



Grow, Know, and Go

April 2024

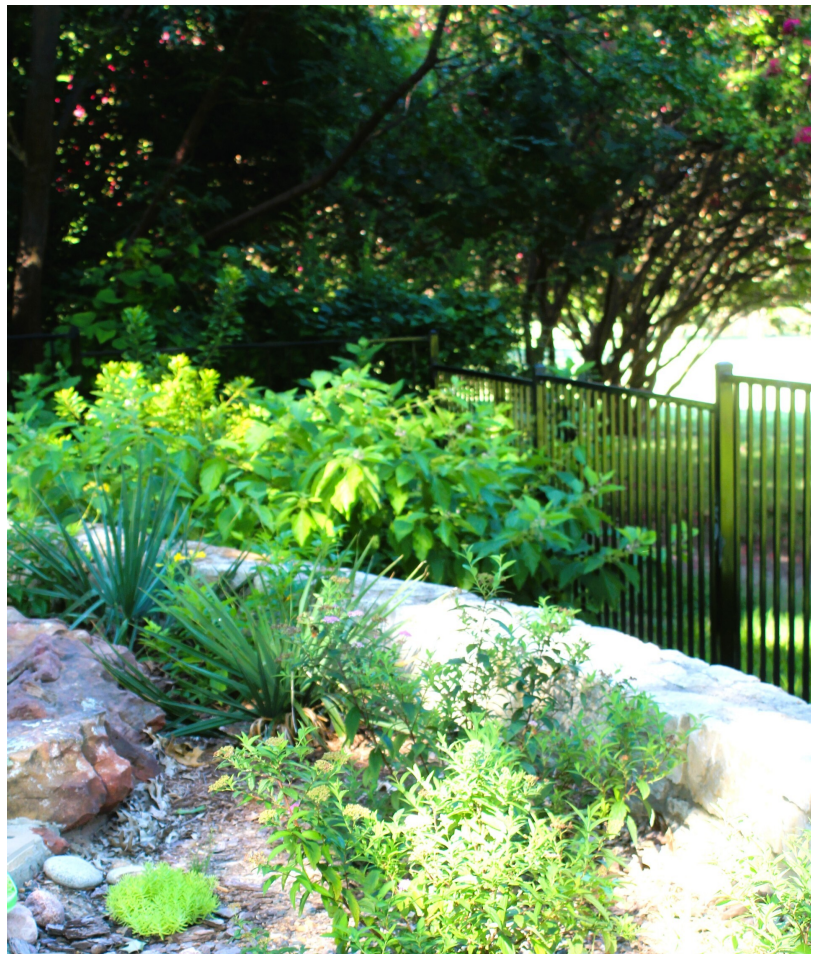
Gardening in North Texas

DCMGA Garden Tour Preview: The Garden of Monica Nagle

By Alan Rister, Dallas County Master Gardener

Upon entering the garden of Monica Nagle, a Dallas County Master Gardener since 2018, one immediately notices two outstanding and unique characteristics: its adjacency to vast, open public park lands, and the natural slope of the site itself. The property's lack of immediate neighbors on two-and-a-half sides of the lot is extremely rare in an urban neighborhood, and it provides an extraordinary wealth of "borrowed views" into the wooded areas and open lawns of Norbuck Park. That proximity to the 100-acre park near White Rock Lake was indeed one of the principal attributes of the house and lot which attracted Monica and her husband, Tom, to this property where they have lived since 2016.

The Nagle's back yard has a pronounced downward slope from southeast to northwest, and designer Chris Calle of BlueLine Outdoor took advantage of it by positioning a beautiful swimming pool at the lowest level. He elegantly carved the separate spa into its own space on the side of the incline overlooking the pool. Multiple terraces for planting beds are stair-stepped down several levels across the yard, gracefully descending from the top of the



property to the bottom.

