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Fall Maintenance:

Sow wildflower seeds in late October. Halloween is a great time!

Use pre-emergence weed control for lawns.

Stop pruning fruit trees.

Order December planting bulbs now.

Dividing and Transplanting Perennials



Early October is a great time to move and divide perennials. You want the plants to get at least six weeks of good weather to get established before the first hard frost sets in. Be aware that some but not all transplanted perennials might not bloom in the first year after moving. If you do miss this window, then plan on doing it in early spring.

Step 1: Get Ready: The day before you plan to divide your perennials, give them a good soaking with water to help them stock up and survive the shock of transplanting. If the plants are tall, you may want to cut them back a third to prevent breakage and help conserve energy.

Step 2: Dig Up: Using a shovel or sharp spade, slice deep into the earth in a circle, at least 6" from the crown of the plant, to sever the roots. Work your shovel underneath the clump and pry it out of the ground. The root ball will be almost as big as the plant itself, and try to dig up as much of it as you can. Use a combination of prying and pulling to work the entire root ball loose without breaking the stems. Pull or carry the plant onto your wheelbarrow or tarp, so you don't trample your other garden plants.

Step 3: Divide: If your perennial is the clumping type, you now need to divide it. Pull or cut apart the crown into 3-4 chunks. Each chunk should have several stems and a nice clump of roots. Larger clumps will become established faster and bloom sooner than smaller ones. As a general guide, you can expect next year's plant to be about as wide as the newly divided root ball. Don't be afraid to break some roots but try to follow where the plant naturally seems to split—sometimes they'll even fall into pieces on their own. Discard any diseased or broken pieces; only keep the healthiest parts of the plant.

Step 4: Replant:

- Dig a hole as deep as, and a little wider than, the root ball.
- Mix in plenty of organic matter and sprinkle a source of phosphorus, such as bone meal or 0-19-0 fertilizer, in the hole to promote root growth.
- Place the division in the planting hole. Make sure the roots are spread out and down – you don't want downward-growing roots to be turned upward in the hole or sticking up out of the ground.
- Fill in around the plant with soil, tamping it gently down. Make sure the new plant is planted at the same depth as it was originally.
- Water the plant well, and feed regularly with a balanced organic fertilizer. Water about every other day for the first 2-3 weeks. Baby the transplants with a little extra water for the rest of the growing season, particularly if they're planted in a spot that doesn't receive regular water.
- Add mulch around the plants to insulate the roots and hold in moisture.

Article from Today's Homeowner, Danny Lipford

Is Gardening Becoming a Lost Art?



Since neither of my two younger sisters ever really took to gardening, I seemed to have inherited many of the gardening books my mother and Aunt Sister collected over the years. These two matriarchs were and are two of my main influences. They instilled in me the love of horticulture.

My aunt and uncle always had a beautiful vegetable garden. My fondest memory as a child was helping my Uncle Bill collect the vegetables in a big wicker basket. As for my aunt, she was a card-carrying member of the American Hemerocallis Society of Houston, Texas. (Their purpose was to promote and improve daylilies and to increase public interest.)

Mom's first love was her flowers and she reveled in her azaleas, gardenias, and lilies each year, often comparing them to the neighbors and feeling extremely blessed. She passed this love on to me and yes, I am one of "those" gardeners who talks to her plants. Everyone knows they need to be appreciated in words as well as thoughts.

I recently came across a book passed from Aunt Sister to my mother and then to me. It is a nice little three-ring binder entitled "Plants for the Home", written by John Bagnasco, in 1976. Even though the information is 45 years old, it remains pretty much the same.

This started me thinking that through the art of gardening we can learn so many things even about ourselves. Before there were books, charts, internet, and Master Gardener classes, did a successful garden depend on trial and error? Was it based on traditions and customs, or from a point of observation? I suspect the answer is a little of all of these. The need for nourishment and the desire for beauty in outdoor and indoor spaces may have fueled the learning curve.

Now we buy our food at a grocery store and our plants at a nursery. It begs the question, is gardening becoming a lost art? More importantly, is there inspiration enough for future gardeners? I am afraid the true lovers of the art of gardening are becoming fewer and fewer.

There are a few obvious reasons why seemingly a lack of interest could be occurring. One factor could be gardening is WORK! I mean good old fashion physical, back-breaking, sweat-producing, knee cracking WORK! Not many people have the desire to do hard physical labor and as my body gets older, I can certainly identify.

Another could be lack of space to garden. Some people don't have access to an area needed for a "canning" garden and as my grandma used to say, "plant one row for the birds, one for the rabbits, and one for you." Her organic way of dealing with the critters always tickled me.

Those who have smaller areas can participate in teachable moments. Planting, feeding, and watering the plants is very important. Patio gardening has found a niche but with limited space, you won't be doing much canning.

