

November 2011
Volume 9, Issue 11

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Educational programs of the Texas AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, or national origin. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas are cooperating.

**HCMG monthly meeting,
1:00 pm, November 2,
at the Kerr County AgriLife
Extension Office. The speaker
on “leading edge” Sustainable
Lifestyles is Professor
and Master Gardener
Chris Oefinger**



Mr. Oefinger has been involved with Master Gardeners since 2005, is a two year past President of Cypress Basin Master Gardeners in Titus County and is currently the 1st Vice President of the Texas State Master Gardeners Association holding specialist certificates in *Greenhouse Management, Rainwater Harvesting, Junior Master Gardeners* and *EarthKing™ Landscaping*. He has had a lifelong involvement with agriculture from farming to ranching while earning recognition as one of General Electric’s leading public speakers and was the Aubrey E. Pilgrim *Man of the Year* in 2008 for the Camp County Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Oefinger has been active in several volunteer organizations: 4-H, Junior Master Gardeners, and Titus County Food Pantry while serving on the Camp County Chamber of Commerce for three years. He is currently teaching *Horticulture, Introduction to Sustainable Agriculture* and a *Small Farms* course while helping in the development of the *Eagle Eye Demonstration Gardens*.

Mr. Oefinger was born and raised in Dallas County, Texas and grew up with relatives involved in agriculture in Grand Prairie and Hondo, Texas. He joined the Air Force in 1966 and served four years, two in Southeast Asia during the Viet Nam War. He then attended Southwest Texas Junior College and completed coursework in their Farm and Ranch program for one year before transferring to Texas A&M University where he earned a BS in Agricultural Education and an MA in Agriculture Development. During this time he taught high school agriculture for two years, then in 2000 he earned his second Masters in Counseling. He moved back to Pittsburg in 2004 and lives on a farm inherited from his parents.



President's Message *Chris Seifert*

November 2011

What a great time of year - relief from the summer heat, a bit of rain, green fields and hope for the gardener. I planted carrot seeds and pulled a bunch of weeds just to celebrate. Next I'm sprucing up the porch plants.

October 11th through the 14th was the International Master Gardeners Conference in Charleston, West Virginia. The tours, speakers and activities promoted on the website were *tantalizing*. If you or someone you know attended, please share the highlights with us at the November 2 meeting. Just call me for room on the agenda.

Good news needs sharing. Timekeeper, **John Laroche's** January through September summary report is amazing. Congratulations Hill Country Master Gardeners on 6,407 volunteer hours contributed! You provided information to 3,206 people and in addition, our website received over 5,500 hits! Well done!

As you know, **Roy Walston** must submit a monthly report of all the AgriLife Extension accomplishments from January to December each year. In support of that, our very dedicated **John LaRoche** tediously gathers and totals information from all 112 of us. Thanks to you who report your work to him faithfully each month! Timely reporting makes the workload for our Timekeeper more manageable (humane).

Surely you've heard before, but be reminded again that November is the last month of the HCMG fiscal year. That means now is the time to finish up your volunteer hours and to finish reporting all you have done. Since John occasionally prints an itemized progress report for each one of us, it is clear that some MGs have worked harder than they've reported so far. We want to give you credit! Please send in your time sheets, with volunteer hours divided by month, and each month totaled. If you don't remember for sure just what you did, guesstimate!

Throughout November your new executive committee will be catching up on our annual business as a 501(c)3 and on our ongoing projects and programs. They will be planning for 2012 and beyond, gathering ideas and anticipating what Hill Country Master Gardeners will do and be if the drought continues. They will need to hear from you.

The outgoing leadership and the committee chairs agree that continued participation at Kerr County Market Days is important. Of course if there is no water for landscapes, we would be foolish, even unethical to sell plants. I am already concerned about the economic impact our weather has had on local plant nurseries. Of course, without or with minimal plants to sell, the role of the Market Days Coordinator will change.