The shade garden, which is dominated by a very large red oak tree (*Quercus shumardii*), hugs the west side of the back yard, which is screened beyond by an adjacent dense thicket of native woods, providing shelter for wildlife and privacy for the yard. Watching over the shade garden is a screech owl nesting box, constructed by Tom as a gift to Monica. After several years without an owl occupant, one finally took up residence last year and displaced the unwelcome squirrels who had been “squatting” in the box.



The butterfly garden is located in a sunnier spot next to the shade garden. It is planted with various host and nectar plants from a list prepared especially for Monica's garden by fellow Dallas County Master Gardener Janet D. Smith, a noted expert on all things “butterfly.”

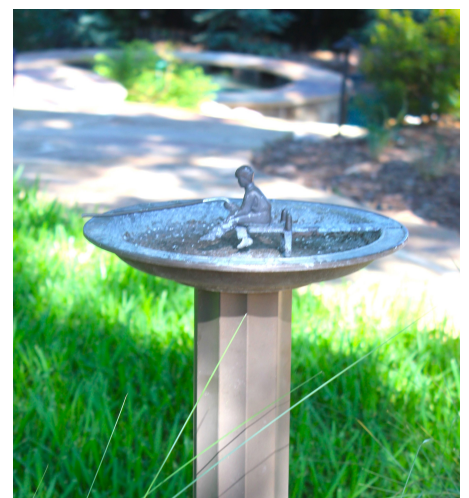


Monica has built a vegetable garden in raised beds along the sunny alley just outside the yard's perimeter fence. She grows typical annual crops such as tomatoes, peppers, snap peas, and pole beans, as well as more unusual and challenging plants such as globe artichokes and perennial asparagus. She is especially excited to have recently discovered and planted June-bearing raspberry plants, which remind her of her childhood years in the Mid-Atlantic states. She devised a clever means of connecting the irrigation system for the raised beds so it can be operated as part of the yard's automatic sprinklers or, alternately, attached to a garden hose for supplemental watering.

This garden's very diverse plant inventory includes more than 100 species and varieties, which include both native and adapted plants. All of the garden owners on this year's tour, including Monica, are advocates for native plants and supporting the local ecosystem, though the proportions of natives in the total plantings vary widely from one garden to the next. Native plants are drought tolerant because of their deeper root systems; they also support wildlife by providing food and shelter, are mostly non-invasive, and do not require fertilization or pesticides.

Many gardeners place one or two—or even more—sentimental objects in their gardens. For Monica, this proudly includes a special birdbath featuring a boy fishing on a dock, an anniversary present from her parents. She also hangs a cheerfully-decorated birdhouse in a small Mexican Buckeye tree at the front corner of her home, a special inheritance from a favorite aunt. No birds live there as it has rather become a home to native bees.

Monica's favorite thing about her garden is simply that it is an open and invigorating place where she can relax outdoors and “dig in the dirt.” It is a beautiful refuge where she can escape from the demands of her duties as the current president of the Dallas County Master Gardener Association. As her garden demonstrates, Monica leads by example.



The upcoming DCMGA Garden Tour on May 18 will feature eight beautiful gardens, including the garden of Monica Nagle. See a sneak peek of the gardens on our [DCMGA website](#) and purchase tickets [here](#).



Avoid Oak Wilt With Proper Tree Maintenance

By Georgeann Moss, Dallas County Master Gardener Intern

Oak wilt is one of the most destructive and infectious tree diseases in the United States, and parts of central Texas are experiencing an epidemic. It is caused by a fungus called *Bretziella fagacearum*, which invades and debilitates the water-conducting system of the tree. Oak wilt can kill a tree in a matter of months, and while it has been identified in Dallas County, we have had fewer cases than many other areas.

Oak wilt fungus is spread in two ways: Sap-feeding beetles can carry spores from tree to tree, or the fungus can spread from tree to tree through interconnected roots. You can help protect your trees from oak wilt with proper maintenance and care for tree injuries.

