

The Green Thumb

September 2003

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The Green Thumb is a publication of the Arlington Organic Garden Club
www.aogc.org

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Susan Horn
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September Meeting – JoAnne Boudreau

JoAnne Boudreau came to Texas over 30 years ago to Mineral Wells and has become a local authority on organic herbs and herb farming. She has a unique ability to share her knowledge of herbs in concise detail. She has helped inform many through her regular radio show "The Herb Lady" Saturday mornings at 8:30am on KJSA 1120 AM. She also writes articles for Home and Garden magazine highlighting a specific herb and its health benefits. She has an internship program at her farm for those interested in growing herbs and an annual Wild and Weedy Herb Walk in April.

Please join us in welcoming JoAnne to our club on Thursday, September 25 at the Bob Duncan Community Center. Doors open at 7 pm, and the meeting will start at 7:30.

Global Warming Impacting Grain Supplies

Have you ever wondered what the impact of global warming is on our food supply? These challenges are showing up worldwide with drastic climate changes. A good example is this summer's European weather where there was a lack of rainfall and extreme heat (over 10,000 people died in France.) The ongoing drought in Africa and the flooding in Asia are other examples. All are contributing to a massive grain shortage worldwide.

"It has come at a time when world food supplies were already at their most precarious ever. The world has eaten more grain than it has produced every year so far this century, driving stocks well below the safety margin to their lowest levels in the 40 years that records have been kept. The amount of grain produced for each person on earth is now less than at any time in more than three decades. Until about a month ago, this year had been expected to produce a reasonable harvest, allowing some recovery. But the heat wave has now ensured that it will make things even worse, and experts say that the crisis will deepen as global warming increases."

http://www.organicconsumers.org/corp/global_warming_food.cfm

Although there are many nations in the world who are working toward the reduction of greenhouse gases and understand the challenges that global warming is creating for our planet, everyone can help. Combine your trips to the store, turn off the TV or radio if you are not watching/listening to it, turn off lights when you leave a room and remember every effort helps us all.

For further information on global warming, go to <http://www.nrdc.org/globalwarming/> or to <http://www.usgcrp.gov/>. Both websites provide insight into the challenges that our generation and those to come will face with these climate changes.



– Susan Horn

Upcoming Area Meetings . . .

Organic Garden Club of Fort Worth

<http://www.organicgardenclubfw.org>

Meets at 7 PM at the Ft Worth Botanic Gardens
September 23rd – Patsy Rosen speaks on “Growing Iris Organically”

September 26th-28th OGCFW will have an educational booth at the Home and Garden Show at the Ft Worth Convention Center

Dallas Organic Garden Club

Meets at 6:30 PM at 6411 LBJ Hwy
September 25th – Jimmy Turner and Clinton Hort will speak

Denton Organic Society

October 15th – “Alliance/Morrison Milling, Products & Operation” – Gene Kastens, Director of the Alliance Milling Division

Arlington Council of Garden Clubs

October 18th – Fielder Fandango – Chili Cook-off & Star Flowers plant swap



AOGC Board News

The following ideas were discussed at the August 12th, 2003 board meeting held at Penny Coder's house:

- What to put on the plate for the bench AOGC is donating to the Fielder House from our Plant Sale proceeds from this year's Garden Show:
 - Sit On It
 - Plant It Here
- Texas Garden Club Inc. sent a letter indicating that AOGC is eligible for grants if we apply for them before 2005.
- If any members work for companies that give grants to non-profit groups, please contact the board.
- The idea of starting an Organic Community Garden was brought up for discussion with the suggestion of contacting the city of Arlington to see if an area of Vandergriff Park might be available. Colleyville residents started a similar garden using grant money from the Texas Committee on Environmental Quality (TCEQ). The extra produce grown is donated to food banks. What a great way to educate the public about gardening without chemicals and using compost in the garden!
- Club members could volunteer to educate 3rd-5th graders about earthworms using the information and displays from the Garden Show. We would assist the children in setting up a worm vermiculture tub in their classroom.

(cont. next page)

OAK RAIN BARRELS



These wonderful Oak Rain Barrels add old world charm to your garden and catch 50 gallons of rain water. Our Rain Barrels come with a faucet that a 2 gallon watering can or bucket will slide under and a hose attachment that a soaker hose can be attached to. The top of each barrel has been drilled and fitted with a 10" catch that is lined with screen for mosquito control.

Your plants will love the nitrogen filled rain water that you collect. Food crops especially benefit from rain water.

Our rain barrels are \$140.00

Delivery is free in the following areas:
(Arlington, Ft. Worth, Grand Prairie and others)

Check with Lucy

To order contact Lucy at 817-572-0148

or e-mail: lucygeorge5208@sbcglobal.net

Barrels may also be purchased at GREEN MAMA'S
817-514-7336

Community Center

Many thanks to our members who called, wrote letters and e-mail, and attended the town hall meetings to save the Bob Duncan Community Center. Our efforts (along with the efforts of many other Arlington citizens who use the Center) have paid off, as it has been taken off the chopping block!

AOGC Board News (cont.)

The teachers could teach a lesson on how plants and the environment work together. This would be a great way to get the gardeners of tomorrow started on the right path.

- As always, club member input is valued! Please contact a board member or e-mail the board with your ideas and suggestions.