2012 will be an excellent time to increase our educational impact. In addition to promoting rainwater catchment and selling rain barrels, we can share all we have been applying in our own lives. We could promote container gardening, mulching and composting, and fire-wise landscaping as well as drought tolerant planting. Those of you who are talented at graphic presentation are needed to polish our Market Days educational presentations.

What a great time of year. The changes now and the ones to come can be quite refreshing.





MORE ON SAFER INSECTICIDES

by Marilyn Pease

Last month's article on *Essentria* piqued my interest (and, hopefully, yours) regarding finding more herbal/natural alternatives to commercial

insecticides and pesticides.

Now I like insects probably a whole lot more than most other Master Gardeners, but I am not averse to occasionally dispatching a few of them to bug heaven. And if that can be done using a more environmentally friendly product, so much the better. Below is a list of some interesting herbal/natural alternatives that I found.



- Keep a bay leaf in your flour canister to repel weevils.

- Peppermint oil on a cotton ball in drawers will repel mice. (I know this works!)
- Basil, lavender and rosemary planted near a

doorway will repel flies and mosquitoes.

- Sweet woodruff strewn under carpets will repel carpet beetles.



- Orange oil containing products can kill on contact within 15 minutes, especially cockroaches. The D-limonene contained in the peel destroys the wax coating of the insect's breathing tubes and causes them to suffocate. (I use this all the time.)



- Good old borax or boric acid will get rid of ants and cockroaches. This mild acid, when ingested destroys the insect's innards and alters its metabolism. Also the gritty nature of boric acid abrades the exoskeleton causing the insect to lose fluid and dehydrate in a similar mechanism to diatomaceous earth. (You can make your own boric acid ant traps.)

I hope we all can try to cut down on unnecessary chemical usage where possible and do keep in mind that "natural" does not mean "harmless".

GREAT TOUR FOR GARDEN LOVERS

Sherry Egloff is going on Dietert Center's Netherlands tour April 30 - May 10, 2012. Included will be:

1. World famous FLORIADE Horticulture Exhibit held every 10 years featuring flora from around the world as well as cultural & green tech presentations.
2. World famous KEUKENHOF Flower Gardens featuring over 7 million blooming flowers.
3. CLAUDE MONET'S home & palatial gardens in Giverny where his famous floral paintings come to life.
4. The tour finishes in PARIS with dinner in the Eiffel Tower followed by a Seine River cruise.

INFORMATION Camille Sandusky, Deitert Happy Travelers (830) 792-4044

Green Step



DON'T POUR GREY WATER DIRECTLY ON YOUR PLANTS



Most common detergents will make greywater alkaline. This is hard on most plants if soil organisms don't have a chance to clean the greywater first. Some stores sell greywater compatible detergents, but you can filter the greywater through a layer of mulch and fertile soil. This is usually enough to restore the pH balance.

Bernadell Larson



Calendar of Events

Attendance at events other than Master Gardener meetings is optional; events are listed for those wishing to attend other educational offerings. Be sure to call and confirm event.

by Betty West

October 25 – Fredericksburg NPSOT meets at 7 pm at the Gillespie County Law Enforcement Center, Community Meeting Room, 1601 East Main Street. Barbara Lowenthal & Julie Clay (Riverside Nature Center's Gleaners) will discuss "*Seeds, the Fruit of Matter.*" Visitors welcome.

October 27 – HCMG hosts Kelly Bender's workshop on "*Texas Wildscapes – Gardening for Wildlife*" at the Kerr County AgriLife Ext. Ofc., 10 am – 3 pm. Copies of her book will be on sale. Reservations on stand-by basis now. Don't forget your sack lunch.

November 2 - HCMG monthly meeting is at 1:00 pm at Kerr County AgriLife Extension Office. The speaker on "leading edge" Sustainable Lifestyles is Professor and Master Gardener Chris Oefinger.

