

# The Latest Dirt



Official Newsletter of the Jefferson County Master Gardeners

May, 2012

## From The President

By Jackie Steen

It's true what they say about April showers bringing May flowers—by the looks of most gardens in the area, it's going to be a colorful May Day this year. Many of the gardens that will be in full bloom were planted with plants from our Market Day plant sale, so we can take some of the credit for helping Mother Nature along this year.

Not only did we supply a lot of the flowers that will be blooming, but a good many of our vegetable plants went home to area gardeners as well. Some of these no doubt, the tomatoes particularly, will be ready with fruit for our annual Fruit and Vegetable Show. For those who have never attended or entered this competition, you are missing out on a fun event. This year the date for the Fruit and Vegetable show will be June 9 at Central Mall. That is approximately seven weeks away and enough time to start talking nice to your tomatoes to get a good yield.

With each passing day we are also getting one day closer to graduation day for our Master Gardener interns. Many of you will be completing the course you began just months ago and will no longer be called 'intern', but proudly wear the title "Master Gardener".



## Agent's Two Cents

By Ricky Thompson

We are well into Spring time and are enjoying some beautiful weather. This has to be my favorite time of the year. Market Day was a BIG success, congratulations and thank you to all those that were involved.

Busy is the best way to explain our current conditions. The Spring time rush of gardeners and homeowners is in full swing, with phone calls and people out in the garden. The effects of the drought from 2011 have brought questions and problems for homeowners. Tree loss, lawn care and we haven't even gotten to the dry season. I just pray we continue to have rainfall for this year.

I continue to thank those MGs that come in to answer phone calls; your support is still needed. It seems that on days when MGs are in the office, calls are slow and when I'm out and MGs are not in the office, those are big call days..

Please continue to monitor your activities and report them to Peggy.



Meetings are the second Thursday of each month, 7pm in the Extension Office Auditorium

Upcoming Meeting Dates:

May 10 –

June 14 –

July – No Meeting



## F.A.Q.'s



**Question:** If I am interested in chairing a committee and/or event, what are the steps I need to take?

**Answer:** According to the bylaws, the president appoints all committee chairpersons. If you are interested in a certain position, be sure to first let the president know and then she/he will approve or not. Also, the president is an ex-officio member of EVERY committee, so always keep her/him in the loop regarding all planning and recap meetings.

**Question:** How can I find our web-site?

**Answer:** We can now be found at [txmg.org/jcmg](http://txmg.org/jcmg). Big thanks to Melissa Starr for taking over the project and keeping the site up to date. Please contact Melissa if you have any comments or suggestions. [melynstarr@hotmail.com](mailto:melynstarr@hotmail.com)



## Common Thyme - *Thymus vulgaris*

A much branching subshrub with woody stems; strongly aromatic; medium green leaves and lilac summer flowers.

Uses -Culinary thyme is ideal for long slow cooking of stews and soups.

Lemon thyme is delicious with chicken and fresh fruit dishes.



### MISSION STATEMENT

To encourage and support the horticultural community of Southeast Texas through education and example.

### 2012–2014 Board Members

President—Jackie Steen  
Vice President—Toni Clark  
Secretary—Melissa Starr  
Treasurer—Dorothy Norris  
At Large— Kathryn Stelly, Tony Lucenti,  
Stellina Reed  
Past President—Melody Weaver

### Newsletter Staff:

Editor: Micah Shanks  
Layout: Peggy Coleman



# Let's Get To Know: Jerry Jobe



Jerry Jobe never met a stranger. He is a Texas boy through and through! Raised in Lubbock, he met and married Leta, an Odessa girl, fifty years ago. Together they raised 3 children and now have 5 grands and 2 greatgrands! Right out of high school, Jerry was accepted as an electrician apprentice and was a full electrician by the age of 21. He and Leta lived in California, Michigan, and several other states as they moved around for his job. When the children started coming, they settled in Nederland, but Jerry would continue his career for "40 to 50 years". He was also a production supervisor at Olin for awhile. With all of this going on, when did he learn to garden? As a boy, Jerry earned his Eagle Scout award and worked after school at his scoutmaster's farm. "Back then, you could get your drivers license at 14, so I drove the tractor, slopped the hogs and milked the cows just for something to do in the afternoons", says Jerry. It was

this experience that tied him to the earth and got him interested in growing things. Jerry's extensive home garden includes tomatoes, peppers, and green beans as well as lovely flowers and shrubs. After he retired, he joined the Master Gardeners and hasn't looked back. He says he enjoys being at the garden "because I live nearby and because I feel sorry for Cecil doing all that work alone." Jerry's strong work ethic keeps him busy with home, grandkids, and now a new job running a route for a pipeline company to Odessa 4 times a month. Alone on the road for hours at a time, he carries books on tape and takes breaks to meet people along the way. He recently stopped at a small vineyard and was given a guided tour of the entire house and winery. (Never met a stranger, remember?) He has also accepted the position as our new state representative. No rocking chair anytime soon for this Texas boy!



# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## 40th Annual Fruit & Vegetable Show

The longest running show in the State will be held Saturday, June 9th at Central Mall from 9–Noon. Enter as many entries as you would like; all entries are free. Win prizes and ribbons. For a copy of the rules and regulations, call the office at 835-8461.



**New Arrival**—Peggy Coleman has a new grand-son born April

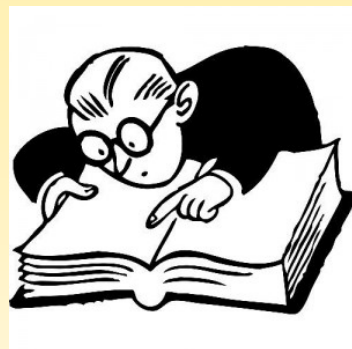


18th. Landen Joseph Coleman weighed in at 4 lbs 9 ozs and was 14" long. He was 6 weeks early, but is doing very well.



## PHOTO DIRECTORY INFORMATION

We want to be able to include everyone and it isn't too late! Master Gardeners, please remember that you need to have your certification current and your 2012 dues paid to be listed as an active JCMG in the photo directory we are currently working on.





# SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

Our Master Gardener scholarship winner this year is Ashley Olson. Ashley graduates from West Brook High school this year with a 3.8 GPA and plans to study veterinary science at Texas A & M. Her many accomplishments and awards include National Honor Society, FFA officer, captain of Westbrook soccer team, Key Club, Interact Club, Student Council representative, Bruin Bearers Club, Fellowship of Christian Athletes. In her spare time, Ashley has won numerous awards and championships at all area county livestock shows in lamb, heifers and brahman beef categories. Ashley met with us at the April meeting. She is a lovely young woman and is more than deserving of our \$1000 scholarship!

A big congratulations goes out to Caitlyn Wenner, granddaughter of Karen and Jerry Sourdellia. Caitlyn is graduating from Kelly High and has been awarded the Terry Scholarship for academics, character, leadership and community service. The award is in the amount of \$85,000! Caitlyn plans to pursue a degree in audiology at UT Dallas. Some of Caitlyn's accomplishments include: Student body vice-president, Key Club Executive board, Class Representative, Student of the Month, Samaritan Award, Aaron Kyrk Lee "Press the Mark" Award, R.C. Maceo/Sam Parigi, Sr. Scholarship, National Youth Leadership Conference, High Honor Roll, Daughters of the American Revolution Good Citizens Award. She is also active at St. Anne's Catholic Church and Teen ACTS retreats. Caitlyn will major in Speech Pathology and Audiology. Well done, Caitlyn!



# HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU !!!!

## May:

Lisa Rodriquez - 3  
Tyler Milton - 4  
Tony Lucenti - 7  
Jeanene Eberling-9  
Janice Kimler - 12  
Sandra Davis - 13  
Ann Bares - 14  
Larry Jacobs - 16  
Tim Schreck - 24  
Norma Clubb - 25

## June:

Dorothy Norris - 4  
Toni Clark - 17  
Jerry Jobe - 18  
Verna McCollom - 21

## July:

Jane McBride - 1  
Glenda Johnson - 2  
Penny Hickman - 14  
Janis Prestridge - 16  
Richard Richmond - 17  
Hortense Price - 30  
Judy Starr - 30



## In The Kitchen With: Ann Bares

### Frozen Fruit Salad

2 (3 oz.) pkg. regular cream cheese  
1 cup mayonnaise  
1 cup whipped cream (can use Cool Whip, but not low fat)  
2 cups red grapes, halved  
1 cup pineapple chunks, drained  
1 cup mandarin orange slices, drained

Soften cream cheese; blend in mayonnaise until smooth. Stir in fruits; fold in whipped cream. Pour into 8 to 9 inch square pan, cover, and freeze. Take out of freezer and thaw in refrigerator several hours before serving.



## Veteran's Memorial Project

Wednesday morning, April 18, dawned clear and surprisingly cool as 20 Master Gardeners and interns gathered at the Veterans Memorial on Hwy 87 near Port Arthur to lend their gardening expertise to a beautification project at the park.

Brent Weaver, Jefferson County Commissioner, requested the help of our organization to get the Memorial ready for the annual Flag Day observance to be held there on May 31.

