



Gardening Volunteers of South Texas

July 12, 2010

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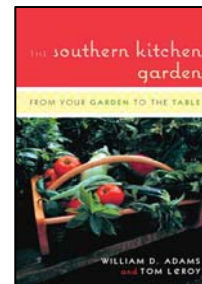
www.GardeningVolunteers.org



"The Southern Kitchen Garden" Book Signing at July 19 Essentials Class

Our main speaker at the **Monday, July 19** class will be **William D. (Bill) Adams**. His topic will be how to create a vegetable and herb kitchen garden. He is the author of *The Southern Kitchen Garden* (and many others). Bill is a great speaker (and photographer!). He retired as the Harris County Horticulture Agent in 2001, after 30 years, and now lives and gardens near Brenham. His next book is growing Tomatoes in Texas, due to

be published by Texas A&M late this fall or early next spring. (Bill says he has 87 different tomato varieties currently growing in his garden.) He has served as Southern Regional Director for the Garden Writers Association.



His other most recent books include *Lone Star Gardener's Book of Lists*, and *Common Sense Vegetable Gardening*. Earlier books included *Abandoned: A Nostalgic Book of Rural America*, *Southern Flower Gardening*, and *Shrubs and Vines for Southern Gardens*.

He will have *The Southern Kitchen Garden* available to purchase and sign (\$19.95). Cash and checks only; no mechanism to accept credit cards.



Save the Date! Saturday, July 31, 6-9pm GVST's 8th Anniversary Celebration

Guest Speaker: Malcolm Beck, Founder of Garden-Ville

This year's celebration is an evening barbeque hosted by **Patti and David Eastman** who live on Smoke Rise Canyon in Bulverde (BBQ by David). Patti has been bringing a dozen fresh eggs laid by her chickens for door prizes at Essentials classes. On their 3-acre farm/garden they raise vegetables, chickens and peacocks. *Thanks to David for sending us this picture of one of their proud peacocks!*

More details and directions coming soon!



Watermelons and Tomatoes

The 2010 watermelon and tomato harvest are now history. On Monday July 5, the Research and Development volunteers harvested the 41 varieties that had been planted earlier in Uvalde, and did taste trials the next day. Then, last Thursday, new and old tomato varieties were harvested at Verstuyf Farms in south Bexar County. The "old varieties" included five that are endangered of becoming "lost" because of seed shortages.

They included the incredibly popular Merced, along with Surefire, Amelia, Heat Wave and Sun Master. Next comes

the seed grinding to begin grinding (extracting) the seeds, which is scheduled to happen this Thursday. The seeds will eventually be packaged and distributed to other commercial growers.

Greenhouse operations have for the most part shut down for the next few weeks until volunteers begin readying plants for fall sale events.

The R&D team work with **Dr. Jerry Parsons** and **Dr. Larry Stein** propagating and testing plants for Texas gardening conditions and their appeal to home gardeners. Over the years, 30 of the plants have been selected to be Texas Superstars™, the statewide marketing program co-founded by Dr. Parsons several years ago.

Plants that our R&D team have helped develop include the Laura Bush petunia, Grandma's Yellow Rose, Bunny Bloom Larkspur, Duranta, Henry Duelberg, Salvia, Bush Morning Glorify, Thyralis and many others you've probably first purchased at GVST plant sales.

A GVST "factoid" -- our organization is actually rooted in Jerry's R&D team. The volunteers who were working with Jerry 9-10 years ago were the original (charter) members of GVST. We worked to obtain our non-profit status in 2002, and then began working with San Antonio Water System to promote watersaving gardening.

How You Can Join the R&D Team This Fall

Many of you have indicated an interest in plant propagation, and joining the team this fall will offer you the opportunity to learn from the most knowledgeable plant people around. WARNING: It's hard work --but very rewarding.

Work days during the fall and spring are almost every Thursday from about 8:30 to 11:30am at the greenhouse on Seale Rd., off North W.W. White. Fewer workdays are scheduled during mid-summer, and November through January. Workdays are confirmed by E-mails from Jerry to the volunteers. Preferably volunteers can work at least two workdays a month, if not all of them!

Duties are much the same as working at a commercial growing operation, because the desired end results are the same!

So, if you're interested in becoming "hands-on", and don't mind if your hands (and your clothes and other parts of your body) get sometimes really dirty, then contact **Rob DeRocher** at **(210) 324-9976**, or talk to him at the next Essentials class on July 19.