So, how do we encourage our kids, our grandkids, and maybe if we are lucky our great-grandkids to develop a love for growing the things they may someday need? Here are a few of my observable suggestions:

1. Start 'em early! I mean when they are big enough to carry a bucket. They love digging in the dirt if you are too.
2. Make it a family thing. Take a break from all the distractions and just spend time together. Doing yard work alone is absolutely no fun.
3. Let kids participate in the entire process. From the tilling of the garden, the rows, planting, watering, and watching for that first little sprig coming up. Hopefully, they will be hooked.

Submitted by Patti Sexton, Master Gardener Intern

Fall is Seed Harvesting Time



October is the month to start collecting seeds from your favorite flowering plants. Let some of the flowers go to seed instead of deadheading. As the flower fades, seeds will form on the stem tips in capsules, pods, or husks. It's important to collect the seeds at the right time because collecting too soon will cause the seeds not to germinate. The best way to know if a seed is ready is when the seed turns dark and hard. If they are white or soft, they are not ready.

Collect the seeds on a dry, warm day. Take a pair of scissors and cut the seed heads or pods, and place in a small container. Spread the seeds on sheets of wax paper to air dry for about a week. Remove any husks, pods, or silk, so they don't contribute to the seeds rotting. Always have your seed packets ready with the name and date labeled. Keep the envelopes in a dry, cool place or you can store them in a refrigerator which will help them stay viable for a longer period of time.

Vegetable Seed Viability

Do you have some old vegetable seed packets but aren't sure if they are still good? Look at the date on the seed packet and the guide below for seed viability:



| 1 year | 2 years | 3 years | 4 years | 5 years |
|---------|-------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|
| Onion | Corn, sweet | Asparagus | Beet | Collards |
| Parsley | Leek | Bean | Cabbage | Cucumber |
| Parsnip | Okra | Broccoli | Cauliflower | Endive |
| | Pepper | Carrot | Chard, Swiss | Muskmelon |
| | | Celery | Eggplant | Radish |
| | | Kohlrabi | Fennel | |
| | | Pea | Kale | |
| | | Spinach | Mustard | |
| | | | Pumpkin | |
| | | | Rutabaga | |
| | | | Squash | |
| | | | Tomato | |

Cool Season Annuals



Now that we are getting a touch of fall weather, it is time to start planting cool-season flowers. Warm-weather annuals are probably putting on quite a show here at the end of the growing season, so it might be hard for some gardeners to remove them and plant cool-season plants. However, now is the time to give those cool-season plants a head start as we move into colder weather. Moreover, think about the splashes of color you will get when everything else has frozen and died down to the ground.

There are several cool-season flowers and plants that can be grown in the Grimes County area, starting with my favorite, **ornamental kale**. With a variety of colors in purples, lavender, rose, and shades of green, kale can be grown in the ground or in containers to add scale, shape and size. Pairing them with **Swiss chard**, **pansies**, **dusty miller** makes an attractive arrangement for your porch. Don't skimp on buying small ones because they will not increase in size as we move into spring. Go ahead and purchase a few large heads with small stems that will fill up a container or a garden spot.

Foxglove is not mentioned as much as other cool-weather annuals, but it is another cold-tolerant annual that produces magnificent spikey flowers. In other parts of the country, Foxglove is grown in the summer, but here in Texas I put them in containers along with **snapdragons**, **pink dianthus**, **larkspur**, **holly** and tiny **violas**.

At most nurseries this time of year you will find **mums**, **snap dragons** (short and tall), **pansies**, **dusty miller**, and even **geraniums**. Look at different ways to landscape your yard or garden with these showy plants.



And don't forget you can also add cool-season lettuces and **Swiss chard** to your containers and landscaping.

These pair well with ornamental kale and pansies. And what's better than to see some color along with some edibles straight from the garden. Try other edibles such as **radicchio**, **curly parsley**, and **rosemary**.

Cool Season Herbs

Fall means a lot less heat stress for herbs. Annuals that have been cut back will show new growth. But there are a few herbs that do not die out during fall and winter. **Rosemary**, **oregano** and **thyme** are all reliable growers during the cooler months. There are also several cool weather annuals that can be planted in October: **hyssop**, **yar-row**, **parsley**, **chervil**, **chives**, **sage**, and **winter savory**.

You can also try growing herbs inside during winter months. Start harvesting and preserving your summer herbs before the first frost sets in.



"And All at Once, Summer Collapsed into Fall"

Beauty Berry Jelly

Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 quarts beauty berries, washed.
 - 2 quarts water
 - 1 envelope Sure-Jell
 - 4 1/2 cups sugar
4. Boil for another 2 minutes
 5. Remove from heat and allow to stand until foam forms, then skim off foam.
 6. Pour hot jelly into sterilized jars, and cap.
 7. If it doesn't set, add another 1/4 envelope of Sure-Jell, or just use the thin jam as a syrup.

