



Horti-Bull

HORTICULTURAL BULLETIN

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2020 MGCSA Calendar of Events

September 3: Sorry, but we have to CANCEL another meeting.

October 1, 2, & 3: Hollywood Park plant sale is planned. Please read more info in this Horti-Bull.

October 1 meeting is tentatively planned.

October 3. Herb Fest at the Pearl Farmer's Market, still being evaluated.

October 17: The annual Malcolm Beck Tamalada at Barbara Lamm's home is still being evaluated.

November: Celebrate Arbor Day, date and time to be announced.



Todd Mermin

Fellow gardeners its hot, but cooler days are ahead. Now that I have stated the obvious it seems like the right time to remind everyone of water conservation. This can be done in a number of ways. I encourage people when designing their back yards and gardens to be mindful of shade and sun areas. This means identifying areas that will have shade in the future (i.e. new tree plantings). You always hear the terms morning sun and afternoon shade and that's because our afternoon sun has the capacity to scorch any plant and almost kill them. Professionals at the San Antonio Water Systems are a great resource for helping with plant types and information on planting. In addition to planting the proper trees, energy can be saved by proper placement of trees and species. I was talking with a fellow club member one day

about an old gardening book for this area and it mentioned planting chinaberry trees for their rapid growth and ability to provide shade. Now keep in mind this book was written prior to air conditioning. Another thing to keep in mind in San Antonio is the existence of microclimates. In these areas, plants that normally do not thrive, do. Here again it is being aware of the natural and built-in environments, and exposure to winds (i.e. north wind). I look forward to seeing you at the Hollywood Park event, until then stay safe, mask up and social distance. Todd

On the 3rd of August, our multi-times President and friend **Mr. Frank Rios** took a fall at home and messed up a hip joint. After a stay in the hospital while the fracture was being repaired, he is now in a rehab facility and expecting a full recovery. Frank 'swears' the bones were glued back together and all are holding just fine. Don't know the sincerity of that statement, but Frank said it, so it must be true. He is in good spirits and anxious to get back home to his own bed. Keep Frank in your thoughts and prayers.



The **Hollywood Park Plant Sale** is still on the agenda for October 1st, 2nd & 3rd. We will need some heavy help in transporting, setting up and putting away during this event. We will prepare as if this is a sure thing, and any COVID19 restrictions in place at that time will be adhered to 100% - masks, distancing, etc. You will be contacted during the month and given the opportunity to **volunteer**. Please consider helping out.

Additionally, we need any plants and plantings that you can donate to the sale. Remember, the Spring Home & Garden Show, Government Hill Plant Sale, and the Hollywood Park event will be our only fundraisers for 2020. We are so appreciative of all who donated plants for the Government Hill sale, we could not have done it without you. Let's hope for a similar response for Hollywood Park. Give Darlene Badorski a call at 815-435-3970 and let her know what you can donate. She can give you any other information you may need at that time.

It is with heavy heart during the planning for this event that we remember our friend, Mr. Earl Siebold who passed away in November 2019. The Big Three of Earl and Joyce Siebold and Cody, the plant sale mascot, residents of Yosemite St. in Hollywood park, were always welcoming and promoting the Sale. Ever the congenial host, Earl was a tireless worker, and he was our lunch-time Chef (Earl's famous Hotdogs). When Joyce was busy elsewhere, he stepped in to help identify with & promote our plants to the local Hollywood Park shoppers.



Joyce & Earl Siebold & Cody

Please read this before you go any > further, especially the part about >> how badly we need your help. >>>>



Calvin's Corner
By Dr. Calvin Finch, Retired Texas A&M Horticulturalist

Horti-bull Gardening Calendar for September

Comply with your community's drought restrictions. Most, including San Antonio's were designed to reduce water use to the level required without permanently sacrificing any part of your landscape. Remember that Bermuda, zoysia and buffalo grass can be allowed to go dormant by withholding irrigation and they will recover when the rains resume. St Augustine will survive with irrigation once every two weeks. Use the flexibility allowed by hand watering to give special attention to priority water sensitive plants.

September is the month for the beginning of the winter garden. Consider planting broccoli, cauliflower, Brussel sprouts, collards, kale, Swiss chard, and cabbage by transplants. Use seeds for lettuce, beets, radishes, turnips, carrots, and rutabagas. Prepare the soil by incorporating 2 inches of compost and 10 cups of slow release lawn fertilizer (19-5-9 works well) into every 100 sq. ft. of bed.

