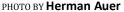


## FEBRUARY'S GARDENING CALENDAR

Texas ASM AgriLife Extension Service — Galveston County Office





Creating a kitchen garden can be a daunting task for the beginner. Shown above is Master Gardener Mary Demeny in her kitchen garden. Mary will provide a seminar on "Kitchen Gardening . . . From Conception to Reality" on Saturday at the Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office in La Marque.

The winter season has been rather mild overall for Gulf Coast gardeners and rainfall has been ample—I've become way too familiar to the squish-squish sound heard when walking over a lawn with waterlogged soil. Peaches and plums have started to display their beautiful flowers and the promise of spring can be seen. With a little luck, Mother Nature will place many more blossoms in home landscapes over the

next few weeks. In the meantime, look over the following checklist for February's gardening activities:

Hands-on Rose Pruning
Demonstrations: Did you
remember to prune your
roses on Valentine's Day?
Are you a bit hesitant on
what types of roses to
prune and not prune?
Then be sure to visit the
Master Gardener Horticulture Demonstration Garden on Thursday (Feb. 19)

morning.

Master Gardener and consulting Rosarian John Jons will provide demonstrations on how to properly prune your roses. Please bring hand pruners and gloves (not required but needed if you wish to practice pruning on site). John's presentation will start at 9:00 a.m. No preregistration required. Raised Beds: Moisturesaturated soils have provided an abundance of



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evidence on the value of raised beds to grow vegetables. Consider building a raised bed for the vegetable garden if the existing garden site has poor soil drainage. Rainy weather can make such raised beds well worth the effort when it's time to plant in spring.

Lawns: Yes, most area St. Augustine lawns are dull brown in color because of our on-and-off periods of cool weather conditions. However, do not fertilize St. Augustine lawns now in the hope of making it green up faster. St. Augustine lawns should not be fertilized this time of year until after the grass starts to actively grow; otherwise, if you fertilize now you will be benefitting winter weeds and some of the nitrogen will be lost before lawn growth starts.

Stone Fruits: Fertilize stone fruit trees by late February. The general recommendation for fertilizer for bearing stone fruit trees is to apply two cups of a balanced fertilizer per inch of trunk in February. A second application is recommended in during mid-May. A fertilizer such as 15-5-10 (commonly used for lawns) is suitable for use on fruit trees and also for shrubs and landscape trees. Spread fertilizer evenly under the drip line but keep six inches away from the trunk. Be sure to avoid using a weed-and-feed fertilizer which contains an herbicide(s) as an active ingredient.

Gladiolus: Begin planting gladiolus bulbs. Space planting dates at 2-week intervals to extend the flower season.

## At a Glance

Master Gardeners are sponsoring two educational programs this Saturday that will likely be of interest to gardeners across the county. I looked up the term "booklearning" and one definition goes as follows: Knowledge acquired from reading books, as opposed to knowledge gained through experience; theoretical or academic knowledge as opposed to practical or common-sensical knowledge. The speakers for both programs have "book-learning" (they have, after all, earned the title of Certified Master Gardeners) and they have amassed a wealth of practical or common-sensical knowledge from their lifelong experiences as gardeners. Moreover, they gladly share their knowledge and experiences with the public. Master Gardener Sandra Devall will

discuss "Texas-Tuff Landscape Plants - Blooming and Beautiful" on Saturday, February 21, from 9:00 to 11:30 a.m. Sandra is a fourth generation Texas gardener and presents a personal perspective on a variety of tree, shrubs, annuals and perennials. She will present a program on choosing varieties of hearty plants for your landscape that will be ornamental as well as welcoming to bees and other pollinators, birds and butterflies. She will also discuss ways to bring beauty to the garden and save you money by directing you away from plants that will not bring you gardening success here in Galveston County.

Master Gardener Mary Demeny will discuss "Kitchen Gardening . . . From Conception to Reality" on Saturday, February 21, from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. Mary states that she has been gardening for 68 years, having started as a little girl by her mother's side in the family garden. She will discuss how to grow vegetables

as part of your home landscape. Gardening on a smaller scale and making use of vegetables interplanted in your flower beds and in pots will be emphasized.

Both seminars will be conducted at the Galveston County AgriLife Extension office located in carbide Park (4102-B Main St.) in La Marque. No fee but pre-registration is required (phone: 281-534-3413, ext. 12; e-mail: GAL-V3@wt.net).

I vouch for both presenters being "book-learned" and "commonsensical." I also know that they are also gifted and entertaining speakers. I have attended their seminars on several occasions before and I have learned something different each time I attended. Even though there isn't any registration fee, I was tempted (albeit momentarily) to apply an entertainment surcharge fee as they deliver their programs in a most engaging manner.