



Through the Grapevine



Message from the President

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Greetings to everyone. I am delighted that the CVMG newsletter has been resurrected. For those of you new to the CVMG, we did have an award-winning newsletter edited by Doreen Grimes for many years. Unfortunately health issues have prevented her from continuing in her role as editor. The goal is to have a newsletter come out quarterly – October, January, April and July. For this issue I asked several MGs to write articles. Both Bob and I would welcome ideas and articles for future issues. The deadline for the next newsletter will be Friday, September 16. Articles should be submitted to Bob White [bwhite0@zipnet.us] with a copy sent to me (cmason@angelo.edu).

The Executive Committee is recruiting members to be on the Nominating Committee. We are seeking three members, each from a different class to recruit other MGs to run for office and lead the CVMG forward. The offices of Vice-President, Secretary, and one State Director need candidates slated for election at the annual meeting in November. If you would like to serve on the Nominating Committee and have not been asked, please contact me or one of the other EC members.

MGs have been hard at work on the

Demonstration Area at the 4-H Building. If you have not been out to the 4-H Building, please stop by sometime when you are out in that direction. I want to let everyone know about the Texas Superstar bed. It is the large bed behind the Salvia bed as you look out from the sidewalk. The bed has been divided into quarter of approximately 10 ft each. The entire bed has been amended with cotton burr compost. The first quarter of the bed closest to the parking lot also have mulch. The second quarter had expanded shale in addition to the compost and has been mulched. The third quarter of the bed has expanded shale and compost and no mulch and the last quarter has only the compost. The bed is to serve several purposes including illustrating what mulching a bed does for weed control and diminishing the water needs. We also want to see if the expanded shale makes a difference. Allison brought the current plants back from the state horticulture agent meeting. We did add one plant to each quarter for comparison sake.

Both the greenhouse/plant sales committee and the 4-H Building Landscape committee have been planning for the future and have been compiling projected expenses. Please watch the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the Month Email Blast for more information on what each committee is planning for the

future and their financial needs. We will be voting on the funds at the September meeting.

The September 13 general business meeting and program will be back at the 4-H Building. Dr. Bonnie Amos will be making a presentation on native plants of Texas. Please plan on attending both the meeting and program. The program does count towards your continuing education requirement for maintain your MG certification.

The next issues of the newsletter should come out in early October. It should include any proposed changes to the CVMG Bylaws. Some of you may remember that we revised the Bylaws two years ago. However, we have some inconsistencies that were not caught at that time. The candidates for office will also be presented.

As usual, let me know of questions, suggestions, and concerns.

Carolyn Mason
President

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Special points of interest:

- Watch for next CVMG business meeting – Sept. 13
- 4-H Demonstration Beds at TGC 4-H Bldg
- How are YOU handling the drought conditions?
- Where is your 'secret' spot for buying plants &/or just relaxing?



Oh, Those Beautiful Roses!

The extreme weather conditions this year have caused many plants in the Concho Valley to wither and die, but some beautiful plants are strong enough to withstand these hardships. EarthKind roses definitely fall into this category. The EarthKind designation is based on extensive research and field trials conducted by the Texas AgriLife Extension Service. Qualifying roses must demonstrate superior pest tolerance, the ability to thrive in a variety of soil types (including poorly aerated alkaline clays), and excellent heat and drought tolerance with limited or no fertilizers. They have to be tough to survive in Texas!

The very first rose to receive the EarthKind designation was the gorgeous pink Belinda's Dream, introduced in 1992. Now there are more than 20 roses in this elite group, including dwarf, small, medium and large shrubs as well as climbers.

Some of us may recognize names such as Sea Foam (white), Caldwell Pink, New Dawn (blush pink climber), and others.

Without a doubt the most recognizable (and possibly the favorite) EarthKind rose would have to be the Knock Out. This is a medium shrub rose that requires little to no maintenance. The Knock Out blooms almost constantly from spring to fall. It fits into all landscapes and is an excellent first choice for anyone who loves roses. The Knock Out was introduced in the U.S. in the year 2000 and has swept the country ever since. It is a highly recommended EarthKind rose and is very disease resistant. We usually think of single or double Knock Outs with red or pink blooms in this area, but there are other varieties also, including sunny yellow, light pink to blush white, and even a rainbow variety with coral, pink and yellow blooms.