Remember that when you plant lettuce seed it should not be covered with soil. It needs to be in the open for it to germinate.

Your fall tomatoes will respond to cooler temperatures at night with thickening leaves and blooms. Peppers and eggplant will resume production of the larger fruit that was being produced before the spell of 100-degree days we experienced in July and August. Okra production is related to day length which will be shortening but lots of pods should still be available for harvest in September.

If you want to prevent winter weeds such as rescue grass, annual bluegrass, bedstraw, thistle, dandelions, henbit, beggars' lice, and chickweed, apply a preemergent herbicide to the lawn, perennial beds, and shrub borders. There are products designed to prevent germination of grassy weeds, and some for grassy weeds. A few such as Dimension, XL, and Amaze do well for both. Review the labels of the available products at your favorite nursery to select the right product for your needs.

September is also a good time to plant wildflower seeds. Keep in mind that preemergent herbicides will prevent weeds from germinating but they will also prevent wildflower seeds from growing so keep preemergents away from wildflower plantings.

You can buy seed of your favorite wildflowers, but it often works best to obtain wildflower mix designed for Texas or a Region. Germination of specific seed varieties is dependent on weather and other conditions, so a mix offers one or more seeds of plants that will take advantage of whatever conditions that occur in a year.

Consider phacelia seed if you encourage butterflies and are looking for a nectar source that fills the early spring gap before mistflower, zinnias, and milkweed reach full bloom. Phacelia is also shade tolerant. Salvia coccinea is also a desirable selection because it blooms over a long season into the fall and it is shade tolerant. Salvia coccinea is included in most wildflower mixes. You may have to go to an internet seed retailer for phacelia if it is not available from a gardening buddy.

To be successful with most wildflower seed, apply it on sites in full sun where there is a minimum of organic material and the seed can be both in the sun and make soil contact.

In the sunny flower gardens zinnias, moss roses, purslane, vinca, and marigold will prosper. Pentas, and begonias may have declined if they received even a small amount of sun during each day of the 100-degree spell, but they should perk up in September if you can you can keep them watered.

MGCSA Officers for 2020

President	Todd Mernin
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Other

EX Officio:	Paul Huegel
HB advertising:	Paul Huegel
Postmaster:	Larry Cromer
Historian:	Paul Huegel
Webmaster:	Ivan Roman
HB Editor:	Jeffry Brown



Salvia Coccinea



From top left, clockwise:

1. A tree full of beautiful hanging baskets, David Badorski and Robert McDaniel conversing, and Sharon Hughes checking her stock portfolio.

2. Joyce Siebold assists a customer in selecting just the right plant for her flower bed.

3. Earl Siebold has brought out the lunchtime hotdogs and Paul Huegel and Jeff Brown waste no time in getting theirs.

4. John Sells, Joe and Mary DeMariano, Mary Martinez, and Paul Huegel enjoy conversation during a lull in the buying action.

5. Exercise buff Frank Rios had to try out the exercise bike that Joyce had for sale. He didn't buy it, said he was 'short of funds this month'.

6. In 2015, thanks to Kathy Rice, we had an abundance of pots for sale — and we sold everyone of them.



Texas Backyard Tomato

By Jeffrey Brown

The tomato is featured in this article, which will include the one time many years ago that author Jeff Brown successfully grew and harvested a 'crop' from one plant. The tomato has long been a favorite garden crop in the U.S., and here in south Texas I tried to grow it in the oven-like hot summer. That is the growth season in Pennsylvania. Isn't it the same here? NO. I planted way too late.

My earliest tomato crop. It consisted of one tomato plant grown in the early 80's in a 4x4 foot raised bed next to some other plants. Having moved here from more northern places where there is a real winter, I did not plant so early. May or June's a good time, right? Fortunately, the growing season is long here. I planted an 'indeterminate' tomato plant of unknown (now) variety. It grew well, and later in the summer many yellow flowers appeared. After some weeks, I noticed the blooms were not setting fruit (the tomato is a fruit, like eggplants). I learned that tomatoes would not set in the big heat without help from something called 'tomato set'. So, I sprayed away and by late summer I had lots of little tomatoes.

Autumn tomatoes. The plant grew well and by Autumn there were many big tomatoes (no squirrels back then, nor rabbits or deer). As the possibility of frost or cold weather approached, I became worried. Finally, I started a mild panic because those tomatoes were still shiny and solid green! No red. I decided to pick them all and take them inside. I put them on the counter and let them sit for weeks.