November 7 - Kerrville Garden Club meets at 1 pm. Trina Cullins of *The Plant Haus 2* will present "*Xeriscaping.*" Contact <mailto:vkilleen@stx.rr.com> for reservations and meeting location. Visitors welcome.

November 8 - Kerrville NPSOT meets at Riverside Nature Center at 5 pm. Light refreshments served at 4:30 pm. David Winningham discusses "*The Art of Growing Wildflowers.*" Visitors welcome.

November 9 - Rose Garden Club of Medina meets at Medina Community Center (13857 St. Hwy. 16 N at 2 pm. Znobia "Zee" Wootan, *Native American Seed*, will address "*Connecting Native Prairie Grasses & Wildflowers to the Well Being of Your Land.*" Visitors welcome.

November 9 - Fredericksburg Garden Club meets at 2 pm at the Memorial Presbyterian Church Fellowship Hall, 607 N. Milam. Visitors welcome.

November 15 - Hunt Garden Club meets at the Hunt United Methodist Church's Activity Hall. Brunch is served at 9:30 am followed by the program at 10:00. Debby Gibson's topic is "*Growing Herbs and Enhancing our Well Being.*" Visitors welcome.



INTERPLANTING in the ECOLOGICAL GARDEN

by Bernadell Larson

In the ecological garden, we chose plants that will collect minerals, water, and air, shade the soil and renew it with leafy mulch; and give us fruits and greens for people and wildlife. But, all these pieces have to be connected in the proper relationship to take advantage of the component synergies. Each component supports, enhances, and benefits the others. Monocultures (planting a massive area of a single plant) deplete the soil and provide a sumptuous feast for pests. You can avoid these problems by practicing interplanting, companion planting, or creating plant communities. In this article we will discuss interplanting, with the other two discussed in subsequent articles.

In the vegetable garden, interplanting is mixing different varieties together to save space and avoid solid clumps of one vegetable. Most vegetable gardeners have used interplanting to deter pests and save space. But this principle can also be applied to plant communities that can benefit, not just people, but all of nature.

An example of a simple interplanting scheme is mixing onions, carrots and lettuce in the same garden bed. These plants have different leaf shapes, light requirements, and root depths. This makes them compatible both physically and in terms of their resource needs. The cylindrical leaves of onions grow straight

up, causing little shade. The feathery carrot leaves spread out but don't create deep shadows. Even though lettuce forms a solid mass of greenery, it is short and casts its shade below the other plants. The three different leaf forms blend well together, which allow ample sunlight to bathe each plant. Also, lettuce needs less sun than onions and carrots, so the slight shade cast by the onions and carrots will not impede the lettuce's growth. With this method, lettuce can be grown in summer (lettuce tends to bolt and taste bitter in the summer if it is not shaded). Another benefit is that the roots do not compete for space. Onions are shallow rooted, carrots go deep and straight down, and a lettuce root level is between the other two plants.

Some other combinations are: Brussels sprouts, parsley, spinach, and onions. These work well together because the spinach and onions are ready before the sprouts mature, and the parsley can

tolerate some shade. In addition their root depths are different. Another combination which works well is radishes, lettuce, and peppers. Radishes grow fast, and the lettuce does not mind the shade of the young peppers. By the time the peppers are full grown, the radishes and lettuce have been harvested.

Most interplanting simply combines plants to avoid negative interactions, like competition for space or light. If that is your only goal, interplanting will work well for you. But, it does not blend plants into dynamic, interactive associations the way nature does, and it rarely capitalizes on the mutual benefits plants can provide each other, such as deterring pests or transporting and storing nutrients. Next month we will explore another technique, *Companion Planting*, which takes advantage of some of these benefits.