Since that meeting a couple other ideas have come into the spotlight: new member packets including a member directory, gardening facts, tri-fold on club information, etc.; and mentoring program for new members that are just beginning to learn about gardening the natural way.

– Esther Chambliss

Upcoming Area Plant Sales!



The **Native Plant Sale at the Wildscape**, Veterans Park, Arlington will be held on October 4, 2003 from 9 am - 3 pm. From I 20, go north on Green Oaks Blvd exit, east on Arkansas Lane, south on Spanish Trail, second parking lot entrance is the Wildscape Native Plant Demonstration Garden. All plants are propagated by Wildscape volunteers and go to the improvement of the Wildscape. 25% discount to all Wildscape volunteers.

Available at the sale will be Columbine, Flame Acanthus, Mealy Blue Sage, Purple Coneflower, Ruellia Nudeflora, Salvia Coccinea, Turks Cap, Zexmenia, Frogfruit, Horseherb, Lyre Leaf Sage, White

Avens, Wood Violet, Inland Sea Oats, and oher grasses provided by Bluestem Nursery.

The **Ft. Worth Botanic Garden's fall plant sale** features many native and adapted plants that can take the heat and live on annual rainfall. Choose from a wide assortment of trees, shrubs, ornamental grasses, ground covers, vines, and perennials. Various plant societies will also be selling their plants. **BYOW** (Bring Your Own Wagon) for loading plants!

The sale will be held Saturday, October 11, 2003 from 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. The sale is located inside the gate of the weekend parking lot, which is south of the Trial Garden. The weekend parking lot provides the closest access to the plant sale. From westbound I-30, take the Montgomery Street exit (#11) and follow the service road to the weekend parking lot just before Montgomery Street.

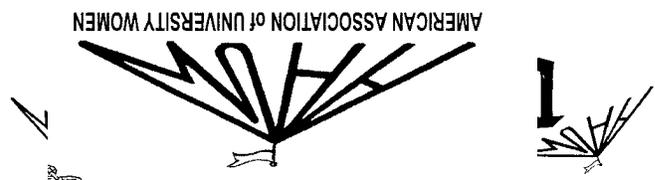
For more information, contact Steve Huddleston, senior horticulturist. Fax number is 817-871-7638. E-mail address is Steve.Huddleston@fortworthgov.org.

The sale will include trees, shrubs, grasses, ground covers, perennials, and vines that are far too numerous to list here.

Used and Antiquarian Books
Benefits Literacy and Educational Grants

Wednesday Oct. 22 5:00 – 8:00PM \$2.00 Donation at door	Thursday Oct. 23 11:00 – 8:00PM	Friday Oct. 24 11:00 – 8:00PM	Saturday Oct. 25 10:00 – 11:00PM	FREE A	Donation at door \$2.00
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St. Stephen United Methodist Church
1800 W. Randol Mill Road, Arlington
(across from Randol Mill Park & National Guard Armory)



Herb of the Month: Basil – *Ocimum* species, Lamiaceae (Labiatae) family

The National Herb Society has declared 2003 as “the year of the basil.” For this reason I have decided to spotlight this herb for the September newsletter.

Common name is Basil; varieties are often named after their scent or physical characteristics. Some species of basil are:

Sweet basil (*ocimum basilicum*): with light green slightly serrated leaves with whorls of white blossoms. Perennial, 3 ft. high and 2-1/2” leaves.

Lettuce leaf basil (Japanese variety) (*O. basilicum* var. *crispum*): has puckered leaves resembling those of curly leaf lettuce; milder than sweet basil.

French fine leaf basil (*O. basilicum-minimum*): has 1/4 inch leaves that have an enticing sweetness; 1-1/2 foot tall, bushy plant that grows well in a pot; perennial.

Lemon basil (*O. basilicum* ‘*Citrodorum*’): pale, pointed leaves 1 inch wide and 1 inch long.

Cinnamon basil (*O. basilicum*): deep green glossy leaves that are 2-1/2 to 3 inches long; 2-foot-tall whorls of purplish flowers.

More varieties are discovered each year. Most basil are annuals (there are some that are classified perennial so be sure to check) and are perfect for our region. Basil loves the Texas heat; it originally came from India, Africa, and far-East Asian areas.

The herb has many legends surrounding it. Some are mythical, romantic and religious. The Greeks believed the name basilicum has kingly associations and means King. An early writer stated that the smell was so excellent that it was “fit for a king’s house.” Others would say that the name Basilisk derived from a serpent-like creature that could kill with a look and for many years the

plant was linked with poison and the “venomous beasts.” This might be why the herb meant hate in Greece, while in Italy basil signified love and romance. Basil was placed

outside a maiden’s window when she was ready to receive her lover. India used the herb for religious purposes and thought sacred to the gods. Sprigs of the species *Ocimum sanctum* (Holy basil) are laid on the dead to protect from evil in the afterlife.

As you have already read, the leaves of basil can have their own characteristics but most of them are oval in shape and the edges will tip inward towards the center spine; they are typically 2-3 inches long and sometimes longer. The color tone of leaves can vary from yellow/green to purple and variegated. Flowers can range in shades of purple to white depending on the species, and height can be from 1 to 3 feet. