



Grow, Know, and Go

May 2024

Gardening in North Texas

DCMGA Garden Tour Preview: The SoPac Trail Respite Area Garden (Maggie Saucedo)

By Alan Rister, Dallas County Master Gardener

The SoPac Trail Respite Area Garden is a recently-created amenity that links adjacent neighborhoods to the relatively new SoPac Trail. It effectively functions as an entrance bridge between neighborhood and trail, and it provides beautification of the area where the trail passes under busy Mockingbird Lane East.

The garden is the brainchild of Dallas County Master Gardener Maggie Saucedo and her husband Felix, who were early advocates of the construction of the trail itself dating back to 2011. They have remained intimately involved with support of the whole project since then through the Friends of the SoPac Trail, of which Felix is the chair. For her part, Maggie organizes and oversees community volunteers, including Dallas County Master Gardeners, who perform the installation of plants and ongoing maintenance in the garden during monthly work days.

The trail project was initially a collaboration between Dallas County and the City of Dallas, with the city taking over control after construction of the trail was completed in 2021. The Saucedos worked

with the Dallas Park and Recreation Department on the creation of the garden space. New shade trees were provided by the city, and city-supplied infrastructure improvements included water supply connections, concrete edging that defines the area, and a concrete pad to accommodate a shade structure. Over the years, the Friends of the SoPac Trail have built a strong cooperative relationship with District 9 Park Board Member Maria Hasbany and the Park Department, with which



there is a formal beautification agreement.

The SoPac Friends commissioned the garden to be designed by Roger Sanderson, former Director of Horticulture at Texas Discovery Gardens (TDG) at Fair Park, who is a noted expert on Texas native plants. Plant selection was also guided and accommodated by another Dallas County Master Gardener, Roseann Ferguson, head of the plant propagation program at TDG, which is well known for its plant sales featuring native and adapted plants.



The first plantings took place in the fall of 2021, and since then the various native and Texas-adapted plants have flourished in the beds of well prepared soil. By careful selection of appropriate plants, this garden has gained official certification as a Monarch Waystation in recognition of its function as a pollinator garden. Although the garden was initially conceived as a beautification amenity for both trail users and neighborhood residents, it has also become a functional demonstration garden, since many visitors regularly ask the garden volunteers about the plants that they experience in it.

Funding for the garden plantings came from two grants from the Dallas Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas (NPSOT). Further funds for the shade structure, a water fountain, and other amenities were provided by Lyda Hill Philanthropies, Lakewood Trails and White Rock Neighborhood Associations, The Loop Dallas, and individual donations collected through the annual North Texas Giving Day appeal.

The SoPac trail is among the newest links in the interconnected 50-mile urban trail known as The Loop Dallas. Three of the trails are named for the railroads which formerly occupied these rights-of-way: Katy, Santa Fe, and SoPac (abbreviation for the Southern Pacific Railroad). When these rail lines became obsolete, their tracks were removed, and the former placements have been converted to the very popular amenity that they have become for walkers, runners, and cyclists.

The upcoming DCMGA Garden Tour on May 18 will feature eight beautiful gardens, including the garden at the SoPac Trail Respite Area, as a Bonus Stop on this year's tour. See a sneak peek of the gardens on our [DCMGA website](#) and purchase tickets [here](#).

Have You Seen These Delicate Flowers?

By Erika Choffel, Dallas County Master Gardener



Years ago, my husband came home from work and asked if I could take out those “pink weeds” in the front yard. Not familiar with these from my home state, I removed them from our ivy that was under a large oak tree. Two years later, my husband came home from work and thanked me for planting the pink little flowers in the ivy. Same flower, and yes, same husband. He was learning to appreciate my long-time hobby of gardening!

I had not planted the flowers either time, they had just “appeared” the year after we bought the house. The flower is commonly called pink evening primrose, or showy primrose, or pink lady, but this particular one is *Oenothera speciosa*. It grows in 28 states as well as parts of Mexico. A perennial wildflower, it spreads, quite rapidly, through

seeds and runners. One blogger wrote, "If you value your garden, don't plant this one." Yet another wrote, "I planted these along the roadside on our property in the spring and they are stunning beside the bluebonnets."

In my experience, also, it's best to give it plenty of space, with firm boundaries, unless you enjoy seeing it pop up in many places. It is drought resistant, and prefers loose soil, and full sun, though mine were in dappled shade. It will likely not survive a very hard freeze, although we still see them after the Great Freeze of February, 2021.

This flower is sometimes referred to as a showy primrose, pink ladies, amapola, or pink buttercup, though it's not in the buttercup family of ranunculaceae. Pink evening primrose grows as a ground cover wildflower in USDA zones 4-9. The plant can be found growing wild on rocky prairies, in open woodlands, along highways, and meadows.

This primrose blooms in mid-March through early summer in much of our Lone Star state. It has been in the seed mix scattered along Texas highways. In many parts of the state, the flowers wither daily and have new blossoms each evening to predawn hours. Hence, the "evening" primrose name.

The *Oenothera speciosa* leaves grow to be 4 inches long and 1.5 inches wide. Leaves range from linear to obovate shapes with serrate edges. The flowers are four petaled, usually pink, and 2 to 3.5 inches across. They have 8 stamens with a four-lobed stigma; pink or red veins in the petals blend into white, then end in the greenish-yellow center of the flower. Primarily used in gardens and along highways, the leaves are edible, best before flowers bloom. I wonder if my husband would notice it in a salad?

Note: Do not eat plants that are not grown by you, especially if they are by the side of the road. You do not know if they have been sprayed with chemicals that may make you sick.

References:

<https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/oenothera-speciosa/>

<https://tnyards.utk.edu/oenothera-speciosa/>

https://www.illinoiswildflowers.info/prairie/plantx/sh_primrosex.htm

https://aggie-hort.tamu.edu/earthkind/plantselector/detail.php?region=zone_c&plantid=255



Don't Miss Our

2024 Garden Tour this

Saturday, May 18th!



Purchase Tickets [Here](#)

May 18th 10am - 5pm
[Click Here For Info & Tickets](#)

How to Protect Your Landscape from Extreme Weather

By Georgann Moss, Dallas County Master Gardener

It's not your imagination. The weather in Texas is getting hotter (and sometimes colder), flooding is more frequent, the state is more susceptible to wildfires, and water-supply lakes are being stressed by increasing evaporation and erratic rainfall. This according to Dr. John Neilsen-Gammon, Texas A&M University professor and State Climatologist. His latest report, *Extreme Weather in Texas, 1900 - 2036* (link: https://texas2036.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/2024_ClimateReport.pdf), was just issued on Earth Day this year.

What does this extreme weather mean for your landscape? By 2036, we are likely to experience quadruple the number of 100-degree days compared to the 1970s and 1980s. The report also predicts a 7% increase in water loss through summertime evaporation by 2036.

Because we live in an urban heat island, our temperatures can be as much as 27 degrees higher than surrounding urban areas. Causes of urban heat islands include the following:

- Impervious surfaces (concrete) and buildings that absorb heat;
- Canyon-like streets that inhibit air flow;
- Air conditioners that generate heat; and
- Less vegetation, which means fewer plants to cool the air through evapotranspiration.

These new weather patterns will even take a toll on native plants. There are more challenging changes coming, but you get the picture.

How to Minimize the Effects of Extreme Weather

So, what's a gardener to do? In his lecture during the National Garden Clubs Inc. Landscape Design School II at the George H.W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum, Dr. Mike Arnold, Professor and Gardens Director of Texas A&M University's Department of Horticultural Sciences offered several tips:

Embrace Diversity in Your Landscape Plants

When considering landscape diversity, always keep the 5:10:15 rule in mind: Never plant more than 5% from the same species, no more than 10% from the same genus, and no more than 15% from the same family. This will help protect your landscape from a complete wipeout by one type of pest or a particular kind of extreme weather.

Incorporate Low Impact Design (LID) Features into Your Landscape

Common LID applications include rain gardens, rooftop gardens, swales, pervious pavers, canopy trees and rain barrels. These features treat rainfall as a benefit rather than a nuisance and encourage the capture and use of rainwater on site.



Recognize and Exploit Microclimates

Microclimates can occur naturally or be intentionally designed. They are small, localized areas that differ in temperature, precipitation, and wind protection from the rest of your landscape. For example, you can use walls, fences, plants, or other structures to block use areas and protect sensitive plants from weather that is harmful to them. You can also create shade using water-wise tree species or structures to reduce evapotranspiration.

Accept the Dynamic Nature of Gardens

Dr. Arnold says that our landscapes are motion pictures, not still photographs. We must accept this challenge and embrace change. He also emphasized these hot-weather watering tips:

- Water deeply, but infrequently.
- Water in the morning to reduce water loss to evaporation.
- Capture and use your rainwater.
- Install rain and moisture sensors.
- Use drip, bubblers, or below-canopy microsprinklers.
- Repair leaks immediately and adjust sprayheads frequently.
- Have an irrigation audit done by a professional.

Ninety-nine percent of climate scientists agree that climate change is real, it's happening now, and it's caused by human activities. Though extreme weather may be here to stay for the foreseeable future, perhaps we can adapt to it.

Sources:

[Texans Should Prepare For Hotter Temperatures, Greater Risk Of Fire And Flooding](#)

[Mike Arnold](#)

[Residential Low Impact Design](#)

[Microclimates in Water-wise Landscapes](#)



May 16, 2024 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm [Taking the Mystery Out of Plant Propagation](#) Dallas Public Library - Lakewood Branch, 6121 Worth St., Dallas. Are you ready to solve the mystery of propagating new plants? Learn how to create new plants from cuttings, division, and layering, and discover the ABCs of seed collection, storage, and germination. Speaker is Roseann Ferguson.

May 17, 2024 12:00 pm to 1:00 pm [Challenges of Shade Gardening](#) Harry Stone Rec Center, 2403 Millmar Drive, Dallas. Different amounts of shade in your landscape determine what plants will tolerate some sun and which thrive best in dense shade as well as all those types of shade in between. Learn what density of shade is in your landscape and what plants stand the best chance of thriving in your garden. Speaker is Cookie Peadon.

