener Rosemary Plank received honorable mention, and special thanks, from the Botanical Gardens in their Quarterly Newsletter, for her dedicated and diligent work in their Hummingbird Garden. Extract shown.



## Nueces Master Gardener Rosemary Plank spruces up Hummer Garden

Our hummers are happy, thanks to Master Gardener and Master Naturalist in training, Rosemary Plank. She's spent countless hours weeding, pruning, freshening and rejuvenating the Hummingbird Garden, funded by the Corpus Christi Garden Council and dedicated at the entrance to the Mary Hope Brennecke Nature Trail in 2003. The quaint, intimate garden, with floral-covered archways and weathered picket fence, makes a picturesque setting for small weddings; and has a view of the stunning Kent Ullberg bronze "White-Tailed Deer." 

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## Using Treated Lumber in the Garden

*University of Illinois Extension—Posted by Candice Miller*

A frequent question that I get from gardeners is about the safety of using treated lumber in the garden, especially for raised beds. The good news is that there is plenty of research that has already been done on this exact subject and the new treated lumbers have shown to be safe for garden use. Check out a blog post about the safety of the wood in pallets too.

The advantage of treated lumber of course is the fact that it has excellent decay resistance, so it is often used in situations when wood needs to be in contact with soil. However, many gardeners are still concerned that the chemicals used to preserve the lumber could harm garden plants and the people who eat them.

A [publication](#) from Penn State University Extension explains exactly what treated lumber is, but essentially it consists of taking preservative chemicals either purchased by the consumer and applied themselves, or by using chemicals intended only for use in commercially pressure-treated lumber.

Chemical preservatives can be divided into two major groups: organic (or oil borne) and inorganic (or waterborne). Organic preservatives include pentachlorophenol, creosote (commonly used on railroad ties), and coal tars, while inorganic preservatives include chromated copper arsenate (CCA), ammoniacal copper arsenate (ACA), and acid copper chromate (ACC). The color of the wood is usually the best indicator of the preservative used. CCA-treated lumber is usually green in color, unless dyed to look brown.

### CCA-Treated Lumber



The toxicity concerns regarding pressure treated wood have been primarily focused on the toxic effects of arsenic in CCA-treated lumber. Studies have shown that, although most of the elements used in CCA are fixed in the wood, some amount of arsenic, chromium, and copper can be dislodged from the lumber as a result of exposure to rain, deck washes, containing brighteners, and irrigation water ([Source](#)).

Good news is that On February 12, 2002, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced a voluntary decision by the wood preserving industry to phase out the use of wood preservatives that contain arsenic for any wood products destined for consumer use. That means that CCA treated-treated wood is no longer available to the public and no longer an issue for gardeners unless using older wood purchased before 2003.

If you have an existing CCA-treated structure in your garden or landscape, the EPA does not require or recommend replacing existing CCA-treated structures at this time. Although the EPA does say that any reduction in arsenic exposure is desirable, it has not concluded that there is unreasonable risk associated with CCA-treated products. Those concerned about existing structures in their yards or gardens can either seal the treated wood every two years with an oil-based stain, or insert plastic liners into the containers to eliminate contact with soil. ([Source](#))

*Continued on next page*



# Using Treated Lumber in the Garden

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## Other Wood Products

So what other wood products are available to use in the garden? The EPA has approved alkaline copper quaternary (ACQ) for use in garden structures. This product is higher in copper than CCA, but is free of arsenic. How do you know what the wood has been treated with? If you are purchasing lumber there should be a tag stapled to it that tells you what type of chemical has been used to pressure treat it.



Another lumber choice for gardening applications today is naturally rot-resistant wood such as redwood or cedar. These are always a good choice for gardens where food plants (vegetable, fruits) are grown.