Now, with that said, we are seeing a record number of days with triple digit temperatures. The brutal summer weather is difficult for even EarthKind roses. Some are showing signs of leaf burn, and again, the Knock Out variety seems to be fairing better than most.

We all know to water deeply and less often, and as Master Gardeners we have an environmental responsibility to follow the EarthKind principles and to educate the public to do the same. Fall is not that far away...let's starting thinking about which EarthKind roses and other plants we can get in the ground when the rain finally comes!



By *Sandy Rogers*

The Hunt



If you are a MG like me you can't travel without finding yourself in a plant nursery where ever you go. I can't travel thru a town or community without turning my head when I spot a plant nursery and that usually leads to a sudden stop or a scheduled stop on the way back thru. This past November I took advice from other MG's and hunted out **The Natural Gardener** in Austin, 8648

Old Bee Caves Road. This nursery carries a large variety of native plants and has an atmosphere of nature at its best. If you travel down to the Frio Canyon area you must stop a **Dora's Nursery** on HWY 83 in Leakey, TX. This woman is a true inspiration to this MG; she started by selling plants off her front porch she had propagated and has now moved to a larger place on the highway. If you have a propagation

question about natives in that area she has the answer.

You would think that as many nurseries as we visit and plants we have, we would be burned out looking, but I think the hunt is half the fun and always find something new at each stop. Safe Travels and Happy Hunting.

by
Kay Thompson





GEMS Found Across West TEXAS



Concho Valley Master Gardeners are known to travel throughout the state of Texas for leisure, to visits family or friends or business. Often times a MG will find a gem whether it is a delightful garden, an interesting plant nursery, or garden store. This column provides an opportunity for members to share their finds with each other. The column is not an endorsement of any business that is listed. I hope others MGs will share their gems in future columns.

Here is a local find from Pat Karmany for those of us stuck in San Angelo for the summer:

Sunnyland Greenhouse and Cement Garden is located at 440 West 49th Street, San Angelo TX. They open at 9 AM and the telephone number is 653-7300.

They participate in Chicken Farm activities every first Saturday of the new month. I had tried to find the greenhouse several times in past years. The first time Sandy Rogers was with me and we were looking

for bird baths for the library garden. Didn't find it. Couple of years ago Janie Medina and I found it but gate was locked. It was the first Saturday of the month. Next time I went with Janie - we found it and it was open. They are a retired couple with a love of plants, cement work, tiling, glasswork and she has painted some very good blue bonnet pictures. Anyone that knows me, knows that I have no sense of direction so over the years I drove around a lot of the numbered streets and met several interesting individuals that didn't know where Sunnyland was. They swore that they had lived in Lakeview for over 40 years and just knew there were no nurseries in the area.

My last visit I went to view her hanging baskets. The heat has wrecked havoc with them and she had very few left. However, she has acquired a large selection of succulents and they are all identified and very reasonably priced. They are also propagating bogainvillas and have a very attractive apricot colored one.

I bought a 3 piece cement bench for my hardscape area in the front yard. It was reasonably priced at \$49.00 plus tax. I have enjoyed all my trips to Sunnyland - even the ones where I couldn't find the place. Saw lots of interesting sites in Lakeview. It's worth a trip just to meet the owners.

Directions: Head North on North Chadbourne. When you pass W. 48th Street on the left you are close. Turn right on Grothe Street and right again on West 49th Street. Sunnyland Greenhouse will be on your left. (You can't see the greenhouse from the street. Go thru the gate to the house and honk your horn.) Walk around and enjoy.

Kay Thompson has been out of San Angelo and sent in the article regarding "The Hunt". Please share any of your 'secrets' finds and GEMS with everyone and we will include the info in future issues.

Compiled by: *Carolyn Mason*



Water Conditions in Texas

This article is not meant to be a scare tactic,

but maybe it should be. The water situation in Texas and other states is in a very serious condition. Besides having less and less in our surface water, we are depleting our ground water as well, where most of West Texas gets its water. A lot of what we haven't used is either polluted or has so much calcium and other minerals that we can't use it in any form especially here in Texas.