There are 17 raised flower beds interspersed among the monuments honoring all branches of the service. We spent the morning tending each one of these beds by weeding, filling them with fresh garden soil, planting an array of colorful annuals, then topping them all off with a layer of mulch.

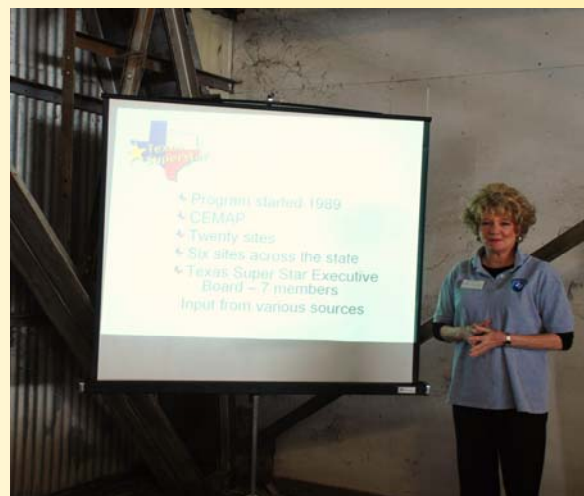




## Spring Market Day 2012

By Ann Bares, JCMG

Our Spring Market Day 2012 was truly blessed this year. Perfect weather brought a cool breeze all day Friday for set-up. A sunny Saturday brought out approximately 960 customers who loaded up their carts with shrubs, citrus, herbs, vegetables, and a wonderful variety of bedding plants that our Plant Team grew or gathered from the best of the best Texas growers. Although the south field was too wet for parking, the Boy Scouts took it in stride as they helped transport plants down the road for our buyers. At the end of the day, there were no "bought" plants left and very few donated ones. When all was said and done, we had made over \$6000 profit! The new food court area was appreciated by everyone. Moving the Kids Korner closer to the entry kept the area full almost all day. Hourly seminars presented by Master Gardeners got great reviews. Our MG booth had lots of visitors who purchased MG cookbooks, almanacs and other publications. The MGs who manned the booth passed out handouts on gardening and answered lots of questions. The many vendors who participated were all pleased with the outcome. Many have signed up for next year's sale and some even registered for the MG course. As always, the success of all our MG events is due to the ideas, hard work and fellowship that is at the heart of our MG family. We share not only our commitment to the MG program, but also the enjoyment it brings. Thanks to everyone who participated!









## Snake Encounters

By Michael Cate, JCMG

Most gardeners have stories to tell about their interactions with snakes. It's just good sense to always be on the lookout, wear gloves when weeding by hand and put on boots or shoes when walking in tall grass. Even non poisonous snakes will bite if grabbed with a wad of weeds.

So far this spring, I've had two close encounters. In February, I met a hog nosed snake wound securely amid an old rose bush I was pruning. Of course the initial resemblance to a rattler gave me a real start! Upon more careful view, I saw the upturned snout. Hog nosed snakes are non venomous and avoid human contact but will certainly stand their ground. However, hog nosed snakes primarily eat toads and have no reason to attack humans. The upturned snout was the giveaway that my confrontation was non poisonous.

In early April, I was photographing a bride in Beaumont's Tyrrell Park when I crossed paths with a three foot coral snake. Probably the most beautiful snake I've ever seen with pearlescent red, yellow and black bands. It slithered into a clump of iris and we let it be.



Awareness, common sense and respect for nature is a gardeners best approach to enjoying our passion.

Some may say there are more consequential concerns as illustrated by this short music video:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UKGIERwNIA4&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UKGIERwNIA4&feature=player_embedded)





## Knowing What Is Good For Us From the Daily OM

Because we instinctively know that nature is good for us on many levels, it's not unusual to feel powerfully drawn to it. Even if you live in a city or find it difficult to travel to a forest or the countryside, there are a myriad ways to reconnect with nature. When you step out of your door each morning, pause for a minute and close your eyes long enough to let your senses absorb your surroundings. Listen and breathe deeply, until you hear the wind rustling through branches, smell rain on damp grass, and see the reflection of leaves brushing up against windowpanes. If you have time, crouch down and closely examine any nearby grass and soil. The sights, sounds, smells, and sensations we experience that are part of nature can remind us of all the gifts Mother Earth grants us each day.

Spending time connecting with nature nourishes the soul, reminds you that you are never truly alone, and renews you by attuning you to the earth's natural rhythms. Taking a walk under the stars or feeling the wind on your face may be all it takes for you to reconnect with nature.