*The picture above was taken at the watermelon tasting trials. Back row, left to right: **Buddy Long, Dr. Jerry Parsons, Jeremy Stavinhoa** of Texas AgriLIFE Extension Service, **Rob DeRocher, Bill Humble**. Front: **Dr. Larry Stein, kneeling, Francine Pidgeon, Dee Emory, Wassel Beal and Manny Zamora**.*

--photo by Forrest Appleton

Volunteer News

Milberger's Top Tomato Contest

Saturday, June 12--Another successful contest and we are always glad to be part of this great event. (But no one took pictures this year!) **Emily Russell, Janie Thomas, Sue Riggs** and **Anne Schiller** signed up contest entries. **Cheryl Gorhum** was a judge, along with **David Rodriguez** from the Extension Service. **Dr. Tom Harris** and **Ron Csehil** were on hand to explain and demo Drip-Line Gardening installation.

Thursday, June 17--Garden Happy Hour hosted by **Melody McMahon**. A great turn out of people and food as usual. Plus, the added bonus of a brief evening shower. In July, we'll combine our monthly Happy Hour with our Anniversary Celebration at the Eastman's.

June Essentials Class

Monday, June 21--Many thanks to **Dr. Larry Stein** for his talk on *Growing Patio Citrus*. At the end of this newsletter, you'll find a recently published article on Miho Satsuma, which has recently become an official Texas Superstar™ plant. (Sneak Preview: "miho" is Japanese (Satsuma's origin) for "very good".

As always we want to thank everyone who contributes to the class with refreshments (**Melody McMahon** is hospitality chairman) and items for our door prizes.

Keeping with the Patio Citrus (and fig tree) theme, **Rob DeRocher** brought several citrus plants from the greenhouse to sell---and he did. They proved a popular plant and Rob kept busy selling them out of the back of his truck!



***Dr. Jerry Parsons, Dr. Tom Harris and Dee Emory** at the Summer Clearance Greenhouse Plant Sale, Monday June 28.*

Correction!

SAWS Garden Jazz Party -- Sunday, May 2



As I always say, let me know if neglected to mention your volunteer work at a GVST event... and thank goodness GVST Board Member **Shirley Gebhardt** spoke up!! Especially since at the SAWS Garden Jazz Party, she worked two shifts!! The irrigation station that morning...then moving over to plant selection for the afternoon. Sorry about that Shirley!
--Anne Schiller

GVST Movers & Shakers

Henry Cardenas' paintings, sculptures, glass and steel wall installations are going on display at the Institute of Texan Cultures' *Texas Contemporary Artists Series*. You can see the exhibit from July 15 through the end of October.

On June 30, **Karen Stamm** officially retired from her public relations job at UT Health Science Center after 26 years! She has new contact info, including a new E-mail address: kstamm@satx.rr.com. She's wrapping up loose ends while contemplating launching a second career as a gardener-for-hire.

Sylvie Rodgers has a new E-mail: sylann@satx.rr.com.



Volunteer Bulletin Board

Summer brings on some dormancy but mark your calendars for these fall events, plus a few more that are in the works, and in the meantime, stay cool!

KSTX Radio Annual Xeriscape Planting

September date, location TBA

CPS Energy Live-Green Fest

(Tentative) Saturday, October 9

San Antonio Herb Market

Saturday, October 16; Pearl Brewery

Mitchell Lake Wildlife Festival & Plant Sale

Saturday, October 23; Mitchell Lake Audubon Center

Garden Conservancy "Open Day" Garden Tour

Saturday, October 23; Locations TBA

Wounded Warrior Family Support Center near new BAMC

On-going landscape maintenance work; contact **Melody McMahon** for future work dates: melodym1222@yahoo.com or home: (210) 481-2923. *GVST volunteers who are also Master Gardeners get credit towards MG hours for working on the project.*

Save These Dates!

Or to sign up now, contact Anne Schiller on the GVST phone at 251-8101, or anne@anneschiller.com.

Welcome New Volunteers!

Jamie Dailey

100 Lorenz #502

SA, TX 789209

562-1476

jmedailey@comcast.net

Jamie became interested after stopping by the GVST plant sale booth at the SAWS Garden Jazz Party. She is a training and education specialist with Medtronic.

