

MARCH, 2007

The GREENLEAF



HOURS: MON - SAT 8:00 A.M. TO 5:30 P.M.
SUN 10:00 A.M. TO 5:00 P.M.

NEWSLETTER

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March Madness

by Rob Wier

That first nice sunny day in March brings out the gardener in all of us. To most it's a joyous beginning, a few regret the chores of yard work, and then there are those that are perplexed and wonder "Where to start?" by the whole thing. So, let's get you started in the right direction before you get dazed, crazed, and confused by the masses of bright blooming colors we display at the nursery.

If your landscape suffered due to the drought and water restrictions, here is some advice on re-doing it.

➤ **Develop a game plan** on what you want to accomplish. Best to have both spouses discuss and agree on this. (You know this can take some time!)

◆ **On a major redo, get a design.** Designs cost money, but save much more money over time.

◆ **Don't be afraid** or reluctant to remove plants that struggled or never performed. Be realistic, like outdated wallpaper they can detract from the over all look.

➤ **Gardening success starts with the soil.** I know, improving your soil isn't as exciting as planting some showy color. Yea ... the neighbors don't drive by and say, "Darn they have such rich, healthy soil!" But healthy soil produces healthy plants that are naturally resistant to stress

caused by pests, drought, and heat. Then the neighbors will drive by and say, "Their yard always looks so good and healthy, and I hardly see them out there!"

◆ **Improve your soil with organic matter** and other soil conditioners. Come to our Open House (*see pg.5 for all the details*) to learn more, or download the information on Bed Preparation from our website. Remember it is an ongoing process ... not just a one-time event.

➤ **Plant well adapted plants to our area.** The Master Gardeners coined a great phrase, "Right Plant in the Right Place". Such a simple rule for a green thumb to follow. We try to carry only plants that are well-adapted for both our sake.

➤ **Water efficiently.** Consider altering or converting your bed areas to drip irrigation. The money spent will save many dollars in the long term by reducing water use, and preserving your foundation and plantings. Investment in reduced water use will be recouped by better property values in the future.

➤ **Mulch bare soil.** It reduces weeds, conserves water, and buffers soil temperatures all while keeping your soil and plants happier. Dollars spent on mulch save dollars spent on water and replacement plants.

Get out and enjoy your yard year-round. Spending a little time with your piece of nature can help reduce stress and help you live happier and healthier.

So let "March Madness" refer to that basketball tournament ... not your gardening habits. Speaking of basketball, how about them **Aggies?! Gig'em!**



TIMELY HINTS

PLANT ... Cool season color still -- for the first part of the month (**Petunias, Alyssum, Dianthus** and **Snapdragons**). We could still have a chance of a freeze through the end of this month so wait to plant summer color until then. We know ... it's hard to wait ... but best to let it warm up. **Herbs, Perennials, Shrubs,** and **Trees** can all be planted now as well. Check with us on veggies, either by plants or seed, since there are too many to list.

FERTILIZE ... The whole yard if you haven't with **Gardenville 7-2-2 Soil Food**. (See last month's benefits of this product.) Use **Greensand** on evergreens for additional iron. **Bloodmeal** on those pansies keeps them happy and blooming. **Superthrive** on newly planted plants for a good start and even houseplants and potted plants that go back outside to rejuvenate them.

PRUNE ... Mid-month you can trim a lot of those perennials back to shape and control their size. You can tidy up **Liriope** and **Mondo grass** from their winter look. Just be sure not to trim the ends of the new shoots coming out of the center. Other groundcovers such as **Asian Jasmine, Euyonomous coloratus, Vinca,** and even **Frogfruit** responds well to a sheering and trimming back to let fresh new growth emerge.

WATER ... Only when absolutely necessary! Such as when there has been no rain for two weeks. How good we are getting about conserving water. Kept it up! If you notice someone who needs help with their watering practices, you can refer them to our website to get a copy of our helpful handout

"Survive and Thrive Watering Woes". Better yet, print it out and hand it to them. You'll find it under our "Plant Care" link.