## Reducing Your Risk

Still worried about exposure to CCA-treated or other chemically treated wood? Here are a few tips to reduce your risk ([Source](#)):

1. Use alternative materials. Any possible risks from exposure of plants or humans to CCA metals can be eliminated by not using CCA-treated wood in vegetable garden applications. Alternative materials include: If you choose to use CCA-treated wood for gardening purposes, do not allow sawdust or wood scraps to fall onto garden beds and do not put CCA sawdust in your compost pile.
  - Naturally decay-resistant wood such as eastern or western red cedar, northern white cedar, Osage orange, white oak, locust, or redwood (none of these will last as long as CCA-treated wood, however).
  - Plastic lumber, concrete blocks, brick, or stone; wire mesh for compost bins.
  - Wood treated with ACQ (alkaline copper quaternary ammonium). This is an alternative wood-treatment chemical that contains no arsenic, chromium, or any other chemical considered toxic by the EPA. However, ACQ contains more copper than CCA, and some copper will leach from ACQ-treated lumber as it does from CCA-treated lumber.
2. If you choose to use CCA-treated wood for gardening purposes, do not allow sawdust or wood scraps to fall onto garden beds and do not put CCA sawdust in your compost pile.
3. Cover CCA-treated wood used for raised garden beds or borders with heavy plastic to prevent contact with garden soil.
4. Manage your garden soil to reduce plant availability As, Cr, and Cu. Plant vegetables, especially root crops, at least 12 inches from CCA-treated wood. Concentrations of CCA metals will be highest in soil immediately adjacent to the wood. If plants are some distance from the CCA-treated wood, most of the root systems will be in soil with normal As, Cr, or Cu levels.
  - Maintain soil pH in the near-neutral range (pH 6-7). Solubility of Cr and Cu is greatly reduced in neutral soils.
  - Maintain adequate phosphorus fertility levels. Plant uptake of As is reduced by the presence of phosphorus.
  - Maintain high soil organic matter levels by adding compost or manure. Organic matter strongly binds As, Cr, and Cu and thus reduces their availability to plants.
5. Plant vegetables, especially root crops, at least 12 inches from CCA-treated wood. Concentrations of CCA metals will be highest in soil immediately adjacent to the wood. If plants are some distance from the CCA-treated wood, most of the root systems will be in soil with normal As, Cr, or Cu levels.
6. Thoroughly wash all soil from vegetables grown in close proximity to CCA-treated wood. In general, soil will have much larger concentrations of CCA metals than will plant tissues. Thus, human intake of CCA metals can be reduced by removing all soil from vegetables immediately after harvest.
7. Peel root crops grown in close proximity to CCA-treated wood. Plant tissue concentrations of CCA metals will be highest in roots, especially at the root surface. Thus, peeling root crops such as carrots, potatoes, and turnips will remove much of any As, Cr, or Cu that the plant may have taken up.



## AG AWARENESS DAY

On October 25 - 27, over 1,235 students from schools throughout Nueces County had the opportunity to learn how important the American farmer is in their lives during Ag Awareness Day. The three-day event, held at the Richard M. Borchard Regional Fairgrounds in Robstown, teaches agricultural importance to children by explaining where products come from and how they're used every day. The Nueces Master Gardeners presented "Good Bugs, Bad Bugs" and AgriLife Extension personnel actively participated throughout the entire event.



### *Presidents Corner - Continued from Page 2*

At some point not too long after this first homecoming celebration in Missouri, the tradition of a boy giving a chrysanthemum to his homecoming date as a corsage was born in Texas. For decades, mums were simple, comprised of just a small flower with perhaps a few ribbons. In the 1970s, homecoming mums became more elaborate and have continued to grow to the mammoth size they are today. Now they include a huge flower (albeit a silk flower has replaced the real chrysanthemum as the centerpiece), tons of large ribbons, charms, bows, bells, cowbells, stuffed animals, perhaps the high school mascot, and even LED lights in some cases! Even guys have their own version of the mum, called the garter – an elastic band worn around the upper arm that has the same features as the mum only on a much smaller scale.

Not just in Texas anymore

For the longest time, homecoming mums were a Texas-only tradition, but in the last few years it has expanded into neighboring states such as Oklahoma and Louisiana. A huge mum can be a source of pride for a girl in both her school and her homecoming date. Enjoy the fall,

Kevin O. Gibbs, CEA-Horticulture—Editor: John M. Slusarz

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**Individuals with disabilities** who require auxiliary aid, service, or accommodation in order to participate in any extension event are encouraged to contact their County Extension Office at 361-767-5217 at least one week in advance of the program in order for proper arrangements to be made.

Contact for general information and name, address or phone number change please contact the office at:  
 Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service  
 ATTN: Horticulture Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service  
 710 E. Main, Suite 1, Attn: Horticulture