No outdoor ripening. I figured they would never ripen there on the counter; but low and behold, after a few weeks the tomatoes did ripen, eventually looking nice and red. Well, they were not 'vine-ripened'; so maybe they would taste like the stereo-typical store-bought tomato: like cardboard. But no, they were juicy and tasted great.

Picnic contest. Back then there seemed to be an annual rivalry and competition to see who could plant and grow the best tomatoes. I faintly remember there being a contest at the annual summer picnic at the Malcolm Beck estate. I remember how one guy, with an English accent, I'll call him Bob, would challenge other members to grow "tow mottoes". **Perhaps one of our longer-time members could recall some of those events for us.**



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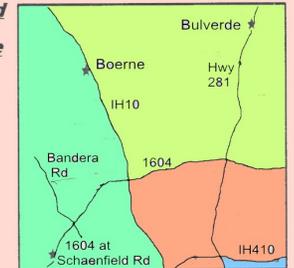
Hours of Operation:

Mon. - Sat.

8:00 am - 5:00 pm

Sun. (seasonal)

10:00 am - 3:00 pm



Trees and Shrubs

All trees and shrubs need more frequent watering from planting time until becoming well rooted, which may take two growing seasons. Once established, plants can then be weaned to tolerate less frequent watering. Proper weaning develops deep roots and makes the plants more drought enduring.



As with lawns, you should water established trees, shrubs, and ground-covers infrequently, yet thoroughly. In the absence of rain, most trees and shrubs benefit from a once-a-month thorough watering during the growing season. Remember, normal lawn watering is not a substitute for thorough tree and shrub watering.

The feeding root system of a tree or shrub is located within the top 12 inches of the soil and at the "dripline" of the plant. The dripline is the area directly below the outermost reaches of the branches. Apply water and fertilizer just inside and a little beyond the dripline, not at the trunk. Simply lay a slowly running hose on the ground and move it around the dripline as each area becomes saturated to a depth of 8 to 10 inches. For large trees, this watering technique may take several hours.

Taken from Texas A&M program's Earth Kind: Environmental Stewardship Program.

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Ronnie Grell
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What About Raised Bed Gardening?

By Paul D Huegel

As the name suggests, raised bed gardening is a technique people use for gardening in various ways. It works quite simply. The raised concept implies that soil is raised above the ground, usually surrounded by some material like concrete, wood, or rock. The soil can also be enriched with compost which people use for vegetable planting. In raised beds plants are usually placed in a geometrical pattern, much closer than what is conventionally done. Raised beds are often used in complex structures. They offer higher productivity; they can be used to control erosion and they also save water. They can also require fewer nutrients due to the bed structure. These structures are used in large areas for crops as well.



Now you must be wondering what the benefits of this form of gardening are. Well, there are many. First, it makes maintenance much easier. They extend the planting seasons which means they can grow in irregular seasons as well. Raised beds can reduce weeds as well if taken care of properly. The soil level is raised up from the ground, which means that no one will be walking on them and damaging them. Furthermore, these beds are great options for us seniors. We won't have to bend over so much to manage or care for them. People also use self-watering raised beds to further lessen the work. Usually these beds are fed water automatically and don't require human intervention.

The second thing to consider is the material to build your bed. While it is natural to have concerns, you needn't worry because the options are many. If you really want to save money, you can always opt for concrete blocks. They look unattractive no doubt, but let's face it, if you are doing it for the crops then does it really matter? Concrete blocks are cheap and readily available in the market. If you want something better and more attractive, then the best option is timber. Wood is great and used in many materials around the world and it is strong and long-lasting. You can also use polythene which is UV treated. This is again quite a good option and one that lasts long. Ultimately people end up choosing their own materials. This is the beauty of these beds; you have so many options.



A raised bed is not complete without good soil. Ideally the soil where the bed sets would be best especially if it has produced healthy plants. It is impractical to dig soil from around or near the raised bed unless you intend to build a pond as well. You can buy bagged organic soils to fill the bed or buy it in bulk which is less expensive. I recommend getting a good garden soil that does not have bio-solids (human waste). Poultry based soils are good as are other animal manures as well. I would stay away from horse manures as the hay the horses eat may have been treated with a chemical that will kill anything you grow in it. We are fortunate here in greater San Antonio to have good sources like Stone and Soil Depot, New Earth and Quality Organic Products for bulk purchases. If you would rather get bagged soils take advantage of the nurseries that give the MGCSA a discount as shown on the back of your membership card. You can add good finished compost to your soil every year to keep your bed full but remember, compost and the soil you buy is not fertilizer. If you want your plants to thrive you should add a good organic fertilizer throughout

the growing season. Organic fertilizers will not burn your plants and can be applied anytime. If you went with the club to the Talking Tree Farm in April 2019, you saw a lot of raised bed gardening in action.