PESTS ... Watch for slugs on the ground, fire ant mounds, aphids on new growth, and canker worms in your trees. We can certainly help with control, once you have identified the pest. Briefly ... **Sluggo** sprinkled under the plants controls slugs. A strong blast of water can control Aphids, or use the spray **Bon-Neem**. Control those nasty fire ants with a one-two punch by drenching individual mounds with the **Nature's Guide Mound Drench** then applying the bait **Come And Get It**. Also applying **Dry Molasses** to your lawn and beds helps with control ... fire ants seem to hate it. Caterpillars can be controlled with **Bacillis Thurengensis** mixed with water and sprayed on the foliage that the worms are eating. As always identify the pests first ... pick up the **Texas Bug Book** to help with their identification ... some are good ones!

OTHER ...

- New to the area? Want to know how to garden here locally? Plan on attending our **Annual Open House** event on **Saturday, March 3rd**, for great information!
- Consider converting the sprinkler system around the foundation of your house and planting beds to **Drip Irrigation**. Most systems can easily be retrofitted by licensed irrigators. Sure, there are some upfront costs involved, but the savings in the long run are endless!

Back By Popular Demand!

Starting up again this month will be our Gardener's Happy Hour events. If you haven't come before, we provide the place, complimentary beverages, and an informal talk and discussion on a range of gardening topics.

Gardener's Happy Hour

March 8th	"Pruning with a Purpose"
March 15th	"Getting Started with Organics"
March 22nd	"Xeriscape Principles"
March 29th	"Rainwater Harvesting"

Thursdays
6:00pm - 7:00pm

'And Now For The Rest Of The Story ...'

Earth Kind : An Environmental Stewardship Program

by Nancy Furth

For several years now, we have been providing you with selected varieties of roses, some of which are designated "Earth Kind" by Texas A&M University. These roses have gone through rigorous testing under harsh growing conditions in all regions of Texas. Proven to do well for the average gardener without the use of pesticides, special bed preparation and large doses of fertilizers, there are now fifteen roses with this designation. Among our best sellers here at the nursery are 'Knock Out' and 'Belinda's Dream'.

'Earth Kind', however, does not only refer to roses. Because of the burgeoning concerns and awareness regarding environmental issues here in Texas, the Earth Kind Program has become Texas Cooperative Extension's Banner Program. It covers a broad range of topics and programs promoting healthy landscape practices as well as well-adapted and native plants. One component of the program, The Texas Superstar program, may already be familiar to you. A new feature available on-line is called the "Plant Selector". You can use this searchable database by clicking on your region or putting in your zip code, to select landscape plants specific to our area with the best drought, heat and pest tolerance.

The primary objective of Texas A&M's Earth Kind

program is to combine the best of organic and traditional gardening and landscaping principles. The goals of Earth Kind are:

- Landscape water conservation;
- The Safe use of, and handling of, fertilizers and pesticides in the landscape; and the
- Reduction of yard wastes entering landfills.



Earth Kind includes a variety of educational programs, which address environmental issues in the landscape. A service of twelve publications is available on-line which covers a variety of environmentally friendly practices ranging from design considerations to irrigation. To access information on all the Earth Kind topics on your computer

go to <http://earthkind.tamu.edu>.