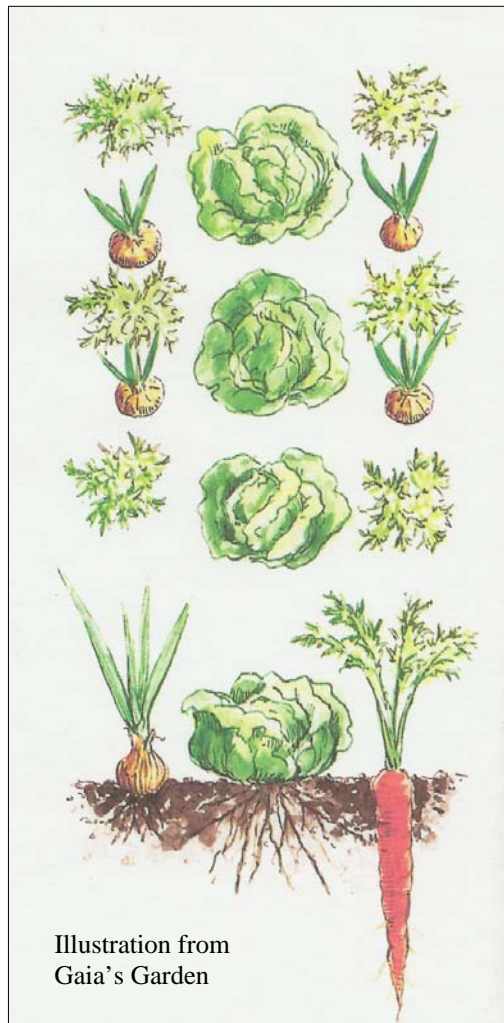


Illustration from
Gaia's Garden

HILL COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS**October 5, 2011
MINUTES**

The meeting was called to order by President Chris Seifert at 2:15 p.m. October 5 after a presentation by Christine Muse, Executive Director and Peggy Sechrist, Assistant Director, of Hill Country Alliance. There were 41 members in attendance.

Members unanimously approved minutes from the September meeting as written.

Treasurer's Report: **Roy Eliff** reported earlier at the Committee Chair Meeting that there is \$19,920 in the general fund and about \$58,300 in the scholarship fund.

New Business:

Ida Luckey congratulated and introduced newly certified Master Gardener **Valerie Fishell**.

Sign Up Opportunities:

Mentor Program: **June Sher** announced she has openings for mentors for the class of 2012. **Sandy Martin**, a mentor for several years, explained how the program works and what is required of a mentor. A sign-up sheet was passed around.

Demo Garden: **Barbara Elmore** will chair the committee in 2012. She feels there will be challenges with regard to the drought and watering issues and will have planning sessions to gather ideas for replanting the garden areas. Contact her if you wish to attend.

Kerr County Fair: Only two slots need to be filled. A sign-up sheet was passed around.

Announcements by Chris Seifert:

Official announcement of the nominated officers to be voted on in November:

Pat McCormick, President,
Patty Zohlen, Vice President,
Diane McMahan, Treasurer, and
Jackie Connelly, Secretary.

Two beautifully designed raffle/auction gardening

baskets were made for fund raiser events for the 4H and the Riverside Nature Center. Thank you to **Julie Bartosh, Jane Clint** and **Jackie Connelly**.

Gillespie County has a new Agrilife Extension Agent – Brad Roeder, a long time resident of Gillespie County.

Other announcements:

Vickie Killeen said the installation of a new shade cloth, top, pump and water wall for the greenhouse was completed, and the building is fully operational. Check the October newsletter for pictures.

Debbie Russell announced the *Wildscape Workshop* presented by Kelly Bender is scheduled for Oct 27. There are 45 members attending.

Webmaster **Carol Brinkman** thanked everyone who sent in their drought report/pictures and especially **Vickie Killeen** who provided an in-depth report on water restrictions for the Hill Country area. Carol invited anyone to send her ideas on how to keep the website fresh and updated.

Office Manager **Liz Althaus** has placed a box for lost and found items in the office. She reminded everyone to please keep the office area tidy.

Publicity Chair **China Long** wants your information and ideas for future articles.

