

# Kitchen Gardens

*Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service — Galveston County Office*



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**PHOTO CREDIT: Herman Auer**

**Shown above is Mary Demeny in her kitchen garden. Creating a kitchen garden can be a daunting task for the beginner. Mary will provide a seminar at the Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office on “Kitchen Gardening . . . From Conception to Reality.”**

The history of kitchen garden designs goes back to medieval times. They were the cloister or courtyard gardens of monasteries or castles. During colonial times, European settlers brought the kitchen garden concept to the USA.

In earlier times, the kitchen garden was located by the back door as it would

be handy for everyday use and care in addition to providing some protection from two- and four-legged entities. In colonial times, these gardens would have contained plants for medicinal properties as well as culinary herbs, fruit trees and berried shrubs. Modern-day kitchen gardens contain a variety of plants

that serve the needs of the palate (i.e., provides food for the dinner table or raw consumption) and the needs of the psyche (i.e., provides beauty in the home landscape and cut flowers for the interiorscape).

Taking the concept of a kitchen garden from fantasy to reality can be a





daunting task for the beginner. Help is at hand: A seminar on "Kitchen Gardening . . . From Conception to Reality" will be conducted on Saturday, September 14, from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. at the Galveston County Extension Office located in Carbide Park (4102-B Main Street) in La Marque. Pre-registration is required due to limited seating (phone: 281-309-5065; e-mail: galvcountrymgs@gmail.com).

Mary Demeny, a Galveston County Master Gardener, will discuss vegetable gardening as an integral component of the home landscape. Gardening on a smaller scale and making use of vegetables interplanted in your flower beds and in pots will be emphasized.

Mary has grown a kitchen garden for many years. Vegetables for discussion include onions, carrots, tomatoes, lettuce, peppers, okra, beets, broccoli, cabbage, kohlrabi, kale, leeks and more. September is a great time to get started on a fall vegetable garden and this seminar can help you get started with your own kitchen garden.

### Weekly Q&A

Q: Will English ivy kill or harm my tree if allowed to grow up the trunk?

A: We receive many calls on this subject. The short answer is yes, eventually—or at least most likely. Read on if a longer response would be appreciated as the reason (for the likely harm to the tree—not my wordiness) may surprise you.

Evergreen English ivy is not parasitic as many people think. It does not derive any nourishment from the tree but the ivy creates an unhealthy situation for it. The ivy attaches itself by aerial roots that anchor it to the trunk and branches.

When ivy is well established on a tree, its leaves and vines can spread into the tree's canopy. This can prevent adequate sunlight from reaching the surface of leaves in addition to reducing air movement within the canopy of the tree. This tangle also collects soil particles that are carried to the trunk surface by wind and rain.

Together these factors create a situation in which various fungi can become established. Wood rots and other fungal diseases can result. The best solution is prevention. Many homeowners allow ivy to form a living mulch around their trees. While this is one way to protect tree trunks from mower and string trimmer damage, homeowners must vigilantly monitor ivy encroachment.

Ivy can quickly attach itself to the trunk of a tree. Pulling it off the trunk once the ivy is well established can cause significant damage to the bark. If this is the situation on your property, the best course of action is to cut the ivy vines at the ground level. The leaves will gradually die. The vines will eventually fall from the tree without damaging the bark. This is a slow process but once they have fallen off, most of the moisture problem

will be alleviated.

If all this is not enough to make you apprehensive, be aware that English ivy vines will weigh down tree branches and can cause them to break. There is also the added risk to the tree being blown over by high winds due to increased wind resistance.

### At a Glance

WHAT: Tomato and Basil Plant Sale

DATE/TIME: Thursday, September 12, 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. and Saturday, September 14, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon

WHERE: MG Discovery Garden located in Carbide Park (4102 Main Street) in La Marque

WHO: Vegetable transplants grown by Master Gardeners include tomato varieties (Bloody Butcher, Bush Early Girl, Fourth of July and Sun Gold) and basil (Genovese and Mrs. Burns Lemon Basil). Selection of other plants will be available including hibiscus, staghorn fern, string of pearls, batface cuphea and more.

WHAT: A Symphony of Orchids . . . Galveston Bay Orchid Society Show & Sale

DATE/TIME: Saturday, September 14, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday, September 15, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Free Admission.

WHERE: Hilton Houston NASA Clear Lake, 3000 E NASA Pkwy., Houston, TX 77058