## What's New In Your Garden?

### Ann Bares

I'm in a rut! Can't think of anything new I've done, garden wise, this spring. Haven't had time to even garden much, just fits and starts as my grandmother used to say.

Only thing I did that I'll do from now on, is to use the heavy duty shower liner during the winter months, and no, not in the shower, we do have CH, but over my "hospital/cutting" bed. Bought it at Annas Linens, \$3.99, and tacked the heavy end where the hooks go, to my greenhouse, about 40" off the ground, laid the other end on the landscape timbers on the front, and secured it with some clay pots. I left the ends open. The little plants I bought after the Fall sale I put under it... butterfly vine, almond verbena, lantana, and basil, and a little knock out rose that I pulled up out of an ant hill. The moisture and warm west afternoon sun must have been like a hothouse, because all of them are HUGE ! The lantana is the length of the g/house, and the rose is blooming. the only thing that didn't live was a basil, but it lasted until the drought set in. i'm going to do this against the back fence next winter, if I have anything tender there.



### Verna McCollom

I planted a small lasagna garden inside my regular garden this year. The sides were at least 10" high and it was layered-newspaper on bottom, barnyard manure, old leaves. commercial manure, compost and anything else that I could find that was organic. Tomatoes, different herbs and strawberries were planted in the garden. Everything did fine except for the strawberries. They produced very little fruit and then the fruit rotted and all I got was gnats all over. I mentioned it to Paul and he said that he was already plowing up his berries and planting something else in that spot. He said to plant berries in the FALL. Next year, hopefully I will produce some good strawberries which will be planted in fall. Also, Larry Jacobs gave me a few porter tomato plants and they are growing very well in the garden. Can't wait till they ripen.

This is my latest container garden creation-Three large pots on bottom-one large pot sitting on top. Lots of color-snap dragon, petunia, creeping jenny, variegated liriopse, Victorian salvia, blue daze and a pot of amaryllis bulbs on top. As the plants start fading and going out of season, they will be replaced with seasonal plants. I kind of like this because it is so colorful and attracts hummingbirds and bees.







## Did Your Trees Survive The Drought?

### How to assess your tree this spring

Texas Forest Service

Now that spring has sprung, it's time to take a look at your trees – and if you don't see any green, it may be time to make some hard decisions.

Trees across the state began to wilt last summer as the Lone Star State underwent one of the worst droughts in recorded history. Some trees went into early dormancy, dropping their leaves and branches in a desperate act of self-preservation. Others died.

At the time, it was difficult – even for tree experts – to tell the difference between dormant and dead. But now that spring is here and many trees are flourishing with the recent rains, the distinction is much easier to make.

"Green is good," Texas Forest Service Urban Forestry Manager John Giedraitis said. "If all the trees around you are green and your tree is still bare and leafless, it's probably not going to make a comeback."

Surviving shade trees – oaks, elms and other hardwood trees are common examples – will have shed all or most of last year's leaves and will be breaking buds, flowering and sprouting new, green leaves. Pecan, hickory, ash and mesquite trees are often the last to sprout new leaves, but even these species should be turning green within the next couple of weeks.

Dead shade trees won't have any new growth. Though they may still have dead, brown leaves, there won't be any green leaves in the crown or at the ends of the branches, which will make them stand out when compared with neighboring, living trees.

These trees also may have patches of bark that have fallen off the trunk and exposed a brown or gray fungus underneath. This fungus – known as hypoxylon canker – is common on dead or dying post oaks and water oaks.

Dead pine and cedar trees – as well as other needle-bearing conifer trees – will be covered in red or brown needles. Once all or most of the needles turn from green to red, the tree can't recover.

If you have a dead tree that is close to a house or other structure on which it might fall, it is a safety concern and removal should be considered. If you're not sure if your tree is dead, check out The Texas Forest Service's Facebook [photo album](#) to see examples or contact a [certified arborist](#).

Last year, Texas Forest Service tree experts estimated as many as 500 million rural forest trees and another 5.6 million urban shade trees had died from the drought. Foresters currently are studying aerial imagery to refine the number of trees killed by drought. Those results are expected later this year.

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May 2012

"The Latest Dirt" is the official newsletter of the Jefferson County Master Gardeners. It will be published in February, May, August, and November. Members will receive color copies via e-mail. It will also be posted on our website at <http://jefferson-tx.tamu.edu>. Click on newsletters. Black and white copies will be available at the monthly meetings and at the office. Input is greatly appreciated. Call Micah Shanks at 409-749-0083 or e-mail your suggestions to [mshanks52@gmail.com](mailto:mshanks52@gmail.com).

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