Cindy Anderson invited those interested to join the Kerrville NPSOT field trip to Cibolo Nature Center on Saturday, Oct 8. Contact her for more information.

Tommie Airhart said recycling baskets have been purchased for the classroom and asked everyone to please recycle while attending one of our meetings.

Thank you to **Fay Drozd** for making the new door window covering.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:45 pm. The next HCMG meeting will be held 1 p.m. on Nov 2 in the AgriLife Extension classroom.

Respectfully submitted,
Jackie Connelly, Secretary



NOVEMBER GARDENING TIPS
by Kathie Marlow

It is time to divide and replant your overgrown or crowded perennials and bulbs. Plant agapanthus (Lily of the Nile) and amaryllis for spring and summer bloom. Spring may seem a long time away, but if you want to enjoy tulips, crocus and other spring bloomers, now is the time to plant. In addition to planting out in the garden, consider planting some bulbs in containers.

Sow seeds for late-winter and early spring plantings. Remove tired or dead summer plants. Add only disease-free ones to the compost pile.

Weed, water, fertilize and deadhead plants as needed. Prepare beds for new plantings.

Continue to add compost and mulch to your flower beds.

Mow your lawn only when needed. You may want to leave the fallen debris as food for the birds during the winter time. And with the drought this year you may want to consider turning your yard into a drought resistant wildflower meadow! Monitor your plants daily for water needs and pest control.

Prune and shape permanent tree and shrub plantings. Continue planting cool-season annuals. Replace and plant new trees and shrubs in containers for future needs.

Before you put away your tools, wash them from stem to stern and wipe the blade with alcohol to prevent spreading fungus. After you sharpen the blades, wipe some mineral oil on all of the metal parts. Now you are ready to start in next spring's growing and flowering frenzy.

Moringa Oleifera -
Magic or Miracle Tree of Life

by Judy Fleming

From the seeds, the pods, the bark, roots and leaves, it is the most generous giver of life enhancing nutrients.



I am so excited to discover this tree! I first saw it in southern Spain and I was unable to discover its name. Recently, a friend of mine that lives in Johannesburg, South Africa, sent me an article about this wondrous tree. It really is a miracle tree in that every part of it can be consumed. It is a super food of nutrients, is used medicinally, provides growing support to crops, and the seeds produce oil with the resulting pulp used in water purification! Ronco did not invent this tree.

The moringa is native to India and its use has spread throughout Asia, Africa, South America and Oceania and is now being cultivated in California, Arizona and Florida. It is commonly known as the Horse Radish Tree because of its pungent edible root. It has been used in Ayurvedic medicine for over 300 years to treat 300 known diseases. Science is confirming that this fast-growing, almost indestructible, drought-

resistant tree is a nutritional wonder. Nutritional lab analyses are showing that the moringa leaves are very high in protein and contain all of the essential amino acids (similar complete amino acid ratio as meat), including two amino acids that are especially important for children's diets. Moringa leaves are also loaded with essential vitamins and minerals, especially vitamins A and C. Delivering such a power punch of bio-available nutrition, Moringa leaves are capable of preventing malnutrition and a host of other nutritionally related diseases such as beri beri and rickets.

Moringa Leaves, gram for gram, contain:
7 times the Vitamin C in oranges, plus
4 times the calcium in milk, plus
4 times the Vitamin A in carrots, plus
2 times the protein in milk, plus
3 times the potassium in bananas



The flowers can be eaten or used to make a tea rich in calcium and potassium. They are also good for beekeepers. The leaflets can be used in any spinach recipe. Small trees can be harvested for their tap root which can be ground with vinegar and salt for a horseradish-like paste.

Continues on bottom of Page 10

Extreme Makeover – Greenhouse Edition

by Vickie Killeen



The old girl was sorely in need of attention, having limped along on a wish and a promise throughout our busy spring growing season.