- All wounds should be painted over immediately with a light coating of tree paint to create a physical barrier to the fungus. This includes wounds from pruning, construction activities, livestock, land clearing, lawnmowers, string trimmers and storms.

- Avoid all unnecessary pruning between February and June as any new wounds on oaks can be an entry point for oak wilt infection. (Necessary pruning includes the removal of hazardous limbs for public safety or those limbs rubbing on a structure. Be sure to immediately paint over these wounds.)

- Don't prune for aesthetics or controlling growth if a tree is already showing signs of stress. (Recent droughts and freezes have caused a great deal of stress on trees.)




- Sterilize your pruning tools to avoid spreading the fungus.

Learn more about oak wilt prevention at texasoakwilt.org.



PRUNING CALENDAR FOR OAK WILT PREVENTION

Oak Wilt, one of the most destructive tree diseases in the United States, is killing oak trees in Central Texas at epidemic proportions. Proper pruning techniques and timing can help prevent oak wilt. Oak wilt is expensive to manage, affects aesthetics and decreases property value. Prevention is key.

- FEBRUARY** ● Beetles that carry the fungus spores from tree to tree are **most active February-June**. Avoid pruning/wounding oaks February-June if possible. If pruning is a necessity for safety purposes, make sure to **PAINT ALL OAK WOUNDS IMMEDIATELY**.

- MAY** ● Oak trees typically show symptoms of oak wilt at this time of year. Reach out to a tree professional if concerned.

- JULY** ● Beetles and fungal mat activity decrease with high temperatures.
- AUGUST** ● Pruning your oak trees in the heat of summer can stress the tree. Try to wait until fall/winter to tackle pruning unless safety is a concern.
- OCTOBER** ● Now is a good time to prune your trees, but always paint oak wounds immediately!
- NOVEMBER** ● Fall is a great time to plant new trees!
- DECEMBER** ● Don't move firewood! Never use infected red oak wood.
- JANUARY** ● Wrap up your tree pruning.


 Visit texasoakwilt.org for more information.



Native Plants and Prairies Day

Presented by Native Plant Society of Texas, Dallas Chapter; Texas Master Naturalist, North Texas Chapter; and the Native Prairies Association of Texas, Blackland Prairie Chapter

Saturday, May 4, 2024
10:00 am to 3:00 pm

Bath House Cultural Center at White Rock Lake
521 East Lawther Drive, Dallas, TX



Native Plants and Prairies Day is a fun free event for families to celebrate our blackland prairies here in North Texas. Join us for our speakers, exhibits, tours and kid's activities.

Native Plants and Prairies Day highlights the importance and value of our North Texas prairies as habitat for bugs, birds and mammals and as a vital natural resource.



Guest Speakers

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| 10:15 am - 11:00 am | Judy Meagher - Insects of the Prairie |
| 11:15 am - 12:00 pm | Karin and Roberto Saucedo - Coyotes: Living in Harmony with America's Song Dog |
| 12:15 pm - 1:00 pm | Amy Martin - Discover North Texas Prairies |
| 1:15 pm - 2:00 pm | John Watts - What's the Buzz: An Introduction to the Bees of North Texas |
| 2:15 pm - 3:00 pm | Nancy Wilson - Landscaping for Birds |
| 3:15 pm - 4:00 pm | Janet Smith - Year-Round Blooms with Native Perennials |

Check out <https://ntxnppd.org> for more details!