In order to talk about water problems in the state, we need to discuss our sources and how we can conserve them.

First is ground water, this is one of the most used sources around Texas. It is pumped out of the ground from a pool like source. The water is not in an underground lake, but is in the rock formations. As the water is pumped out by your water provider or yourself, the water that is left flows to the location that was pumped through the rock, this is not to say that water isn't trapped in un-

derground caverns but most of it is in rock formations. Most ground water took thousands of years to collect where it is today because surface water doesn't just trickle down through the ground, at the most it is estimated that only about 15% ever reaches back to it's source.

Second is surface water, this may come close to underground water usage, but is dependent on lakes in the area and local factors concerning its stability. Some cities

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depend on a combination of sources, plus recycling run off and sewer water. Third source is rain water; this can be collected and stored in many various ways for use in houses, gardens, livestock, and anything that needs water. This water only needs to be collected and stored for non-potable use, if intended for potable uses then it will need to be passed through some sort of purification process (Ultra Violet Light or chemicals) for in house usage.

All water usage should be planned before hand and considered

for its benefits.

Too many times we just set the sprinkler out and turn the faucet on full blast, not paying attention to what we are really doing. Letting the water run into an area that does not need water (street, alley way, weedy area, or on the fences etc...) these are all totally wasted uses of water. Another wasteful habit is the use of timed automated sprinkler systems; these are nice but are out dated as being wasteful and inefficient. Quite often these systems run without being checked for faulty heads or area being cov-



ered. The best method to water our landscape and gardens is the one that uses the least water and keeps the water where we need it. We can either use a drip

system or a low to the ground spraying or misting type of system, something that will keep the water from evaporating so fast. In our West Texas climate where the humidity is low, any water that is released into the atmosphere is evaporated very fast. The roots are what needs water, not the leaves.

Bob White

Concho Valley Master Gardeners

Ron's Ramblings



Who would have known when I planted an entirely new landscape in December of 2010 that we would have three consecutive days without the temperature rising above 32 degrees four weeks later, followed by the second worst drought and heat wave in San Angelo history? Thankfully, I followed the Earth-Kind principles of soil management learned in our Master Gardener classes utilizing expanded shale and compost and topped off with plentiful mulch for all of the landscaped beds, and selecting native and/or adapted plant and turf specimens throughout the site. As a result, I have been pleasantly surprised how well everything is looking so far.

Friends and neighbors have asked me why my landscape seems to be holding up better than theirs during this drought. I truly believe that the soil preparation has provided excellent drainage in the heavily clay soil found in Butler Farms, allowing good water and air circulation and space for new roots to develop, along with the mulch which retains the moisture from the drip irrigation system in the prepared beds. With the new outside watering regulations that went into effect on 1st of July, I believe this extra initial expense will more than pay for itself in the coming months.

So, with another 60-90 days of summer remaining, with little precipitation predicted, what can we do to get our turf and plants through the tough times until cooler weather and

rains prevail, and protect our investment? Neil Sperry, in his latest newsletter, has provided some helpful suggestions from which we all can benefit. First, he suggests that we should prioritize which plants are the most expensive or slowest to replace. If you must choose between plants, choose to water trees, shrubs, and groundcovers, and forgo the less expensive and quickly established annuals. Hand water new plants, as our drip systems will be inadequate, even if it means watering more than once per week, as our city has special provisions for new landscapes. For young and newly planted trees, create a turf-free ring around them, and then fill the berm with a slow running water hose.



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Sensory Garden by Carol Diminnie

MG Demonstration Bed #1: Sensory Garden



A sensory garden is one that devotes itself to providing experiences for multiple senses; providing scents, textures, sounds, and color to delight the viewer. Although all gardens can stimulate the senses, some do so to a greater degree than others. Sensory gardens can be developed that address one or more of the following senses: sight, sound, smell, touch, or taste. The sensory gardener may use plants, trees, music, chimes, statues or other art objects to delight the senses.