So, on Wednesday, Sept. 21, 2011, **Anne Brown, David Buchen, Don Walzel, Keith Frantom, Lee Fry** and **Vickie Killeen**, led by **Ron Richerson's** experienced direction, updated our greenhouse from its bare bones. Built in 2004, the original components had outperformed the best predictions

of 3-4 years service.



Starting at the top, the team stretched a new double layer of polyethylene film over the existing metal

frame. Winter winds had ripped open one layer in February, compromising heating and growing conditions.

Then, a new sump pump was installed to pump water through new evaporative cooling pads. The pads provide much-needed moisture to the greenhouse while reducing heat inside. Limescale (calcium carbonate) water deposits on the discarded pads were so thick and heavy that everyone thought the



OLD



NEW

old pads were metal, similar to a car's radiator. Actually, they are a light, specially-formulated cellulose paper.

The final touch was a new, larger shade cloth to shade the entire greenhouse with 50% sunlight



reduction. (The old, too-small cloth will be recycled as an additional shade layer when needed on the wooden shade house.)

Then it was show time... While everyone held their breath, the fan was turned on. The double roof inflated trapping an insulating air layer. After plugging in the pump and turning on the water, the cooling effect of the evaporation pads was welcome relief as the late morning heated up.

HCMG's new Propagation Committee has a refurbished, operational greenhouse to start their season. Success in seed germination and rooted cuttings is sure to follow!



The shade cloth is being put on over the 2-layer poly roof



Old corroded pump



Anne checks the new cooling system



ALL THINGS EDIBLE - November 2011

Finally! a little break from the Great Drought of 2011. I hope the skies smiled on your property and your garden is beginning to recover. If you are a weather geek like I am, you might be interested in this website by the Community Collaborative Rain, Hail and Snow Network:

www.CoCoRaHS.org. Plug in your state and county and you can see how much rain you and your neighbors received. Word of caution: It's not nice to covet your neighbors' rain!

Although my usual fall garden wasn't planted in August and September, I did stick a toe in the water this week by sowing seeds of lettuce, radish and spinach. I've also planted garlic and shallots. You can divide and re-plant bunching onions. I just can't get excited about planting a large garden while we still have water restrictions. You can still plant cool season greens: kale, mustard, turnips, spinach and cilantro.

As you clean out old plants from the summer garden, if the foliage is diseased, do not put it in your compost bin. Examine the roots of tomatoes and peppers. If you see roots with swollen gall-like structures, or you have had problems with root-knot nematodes in the past, consider planting Elbon rye this fall. The rye acts as a trap-crop for the nematodes. This website gives details about planting the rye, which does an excellent job of remediation.

<http://bexar-tx.tamu.edu/HomeHort/F1Column/2006%20Articles/Nov4ElbonRye.htm>.

If you have unused garden space, consider planting a cover crop to increase organic matter in your soil. November is the perfect time to sow the seeds. Skip Richter in Austin has an excellent article on "Winter Soil Care," where he discusses which cover crops to choose:

<http://www.garden.org/regional/report/arch/inmygarden/2615>

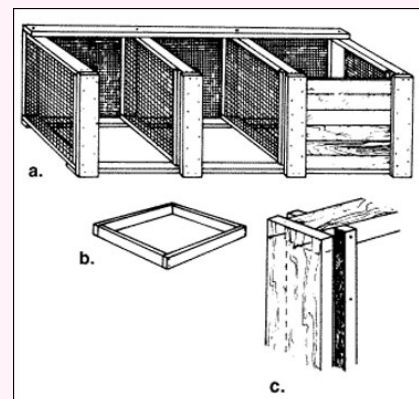
If you don't want to plant cover crops, at least cover fallow areas with mulch to prevent winter weeds and to get your soil ready for a winter garden (January) or spring garden (April). Preventing winter weeds is preferable to digging them out when you are ready to plant.