May 18, 2024 10:00 am to 5:00 pm [DCMGA Garden Tour of 2024](#) features 8 beautiful and unique gardens in East Dallas/Old Lake Highlands. Link includes educators' speaking schedules and ticket information. Tour site addresses will be emailed with ticket receipt.

May 20, 2024 11:30 am to 12:30 pm [Wicked Plants](#) Methodist Medical Center, Main Lobby located at Beckley & Methodist Drive, 1441 N. Beckley, Dallas. This fun presentation covers plants that are deadly, illegal, intoxicating, dangerous, painful, and destructive/invasive. This presentation uses interesting historical anecdotes, photos to identify the

plants and facts so gardeners can avoid these plants in their landscapes. Speaker is Kevin Burns.

May 23, 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. Jake Poinsett will be talking about "Native Grasses." Jake is the Program Manager at the Trinity River Audubon Center in Dallas. Before working for the National Audubon Society, he was a Park Ranger for Texas Parks and Wildlife, South Carolina Park Service, and the National Park Service. He is originally from the Pine Barrens of New Jersey and is a "bird nerd" who also loves all things prairie. Public welcome.

June 3, 2024 10:00 am to 11:00 pm [Sex in the Garden](#) Grace Christian Church, 504 South Houston Street, Kauffman. This entertaining and educational talk describes what really goes on in our gardens: pollination. Learn how flowers lure insects to help with their reproduction and how they reward the pollinators. You will never look at the garden in the same old way again. Speaker is Janet D. Smith.

June 6, 2024 1:00 pm to 2:00 pm [Preparing a Vegetable Garden from the Ground Up](#) Dallas Public Library - Highland Hills Branch, 6200 Bonnie View Rd., Dallas. Vegetable gardening is more than just sticking plants in the ground. This talk explains preparing the ground for a vegetable garden, what to plant and when, and what to do after the garden is done to preserve the fertility of the soil. Speaker is Stephanie Smith.

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



May

Cover your vegetables with netting! The squirrels will get to them before you do.

Planting

- Continue to plant warm-season turf grasses (Bermuda, St. Augustine, and Zoysia.) Early June is also an ideal time to establish new Bermuda lawns by hydro-mulching.
- Plant ground covers and tropical and warm-season annuals such as begonia, hibiscus, periwinkle, portulaca, purslane, salvia, zinnia, coleus, Mexican heather, gomphrena, and caladiums.
- Review North Texas Planting Guide to decide what fall vegetables can be planted now.

Plant Care

- Pay special attention to the water needs of new lawns, trees, and ornamentals as hot dry weather sets in. Water in the early morning hours (3:00 am to 8:00 am) to minimize fungal problems and reduce evaporation.
- Fertilize annual flowers and vegetables with your favorite fertilizer to assure continued vigor, based on results from a soil test (which may cost as little as \$10).
- Check crape myrtles for aphids throughout the summer.
- Check ornamentals, flowers, and vegetables for spider mites, prevalent in warm months.
- Watch for bagworms on junipers, arborvitae, and other conifers; treat as needed.

- Watch for webworms on trees, especially pecans and mulberries, and treat as necessary.
- Apply fungicide as necessary to control black spot and powdery mildew on roses.
- Early June is an ideal time to aerate your lawn.
- Fertilize your warm season turf grasses if needed based on soil test recommendation.
- Check for chinch bugs in St. Augustine lawns throughout the summer, and for gray leaf spot fungus in periods of high humidity and temperatures in the 80s and 90s.
- Spot treat fire ant mounds with ant bait or a mound drench.
- Begin to harvest vegetables and fruits as they ripen: potatoes, beans, cucumbers, squash, radishes, tomatoes, blackberries, and peaches.

Pruning

- Prune out any dead or broken branches of woody ornamentals (trees and shrubs), but avoid major pruning during summer heat.
- Cut back spent flowers of annuals and perennials to encourage new blooms.
- Prune spent flowers from roses and fertilize if needed according to a soil test.
- Pinch back chrysanthemums to encourage branching.
- **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 Janet D. Smith

By Alan Rister



The upcoming DCMGA Garden Tour on May 18th will feature eight beautiful gardens, including the fabulous garden of Janet D. Smith as one of the stops on this year's tour. [Read more ...](#)

Should Artificial Turf Have a Place in Our Landscapes?

By the DCMGA Help Desk Team, Margaret Ghose



The use of artificial turf can be a contentious issue. Artificial turf is advertised as a water saving, “environmentally friendly” alternative to natural turf. This comparison is deceptive however, because natural turf and other living plant materials provide environmental services that artificial turf does not. [Read more ...](#)

Plant of the Month - *Monarda fistulosa* "Beebalm"

By At Home Botanist Team



Beebalm, known for its distinctive, aromatic foliage and charming whorls of tubular flowers, is a popular perennial in residential gardens. It produces blooms in vibrant shades of lavender, pink, and occasionally white during the peak summer months, typically from early July to late August. These colorful flowers not only add visual splendor but are also highly enticing to pollinators such as bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds. [Read more ...](#)

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