The first demonstration bed developed by the Master Gardeners at the 4H Center is a 16' by 16' sensory garden divided into 4 quadrants. These separate sections are devoted to plantings that stimulate individual senses.



The raised bed is divided into four sections using limestone slabs, with the intersection of the walkways forming a circle. The circle is currently filled in with limestone, but the plan is to replace this center with a piece of sculptural art that has one or more of the following characteristics: color, chimes, movement, water flow. We welcome suggestions for this addition to the garden.

The first quadrant of the garden is planted with grasses and artemisia. Their color, visual texture, form, light and shadow stimulate the sense of sight, while the movement of the grasses as they sway in the breeze stimulate the sense of sound. The plantings include Mexican feather grass, lemon grass, power castle artemisia, morning light miscanthus, and liriope (monkey grass).



Quadrant two contains flowering plants, whose colors and scents stimulate both the eye and the nose. The center plant is a red star hibiscus, with purple dwarf Mexican petunia (the pink version did not survive the winter), multiple colored vinca, and a multi-colored lantana. This bed needs additional perennial plants because of winter or summer die-off of initial plantings.



In the third section, both the sense of smell and taste are addressed by the plantings of mints and herbs. lemon balm, lemon basil, Greek oregano, and spearmint surround a rosemary plant.



Finally, in the fourth quadrant, succulent plants provide a tactile stimulation with their variety of textures. A yellow yucca grows beside several red yucca plants. Autumn joy sedum, spineless cactus, barrel cactus, and a struggling aloe plant complete this landscape.



The plot itself is a work in progress. Some initial plantings have not survived the cold winter and/or the very hot summer. Selection of the plantings depends upon availability and their ability to thrive in the hot, sunny location. Because of the limited size of the plots, mature plants should not grow to more than two feet in diameter. Master Gardeners are invited to contribute ideas for new plantings (as well as the plants themselves) to improve the sensory impact of the garden.

Concho Valley Master Gardeners

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We're on the web!!

<http://mastergardener.tamu.edu>

<http://txmg.org/conchovalley/>



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These well-timed soakings during the summer should save all of our trees.

Neil also suggests eliminating the water hogging weeds in our shrub beds, and then mulch to slow down re-growth. Waiting to fertilize established plants until we get rainfall or until cooler September arrives is recommended. Use a water breaker attachment, along with a water bubbler to attach to the end of the hose for supplemental watering of landscape plants. My southwest areas of turf dry out the quickest because of the prevailing winds that we have had for the past several months, and I have found using a soaker hose is the most effi-



cient way of applying water.

Perform a maintenance check for all of your popup heads, and water

in the morning when the pressure is best, and a less likely chance of giving fungus a chance to start.

As each day goes by, we are that much closer to cooler weather and nurturing rainfall. God's timing is always perfect!

Ron Knight

But blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, ...like a tree planted by the stream...it has no worries in a year of drought, and never fails to bear fruit.

Jeremiah 17:7-8.

Allison's Accents:



An addiction to gardening is not all bad when you consider all the other choices in life.

- Cora Lea Bell

What a challenging year it is turning out to be – it's times like these that the Master Gardeners are more needed than ever! You have been doing commendable projects and the education you provide the community are invaluable. Keep up the great work!

Significant progress has been made on the demonstration beds at the 4-H center, the plant sale went phenomenally, the Habitat for Humanity workday turned out great, and those are just a few examples of the wonderful work that you do as a group. I would like to welcome all the Master Gardener interns that

completed the training class in May and hope you all find a project you enjoy to work on with the group – the volunteer projects are a great way to get to know other gardeners and learn while you go!

As always, I want to thank each of you for your service and participation. I look forward to upcoming events for fun, fellowship and fruitful education.

Allison Watkins

Horticulturist



Calendar items:

- ➔ August 19 – *Lunch N Learn*, 12pm – Wildflowers
- ➔ August 30 – Fall Vegetable Gardening class, 6pm
- ➔ September 16 – *Lunch N Learn*, 12pm – Plant Selection
- ➔ September 19, 20, 26, 27 – EarthKind Landscape School