I believe you have to "grow" your soil before you can grow healthy plants. As Master Gardeners we joke that the answer to every garden problem is "compost," and you can never have too much compost. If you don't have a compost bin, consider building one during these cooler months. For about \$50 you can build three circular wire bins from 1/2" mesh hardware cloth. Supplies needed: 25' roll of 36" width hardware cloth, 6 lengths of 1"x 2"x 36" treated lumber, 6 large hook-and-eye latches, tin snips, and staples for staple gun. Directions and a diagram are found here:

<http://whatcom.wsu.edu/ag/compost/compostbins.htm>.

Due to our semi-arid climate, it is difficult to keep a compost pile like the recommended "wet sponge" to make "hot" compost. I make what is called cold or "slow" compost. The good news is there is no heavy-duty work to turn the pile and the bad news is plant pathogens and weed seeds are not destroyed as in the hot composting process.

COMPOSTING
Wood and wire three-bin turning unit



Hill Country Master Gardeners 2011 Executive Committee

Chris Seifert - President
Barbara Elmore - Vice President
Jackie Connelly - Secretary
Roy Eliff - Treasurer
Randy Simmons - Ex-officio Advisor
Roy Walston - C.E.A. Advisor

Committees

Archivist: Ida Luckey

Demonstration Garden: Dorothy & David Buchen, Chairs

Education: Debbie Russell, Chair

Greenhouse: Vickie Killeen & Anne Brown, Chairs

HCMG Office Manager: Liz Althaus

Horticultural Inquiry: Anne Moss

Information: Betty West

Jr. Master Gardener Program: Sandy Martin, Chair

Market Days: Ron Smith II, Chair

Mentors: June Sher

Programs: Melva Chancellor & Jane Rackley

Public Relations: China Long

Record Keeping & Volunteer Hours: John LaRoche

Scholarship: Judy Fleming, Chair

Speakers Bureau: Kathy Lewis

Technology: Cindy Anderson

Volunteer Email Coordinator: Jackie Connelly

Newsletter & Website Chair & Newsletter Editor

Eleanor Baldwin

Assistant Editors - Betty West & Kathie Marlow

Columnists - Pam Bresler, Barbara Elmore, Marilyn Pease, Judy Fleming

Environmental Reporter

Bernadell Larson

Special Projects Reporter - Vickie Killeen

Webmaster - Carol Brinkman

Web Assistants - Anne Moss, Julie Bartosh, & Betty West

Submissions to baldwin@kctc.com



Webmaster Carol Brinkman's Website of the Month

I have said it myself, and I have heard others in our organization say something similar to, "I'm going to have to re-think (re-design, re-consider) my garden when/if this drought is over." *Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center* has an excellent list of drought-tolerant plants at http://www.wildflower.org/collections/collection.php?collection=centex_drought.

This list is a great starting point as you begin planning your AD garden (after drought). While you are visiting their site, consider signing up for their monthly newsletter; it always has good information.

Moringa Oleifera continued from Page 7:

The young pods can be cooked like string beans while seeds from mature pods can be processed for an excellent oil that does not become rancid. Miracle?

The moringa likes sandy well drained soil and is very drought resistant. Although it is considered tropical or sub-tropical, it seems to thrive in impossible places — even near the sea - in bad soil and dry areas. The moringa can be propagated from seed which will sprout in one or two weeks, or from cuttings which will stabilize in a very short time. It can be expected to bloom within 8 months after planting. The only down side is that it does not tolerate temperatures below 32 ° F, so would need to be protected in the winter.

Both the *World Health Organization* and *Trees for Life* are supporting scientific research and propagation of this tree to address world hunger. I plan to acquire seeds in January from a grower in California to experiment with this plant. If anyone else is interested in determining if we could grow this magic plant in the Hill Country, please drop me a line and I will include you in this exciting activity.

<http://moringa-miracletree.com/>
<http://www.treesforlife.org/our-work/our-initiatives/moringa>



Disclaimer: Statements in this article have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration and are not intended to cure, treat or diagnose any disease or illness.