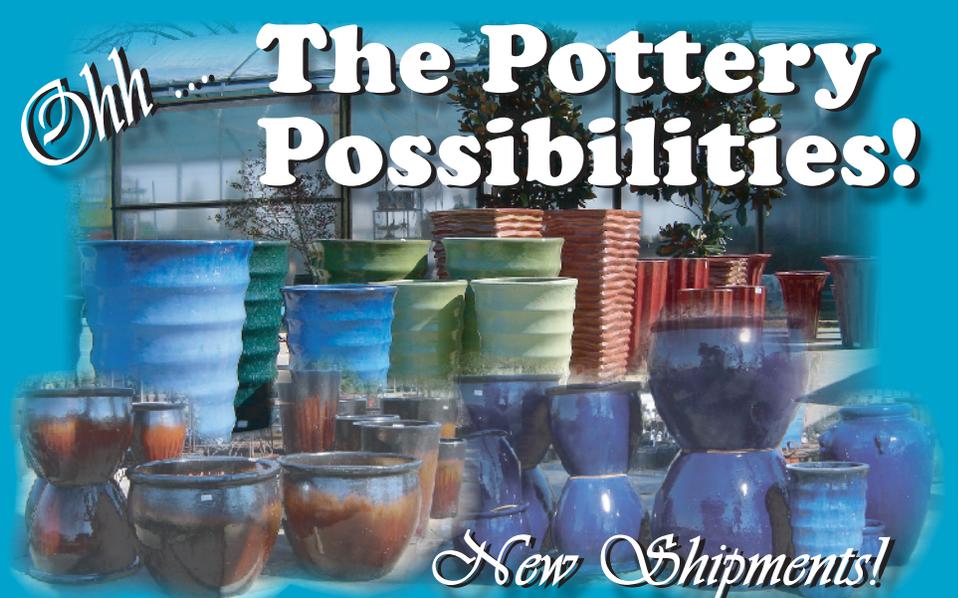
The Earth Kind Environmental Stewardship Program is a collaborative effort supported by the Texas Smartscape, the Texas Waterwise Council and the Texas Nursery and Landscape Association.

All of us at Shades of Green know how important it is to offer you the best selection of native and well-adapted plants. We also want to help you select the landscape supplies and amendments you need to be conscientious environmental stewards. We look forward to working with you as you continue to improve and make your landscape "Earth Kind".

BAG IT!
Get \$5.00 OFF
With Your Purchase of \$35.00 or More of
Bagged Goods!
Mulch, Compost
and other
Soil Amendments
Present This Coupon
(Yes, you have to present this coupon)

 Not Valid With Any Other Offer
Offer Expires April 1st, 2007

Ohh ... **The Pottery Possibilities!**



New Shipments!

Phlox Talks ...

I can remember Phlox 'Minnie Pearl' making it back to Texas from Plant Delights Nursery in North Carolina, but I haven't seen her since. If I planted it at the house, she never did anything. If I brought it to the greenhouse, she disappeared (read 'died') before it could be propagated. As you (and I) get older it seems like gardening becomes one big question. "Where did that plant go?" "Where did that plant come from?" "Who weeded over here?" "Who moved this?" "Where's my clippers?" "When did this flower turn yellow?" "Somebody answer that phone!"

Any-who. 'Minnie Pearl' is gone (I think). Funny that I would have even bought a Phlox. I have never had much luck with them in Texas. Oddly enough, we are going to try at least four new varieties of Phlox this year. Why? I don't know. Let's hope we can find one or two good ones. By good ones, I mean a Phlox that will live at least three years or more. Some are for sun and some for shade. All will have to be drought tolerant and handle once a week watering. As always, soil prep will make the difference. Add lots of compost when planting Phlox. And they all demand well-drained soil. Other than that, they are on their own. Tough love here in Texas, isn't it? There are lots of Phlox, and because they hybridize easily, a bit confusing.

Quickly, before we get bored, the early spring blooming Phlox subulata or "Thrift" we aren't concerned with here. I would forbid anyone to plant the pink one, but I like the blue one. (By the way, it's just personal, there are no right or wrong plants. You dig the hole, you can plant whatever you want. They can't take that away from you.)

All Phlox are native to the United States, but only the woodland types are native in Texas. Look for Phlox divaricata 'Louisiana Blue' or any of the Phlox pilosa types. They do well in shade and are fragrant. Phlox pilosa 'Arborside' was named for a plant growing on the side of the arbor at the entrance of the Heard Museum in McKinney. Very hard to find, very easy to grow. New to us this year will be Phlox pilosa 'Eco Happy Traveler' with

'Robert Poore' Phlox



by Brice Creelman

rose pink flowers, and Phlox 'Spring Delight' a hybrid that we know absolutely nothing about. We'll try them for the first time together. Good luck. East side shade is best for all these woodland types. Let them spread where they want to be.