Eight Great Plants to Bring Butterflies to your Garden

Texas Superstar® Plants Among Options to Attract Pollinators

"You can keep pollinators coming back to your



garden with reliable, continuous food sources that they like," says Molly Keck, AgriLife Extension entomologist for Bexar County. She recommends Texas Superstar® plants as good choices to survive and thrive in our Texas climate. Here are some of her Texas pollinator plant suggestions:

1. [Pride of Barbados](#): With showy orange and red flowers, it is a dramatic plant for Texas gardens. Depending on the zone it is grown in, it may serve as everything from an annual to a shrub.
2. [Henry Duelberg salvia](#): This true Texas native was discovered in Central Texas, growing at the grave of the person for whom it is named. It can bloom spring through fall if it is cut back regularly.
3. [Mystic spires blue salvia](#): This salvia flowers freely during the growing season and is a plant butterflies love. It has a very tubular flower, and the butterfly must use its long proboscis to get down into the nectar, which is exactly as it was designed to do.
4. [Lantanas](#): These are a good option available in many colors and bloom even during the hottest weather. The [new gold lantana](#) is very hardy and highly attractive to butterflies and native pollinators as well.
5. [Butterfly deep pink penta](#): Another option to bring blooms to your garden for three seasons are pentas. The unique star-shaped flowers are a dazzling color and relatively low maintenance and pest tolerant.
6. [Fall zinnias](#): When planted late summer, fall zinnias can play a crucial role in providing butterflies food in the fall, often up until the first frost. Available in a variety of bright colors, you can buy zinnias nearly year-round, but fall offers the most variety.
7. [Turk's cap](#): A native plant to South Texas, it is relatively low-maintenance, tough throughout Texas and attracts hummingbirds. Although it doesn't have a ton of flowers, the turban-shaped flowers it does produce are usually red, but varieties can range from white or pink or both.
8. [Gregg's mistflower](#): This quick growing native plant is beloved by bees and serves as a good food source in the fall for migrating butterflies like the Monarch.



Read more about bringing butterflies to your garden in [this article](#) in *AgriLife Today* by Susan Himes.

Upcoming Events

April 18, 2024 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm [Successful Seed Starting](#) Lakewood Library, 6121 Worth St., Dallas Save money and feel accomplished while you grow the varieties you want by starting your vegetables from seed. This demonstration shows step-by-step how to successfully propagate seeds and care for seedlings before planting them outdoors in the garden. Participants learn about the tools, supplies, and procedures. Speaker is Glen McGee.

April 19, 2024 11:00 am to 12:00 pm [Earth Day Presentation](#) Dallas Arboretum, Test Pavilion, 8525 Garland Road, Dallas. A history and information on citizen science, plus things that people can do to help our environment. Speaker is

Judy Meagher.

April 20, 2024 11:00 am to 1:00 pm [Bug Walk](#) Kiest Conservation Area, 3080 S. Hampton Road, Dallas. Come learn about bugs! Remember - if it is raining, we won't be there. But if it's just a little sprinkle, we probably will!

April 22, 2024 10:00 am to 11:00 am [Basic Garden Planning](#) Dallas Public Library - White Rock Hills Branch, 9150 Ferguson Rd., Dallas . Do you want to start a garden of herbs, flowers, or vegetables or a combination? This presentation outlines the first steps to take. It covers basic garden needs as well as what to grow, where to locate a garden, and where to get more information. Speaker is Stephen Seewoester.

April 25, 2024 12:00 pm to 1:30 pm [DCMGA Monthly Meeting](#) Brookhaven Campus, Dallas College, Room H125, H Building, 3939 Valley View Lane, Farmers Branch. John Hunt will be giving a talk on "Organic Gardening." John has been a MG for some years and is a member of the Speakers Bureau. He will be talking about the impact we can make as gardeners to maintaining a natural balance in the garden. Public welcome.

April 26, 2024 11:00 am to 12:00 pm [Unusual Herbs: Beyond the Basics](#) Dallas Arboretum, Test Pavilion, 8525 Garland Road, Dallas. From anise hyssop to cutting celery or salad burnett, delve into lesser-known herbs that can be grown in the Dallas area. For the gardener who craves variety and enjoys plants with unique properties. Speaker is Barbara Gollman.

April 27, 2024 11:00 am to 12:00 pm [How to Attract Butterflies & Hummingbirds](#) Dallas Public Library - Preston Royal Branch Library, 5626 Royal Lane, Dallas. Speaker is Janet D. Smith.