Now that you know the basics and are planning to set up a raised bed garden, **GO FOR IT!**

Did you know?

A 'jiffy' is an actual unit of time for 1/100th of a second?

A goldfish has a memory span of 3 seconds?

A dime has 118 ridges around the edge?

A cat has 32 muscles in each ear?

A crocodile cannot stick out his tongue?

A dragon fly has a lifespan of 24 hours?

Tired of seeing trivia like this in your Horti-Bull? Submit an article and help us out!

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Hollywood Park Plant Sale in action!

Gardening in a Pandemic World

by Paul D Huegel

We as individuals may be in quarantine mode but gardening is not, and we should take advantage of our green thumbs throughout the year especially now that many of us have some extra time on our hands. In addition to the social distancing brought on by the COVID-19 virus, we have been suffering through a long, hot and dry summer here in South Texas. At this point though, fall is in our sights so we can begin to plan our gardens for the second planting of the year. Actually, we should have transitioned into the fall season with an extension of some of the Spring vegetables like tomatoes, peppers, summer squash, bush beans and eggplant. If you have not planted any of these yet you need to get them in the ground now as transplants verses seeds to ensure a successful harvest.

Finding plants has been somewhat of a challenge this summer. People are adjusting their life style with social distancing and more gardening so nurseries are flourishing in sales of plants in a COVID-19 environment. However, you can still get nice plants at the nurseries that offer us MGCSA members a discount as listed on the back of your membership card. You may not get every variety of plants but there are some good ones still available. The nurseries will soon be getting in the fall/winter cold vegetables like broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts and other cool weather plants. Growers have stepped up their production due to the increased demand brought on by the pandemic so future availability should not be a problem. Unlike toilet paper people generally only buy the plants they need.

If you have decided not to plant more "fruit" vegetables (those vegetables with seeds) during this transition period while waiting for the cool weather plants to arrive take advantage of this hiatus by preparing your garden beds and pots. As an organic gardener, I do not recommend turning the soil as this disturbs the beneficial fungi and other microbes as well as bringing up those dormant weed seeds which want to take over your beds. Not to mention, it is hard work in the hot sun. I would apply an organic fertilizer, and finished compost to the soil's surface and a "living" mulch (mixture of compost and mulch) to retain moisture since it will typically remain hot into mid to late September when we can start planting again. It is also a good idea to apply beneficial nematodes for flea and ant control to your garden and lawn.

In addition to the fall vegetables mentioned above you may plant fall blooming perennials like mums, asters, copper canyon daises, salvias, and firespike. The best time for planting shrubs and trees begins in late September so you need to take a critical look at your landscape and decide what additions you want to make.

Beans, cucumbers and squash can be planted early in September. Plant broccoli, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, and cauliflower transplants when available throughout the month. As the temperatures moderate, plant root vegetables and leafy greens but hold off on spinach until it is cooler.



Spray every two weeks with liquid seaweed to prevent spider mites and to increase cold tolerance of your plants. To encourage maximum flowering, bush roses can be cut back by one third. You can plant seeds for dill, cilantro and poppies. Also, begin sowing wildflower seed.

In a pandemic world it is important to stay active, to stay healthy physically and mentally, so gardening is a good alternative. I also recommend starting a walking regimen which beside the health benefit, you get to check out the landscapes in your neighborhood for ideas. Above all do as the song says "don't worry, be happy" and hopefully things will get back to normal and the MGCSA will meet and greet again without social distancing.

KNOW THESE PEOPLE?

-I live in a semi-rural area. We recently had a new neighbor call the local township administrative office to request the removal of the Deer Crossing sign on our road. The reason: Too many deer were being hit by cars and he didn't want them to cross there anymore.

-My daughter went to a local Taco Bell and ordered a taco. She asked the person behind the counter for "minimal lettuce." He said he was sorry, but they only had iceberg.

-I work with an individual who plugged her power strip back into itself and for the life of her could not understand why her system would not turn on.

-When my husband and I arrived at an automobile dealership to pick up our car, we were told the keys had been locked in it. In the service department we found a mechanic working feverishly to unlock the driver's side door. As I watched from the passenger side, I instinctively tried the door handle and discovered that it was unlocked. "Hey", I announced to the technician, "it's open!" To which he replied, "I know, I already got that side."

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