They are not invasive and will work well in a shady spot as a ground cover. Phlox paniculata or 'Summer Phlox' are the ones that are so misunderstood. All grow tall (36" or more) in sun and need some protection from our Texas wind. Also, 'Summer Phlox' is never talked about without the "mildew" word coming up. This is not always a problem in "drier" Texas and a lot of times the foliage, if it does get mildew, is hidden by other plants. Don't let it stop you from trying any of them. Put them at the back of the border and be patient. Summer blooms. Just between me and you, when you get any perennials through the first year here, you can't believe how big they will get after that. Phlox is a perfect example of a plant that gets better with age.

'Minnie Pearl' is (was) a Phlox paniculata, or 'Summer Phlox'. Best ones to try are 'David' (white), 'John Fannick' (light pink dark eye), 'Robert Poore' (dark pink), and a couple of new ones 'David's Lavender' (which is a lavender sport of David) and 'Shortwood' (which is also dark pink). 'Shortwood' is patented which sometimes means it really may be a better plant. Put 'Shortwood' on your short list of new plants to try this year. 'John Fannick' and 'Victoria' are the two Texas Superstar plants. 'John Fannick' is excellent, however 'Victoria' has been a problem to propagate. If you find it, buy it.

Also, because 'Summer Phlox' bloom towards the summer and are so tall, you won't always find them blooming in a one-gallon pot. It's best to buy them short and green in spring and let them get established in your landscape by summer. They are also great as a cut flower (butterflies are free!).

Here's to hoping that Minnie shows up this spring. Someplace. If not, there are tons of other Phlox to plant. Hey, where's my trowel?

**** NOTE ****

These new Phlox will not be available until April or early May. 'Minnie Pearl' may be later than that.



'David' Phlox



**Come
Join Us!**

ANNUAL OPEN HOUSE

SATURDAY, MARCH 3RD, 2007

Schedule of Events

9:00am - 10:00am (at the Greenhouse)

***"Soils, Composting,
& Building A Raised Bed"***

by Collin County Master Gardeners

10:00am - 11:00am (at the Greenhouse)

"Ten Texas Tuff Perennials"

by Brice Creelman

11:00am - Noon (at the Greenhouse)

***"Design, Irrigation, and Integrated
Pest Management"***

by Collin County Master Gardeners

Noon - 12:30pm (at the Greenhouse)

***"To Prune or Not To Prune
A Crape Myrtle"***

by Rob Wier

1:00pm - 1:45pm (at the Greenhouse)

"Trees & Shrubs"
(including Planting and Pruning)

by Collin County Master Gardeners

2:00pm - 3:00pm (at the Greenhouse)

"Perennials"

by Collin County Master Gardeners

Information Booths

~ Featuring ~

- Frisco Garden Club
- Collin County Master Gardeners
- Plano Pure
- Fellows Irrigation
- City of Frisco Environmental Services

"Bunnies & Buds" Easter Photos

~ By Misty Hoyt ~

Family Portraits with bunnies and some artfully created greenery, bountiful buds, and unique garden decor.

Appointments Recommended
[see website for details!]

Concessions Available

On The Front Porch

Fishing Contest (Kids 12 & Under!)

We'll provide the worms and corn for catching small sunfish and bass along the creek on the north side of the Creek Crossing.

**Bring Your Own Rod and Tackle!
Longest fish wins the contest!**

Cart Rides

With B.B. The Miniature Horse!
11:00am - 1:00pm

Bring your camera!

Blacksmithing Demonstrations Kestrel Ridge Forge, LLC

Free Shovel Sharpening
In The Pottery Barn!

**POTTERY
BARN**



"Bedding Plant Roundup"
Saturday, March 31, 2007

Bedding Plant Sale and Petting Zoo!

Come out and support the Frisco FFA

A portion of the day's proceeds will go to
support the students in Frisco FFA

Yee-Ha!



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March Fragrance Of The Month
~ PARIS ~



- kitchen pot racks
- fireplace tools
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- specialty gates
- repairs & re-work
- general welding

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www.ShadesOfGreenInc.com

NEWSLETTER



THE GREENLEAF



MARCH, 2007

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