April 27, 2024 1:00 pm to 2:00 pm [Gardening in Small Places](#) Dallas Public Library - Oak Lawn Branch, 4100 Cedar Springs Road, Dallas. Apartment patios or urban courtyards can produce a bountiful stand of plants if you make the proper choices. Everything from containers to reclaimed grassland can be the basis of a pocket garden. Speaker is Barbara Gollman.

[View More at the DCMGA's Current Calendar of Events](#)



May

Download the [Homeowner's Fruit and Nut Spray Schedule](#)

Planting

- Plant caladiums and elephant ears as night temperatures reach 70 degrees.
- Plant ground covers and hot weather annuals such as periwinkles, portulaca, salvia, zinnias, and coleus.
- Continue to plant warm-season turf grasses.
- Finish planting black-eyed peas, cantaloupe, cucumber, eggplant, green beans (pole or bush type), lima beans, okra,

peppers, pumpkin, sweet corn, sweet potato, squash, and watermelon. Plant perennial herbs in prepared soil or containers.

- Plant hardy varieties of palms during the warm season from now to August.
- Tropical color plants including hibiscus, allamanda, bougainvillea, and mandevilla may be planted now.

Plant Care

- Check roses, ornamentals, and vegetables for aphids and powdery mildew.
- Continue Homeowner's Fruit and Nut Spray Schedule.
- Check roses for black spot and apply fungicide as necessary according to label directions.
- Watch for bagworms on junipers and other conifers, treat as required.
- Inspect broadleaf evergreen shrubs such as euonymus and hollies for scale insects, and treat as necessary.
- Check ornamentals, flowers, and vegetables for spider mites, which begin to appear with hot weather.
- Continue regular mowing of warm-season turf grasses every 5 to 7 days.
- Mow Bermuda, maintained at 1 1/4 to 1 1/2 inches, and St. Augustine, maintained at 2 1/2 inches in full sun to 3 to 3 1/2 inches in moderate shade.
- Check for chinch bugs in St. Augustine lawns (late May to Sept.). Also watch for gray leaf spot fungal disease.
- Mulch planting beds to conserve moisture, deter weeds, and keep soil cool.
- Be attentive to the water needs of new plantings.

Pruning

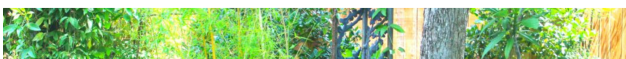
- Prune spring-blooming shrubs such as forsythia and Indian hawthorn after they finish flowering.
- Prune climbing roses after their blooms fade.
- Snip off the dried foliage of early spring bulbs such as daffodils and the faded flower stalks of irises.
- **To avoid oak wilt disease, do not prune live oaks and red oaks between February 15th and June 30th unless pruning is required for public safety or structural damage issues.**

New this month on our DCMGA Website:



DCMGA Garden Tour Preview: The Garden of Vera Guillén

By Alan Rister



The upcoming DCMGA Garden Tour on May 18th will



feature eight beautiful gardens, including the fabulous garden of Vera Guillén as one of the stops on this year's tour. [Read more ...](#)

Tips on Adding a Rain Barrel to your Garden

By the DCMGA Help Desk Team, Margaret Ghose



Setting up a rain barrel is a great way to save water for those non-rainy days in Texas. You can buy a ready-made barrel or construct one yourself, but before getting started, keep a few things in mind. [Read more ...](#)

Plant of the Month - Prunus mexicana "Mexican Plum"

By At Home Botanist Team



The Mexican Plum, botanically known as *Prunus mexicana*, is a versatile and captivating deciduous tree that's heralded for its early spring show of white, aromatic blossoms that hint at soft sunlight shades at the center of each flower. Noted for its drought-resistance, once established, the tree boasts glossy, oval leaves that turn a delightful yellow in the fall ... [Read more ...](#)

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