

TEXAS A&M AGRI LIFE EXTENSION

GARDENERS' ACTIVITIES FOR MAY

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service — Galveston County Office



PHOTO CREDIT: Dr. William M. Johnson

Visitors are welcome to visit the Discovery Garden on Thursday, May 3, as “Garden with the Masters” tours will be provided in addition to a greenhouse-grown plant sale. Visitors will be able to view a century plant that is full bloom.

While cool night time temperatures over the past few weeks have been very pleasant, we should be prepared for warming temperatures and longer, sunnier days with the arrival of May.

Busy days of gardening are in store for the May gardener in completing spring chores and in preparing for summer. The following

gardening educational programs and gardening checklists will be helpful:

PLANT SALE AND DISCOVERY GARDEN TOUR ON MAY 3: The Master Gardeners invite area residents to tour their Discovery Garden in Carbid Park ([4102 Main Street](#) in La Marque) on Thursday, May 3,

from 9:00 - 11:30 a.m. The Discovery Garden consists of several theme gardens including a Butterfly Garden, a Serenity Garden, a fruit orchard as well as dozens of raised vegetable beds.

Visitors are also encouraged to visit the Earth-Kind Garden to view a century plant that is in



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full bloom. The misleading moniker "century plant" comes from the fact that this slow-growing cactus takes years (although not 100) to flower.

The century plant is monocarpic, meaning it will bloom once in its lifetime. That bloom may not appear for 10, 20 or more years, depending on the climate. Many species in the genus *Agave* flower just once, although there are a few that are repeat bloomers.

The upward-facing yellow flowers grow in clusters at the end of horizontal branches near the top of a tall stalk that emerges from a thick basal rosette of gray-green leaves. The flower structure resembles a candelabrum and sits atop a flower stalk that may be several feet tall (the flower structure of plant on display is nearly 25 feet tall). If you have not seen a century plant in bloom, it would well worth the time to visit ours.

GREENHOUSE-GROWN PLANT SALE ON MAY 3: Master Gardeners will also conduct a greenhouse-grown plant sale from 9:00 - 11:30 a.m. on Thursday, May 3, at the Discovery Garden in Carbide Park (4102 Main Street in La Marque).

SATURDAY SEMINARS ON MAY 5: Two seminars will be offered on Saturday, May 5. The first seminar from is entitled The ABCs of Caring for Orchids and will be presented from 9:00 - 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, May 5. Galveston County Master Gardeners Clyde Holt and Joyce McMillan will share

their wealth of knowledge and experiences on growing orchids. The presentation will cover the different types of orchids, light, water, temperature, potting media, etc. A variety of orchids will be on display and the program will be followed by a Q&A session. Participants are invited to bring any orchids that they want for specific information on.

I will provide a presentation on Beneficials in the Garden and Landscape from 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. on Saturday, May 5. I enjoy discussing the plethora of beneficials commonly found in Galveston County home landscapes and gardens.

Both seminars will be conducted at the Galveston Extension Office located in Carbide Park ([4102-B Main Street](#) in La Marque). Pre-registration is requested to ensure availability of handouts (e-mail galvcountymgs@gmail.com or phone 281-309-5065) Seminar participants are also welcome to bring insects for identification.

HOME FRUIT GROWERS' TOUR ON MAY 19: A Home Fruit Growers' Tour will be conducted on Saturday, May 19. Three fruit orchards are on this year's tour. Each location will be open from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon.

This year's tour sites contain a wide variety of fruit trees ranging from a peach orchard (Fruit 'n Such Orchard located at [6309 Avenue U](#) in Texas City), the Master Gardener Demonstration Orchard

(located in Carbide Park in La Marque) and a sizeable home orchard in Santa Fe. Tour maps and additional details may be downloaded from my website address provided with this column (click on the "Extension Educational Programs" link). Additional information will also be provided in next week's garden column.

LAWNS: Many homeowners will level out low spots in the lawns this time of the year using sharp sand or bank sand as the only filler. While this is a common practice, it is not a good one. Use of sand to fill low areas in a lawn will very likely cause problems later with unsatisfactory lawn growth.

Such areas will suffer more from drought stress during the summer and will likely have problems with soil nutrient uptake. For best results, use a good quality topsoil to fill in low areas of the lawn.

OKRA: Normally I recommend that okra be planted during the month of April but this year it would have been better to have waited until May given the occurrences of cool temperatures over the past few weeks. This cousin-of-cotton especially needs to be planted in a warm soil. Proven varieties include Emerald, Clemson Spineless or Jade. After planting, plan to thin plants to 24 inches apart in the row, with rows 36 to 42 inches apart.