Frank Scalise

12507 Beckington
SA, TX 78216
452-0455
frank.scalise@sbcglobal.net

Much of Frank's early gardening experience was in Chicago but after moving to San Antonio, wants to learn more about gardening in South Texas, so he has been attending our Essentials classes. He is also involved with the Comal County and Bexar Master Gardeners. He has expressed an interest in joining the Wounded Warrior landscape team.

David Eastman

2529 Smoke Rise Canyon
Bulverde, TX 78163
(830) 980-8793
pdoasis@gvtc.com (same as Patti Eastman)

David is married to volunteer Patti Eastman. He is a homebuilder (Eastman Builders) and is most interested in propagation and vegetable gardening.

Peggy Jones

12774 LaVernia Rd.
St. Hedwig, TX 78152
(210) 649-4002
pljones@swbell.net

Peggy is rejoining our roster after a couple of years off. She is a member of the Guadalupe County Master Gardeners and Garden Center. She has also been a member of the San Antonio Rose Society.

Pat Schultze

PO Box 397
Marion, TX 78124
(830) 914-3191
clydepat6@aol.com

Pat's also rejoining our roster. She is a member of the San Antonio Daylily Society and the Guadalupe County Master Gardeners.

Debbie Leisenring

5 Staff Post Rd.
San Antonio, TX 78234
834-1118
dleisenring@gmail.com

Debbie found out about GVST through Melody McMahon. She is a graduate of Class 51 of the Bexar County Master Gardeners and is interested in events, propagation and the possibility of working on our soon to be announced project at the Stillwell House at Ft. Sam Houston.

Bayla Beskin

208 Grove Place
San Antonio, TX 78209
829-2546
dbiskin@phyllisbrowning.com

Bayla is a realtor who is attending our Essentials of Gardening classes to learn more about gardening.

Growing Citrus in Containers

Source: Julian Sauls, Texas AgriLIFE Extension Service Horticulturist
<http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/extension/homefruit/citrus/citrus.html>



Citrus trees generally do not perform well as houseplants, but several kinds can be adapted to container culture. However, none will be as attractive to grow and fruit as well as trees grown under optimal conditions in the soil. Smaller citrus types (calamondin, limes, kumquats, lemons and limequats) are best suited to container culture, but all will grow for a limited time.

Containers: Must have adequate drainage holes. Size is most limiting factor. Should be large enough to permit maximum growth, yet small enough that they could be readily moved indoors during freezing weather.

Potting: Cover drainage holes with screen mesh. Potting soil is suitable, but an adequate mix can be made of one part sand, one part peat moss and one part composted bark. Partially fill the container and set the plant to its correct depth which is the level at which it was grown previously. Final soil surface should be 1 to 4 inches below the container rim to allow for easy watering. Complete filling the container, firm the soil or media around the plant and water thoroughly. An attractive mulch of bark, gravel or other material can be added to improve the appearance.

Light: Grows best in full sunlight, but place container-grown citrus to receive partial shade to reduce growth and to provide better acclimation to the occasional trips indoors during the winter. Avoid extremely low light for prolonged periods as the trees will become leggy and unattractive. Avoid extremely rapid changes in light exposure to prevent excessive leaf drop.

Freezes: Root system is more susceptible to cold damage because it is not so well insulated in containers as in the ground. Container-grown citrus will require some form of cold protection to survive most freezing temperatures. Moving them indoors during freezes may be the simplest solution.

Water: Overwatering is the most common cause of poor performance. Water only as needed. Generally allow the upper inch of the medium to become dry before watering. The apply water slowly to fill the container, permitting the excess to drain out the bottom. Soils generally stay wet longer in plastic, metal and ceramic containers than in wood or clay containers which permit water evaporation through the sides. Cool weather slows growth, so reduce watering frequency during the winter.

Nutrition: Over-fertilization and low light can result in leggy growth. Numerous water-soluble fertilizers are available and should be used according to label direction. Generally, a deep green color of mature foliage indicates adequate nutrition. Salt accumulation from water and fertilizer salts can cause a white crust on the soil or container, as well as leaf burn and twig dieback. Periodically leach salts by slowly running water into the container for several minutes to carry soluble salts through the soil and out the drainage holes.