Directions:

1. Boil berries for 20 minutes
2. Strain off any solid matter
3. Add Sure-Jell and sugar



Area Nurseries—Cool Season Annuals

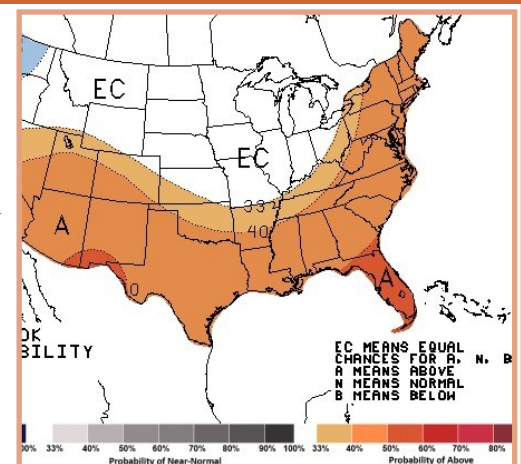
Our more experienced Master Gardeners have found out the hard way that those special plants such as cool season annuals, herbs and Texas natives are sometimes hard to find in this area. The big box stores often have plants that don't even grow here. Below is a list of nurseries that you might want to visit that we have found to carry that special plant. Most of them are not in Grimes County so plan a day trip.

- Antique Rose Emporium—Brenham
- The Arbor Gate—Tomball
- Buchanan's—Central Houston
- The Farm Patch—Bryan
- Martha's Bloomers—Navasota
- Plants for All Seasons—North Houston

Winter Forecast 2021—2022

NOAA winter forecast for 2021-2022 favors warmer, drier conditions across the southern tier of the U.S., and cooler, wetter conditions in the North, thanks in part to an ongoing La Nina.

FARMER'S ALMANAC predicts “for our friends in the Southern Great Plains, including Texas and Oklahoma, we are sorry to report that late January may bring some potentially frigid and flaky weather like you experienced last winter. Hopefully, it won't be as robust, but it doesn't hurt to be prepared.”



Grimes County Master Gardeners—Intern Training

Grimes County Master Gardeners are continuing with their Intern Training for 2021. The interns have the option to attend an in-person class each Thursday at the Navasota Center or do individual on-line training at home.



Garden Work Day

Grimes County Master Gardeners and Interns worked on the Extension Office flowerbeds September 21st. A big **Thank You** to all those who helped!




Events

Grimes County Master Gardeners will have their **Monthly Business Meeting on Tuesday, October 12th, at the Navasota Center**. This will be an evening meeting starting at **6:00 p.m.**

Monthly Garden Work Day: October 19th—9:00 a.m. at the Grimes County Extension Office.

Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, many in-person continuing education classes are not available. Below are some virtual learning and webinars for this month.

October 2021

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|-----|-----|--|------|------|-----|--|
| | | | | | 1 | 2 |
| 3 | 4 | 5 ★ | 6 | 7 ★ | 8 | 9 ★ |
| 10 | 11 | 12 ★ | 13 ★ | 14 ★ | 15 | 16 |
| 17 | 18 | 19  | 20 | 21 ★ | 22 | 23 |
| 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 ★ | 28 ★ | 29 | 30  |
| 31 | | | | | | |

GOT A GARDENING QUESTION?

Got a gardening problem or question?

Contact our Master Gardeners to get help: grimescountymastergardeners@gmail.com or call us at [936-873-3917](tel:936-873-3917).

A photo along with your question will help us with the answer.

Continuing Education and Events

- Oct 7, 14, 21, 28: **Grimes County Master Gardeners Intern Training**, 9:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.
- Oct 5: Urban Harvest, **"Growing Herbs for Use, Insight & Design"** 6:00 p.m.—7:30 p.m. \$20—Zoom
- Oct 7: Home Grown Lecture Series, Harris County AgriLife, **"Creating a Combination Planter"**, 10:00 a.m.
- Oct 9: Urban Harvest, **"Bokashi Composting"**, 9:30 a.m.—10:30 a.m. \$20—Zoom
- Oct 13: Urban Harvest, **"Tough Texas Native Plants"**, 10:00 a.m.—11:00 a.m. Free—Zoom
- Oct 27: Gardening on the Gulf Coast, **"Pecans"**, 10 a.m.—11 a.m.
- Oct 30: Once again our **Gardening Witches** will be at the **Anderson Trunk or Treat**. You don't have to dress up but its more fun if you do!

Texas Master Gardeners

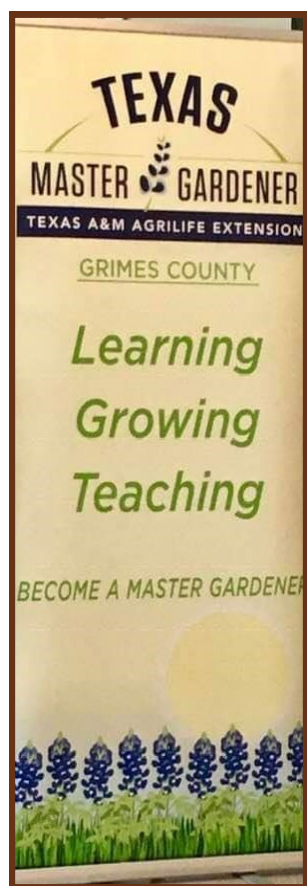
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Grimes County Master Gardeners

Please send submissions and photos by the
20th of each month to: pwparmley@gmail.com



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