Pruning: Trees become leggy when grown indoors in poor light for too long. To overcome this, cut back the entire top by about one-third to induce more branching and bushiness. (Note: more adequate light is still necessary). Such heavy pruning is best done during February so that flowering and fruiting are least affected.

Twig dieback and leaf drop may occur if the top gets too large for the capability of the root system. Such plants require moderate pruning to balance the top with their roots and rejuvenate the plant.

Fruitfulness: Citrus will produce fruit when grown in containers, given time, good care, adequate size and age. Do not expect large yields as the amount of fruit produced is proportional to tree size, which will be limited by the size of the container.

Diagnosing Problems: Citrus normally grows and produce well without undue attention or difficulty. Most problems are not serious and can be ignored or alleviated by minor adjustments in cultural practices. Few citrus problems warrant the use of pesticides.

Satsuma Miho Mandarins Tolerate 14 Degrees F.

By Robert Burns

<http://agnews.tamu.edu>



COLLEGE STATION, April 2010—Not to be uppity, but just because a plant is favored by Oriental royalty doesn't necessarily mean it's good enough to be a Texas Superstar, said a Texas AgriLife Extension Service expert.

Satsuma Miho mandarins are one of the five new Texas Superstars for 2010, said **Dr. Larry Stein**, AgriLife Extension horticulturist. After rigorous testing, horticulturists with Texas AgriLife Research and AgriLife Extension designate plants as Texas Superstars that are not just beautiful but perform well for Texas consumers and growers.

"They're highly prized in Japan," Stein said. "But we were looking for a more cold hardy variety with very good quality."

Many satsuma mandarin varieties do well under Texas conditions, and satsumas were promoted as Texas Superstars as a group in 1993.

"But we never promoted a specific variety, not until now," he said.

What changed Satsuma Miho's status? Years of further testing, Stein said. The previous recommendations for satsumas, at least as container plants or patio plants, said that they should be brought indoors if temperatures threatened to drop below 25 degrees F., which is still a good idea for the first few years of the tree's life. Also, many of the satsumas required being grafted onto hardier rootstock, and the Texas Superstar team wanted something easier to grow.

In 1994, AgriLife Extension and AgriLife Research horticulturists planted several Satsuma varieties—Miho, Seto, Okistu and Kimbrough—under identical conditions at the Texas AgriLife Research and Extension Center at Uvalde. They used two-year-old container-grown plants that had either been grown on their own roots or grafted to sour orange rootstock.

For winters of 1996 and 1997, the trees are protected from freezing temperatures using dry cedar mulch.

“The entire trees were covered these two years,” Stein said.

In 1998, to test cold-hardiness, the trees were left uncovered an a low of -8.9 Celsius (about 16 degrees F.) was recorded. Stein said the trees los some leaves but for the most part, their wood was undamaged.

In January 1999, temperatures dropped to -6.9 Celsius (about 20 degrees F.) and again there was no damage to the wood.

Both the Seto and Miho produced high quality fruit, but the team eventually chose Miho as a 2010 Texas Superstar.

“Not only was it a very high quality fruit, but it also rooted quite readily from cuttings,” Stein said. “It tends to root best and grow off best (of any of the tested varieties.)”

Mature budded Miho trees are small to medium size, from about 10 to 12 feet tall with a spread of from 13-15 feet wide. Trees grown on their own roots are generally about two-thirds the size of budded trees, he said.

“The color of Miho fruit develops in late summer and early fall; the peel is smooth and thin and leathery,” Stein and his colleague, Dr. Jerry Parsons, retired AgriLife Extension horticulturist, wrote in their official report. “Fruit has been allowed to hang until early December...but should be harvested around or just before Thanksgiving.”

Though Satsuma Miho is technically a small tree, it can be grown in a container. The tree's size is further dwarfed when it is containerize, Stein said.

He also noted that many people lose their patio citrus trees in the first or second year of the tree's life, and though larger trees have withstood temperatures in the teens without damage, it's a good idea to roll the containerized tree indoors when temperatures are apt to drop to 25 degrees or below.

Find a complete Texas Extension Service guide to growing citrus in ground and containers at:

<http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/patiocitrus>

It also includes more information on the Satsuma Miho.



8th Annual Anniversary Celebration & BBQ

Saturday, July 31

Hosted by Patti & David Eastman

2520 Smoke Rise Canyon in Bulverde

6-9pm / Guest Speaker: Malcolm Beck
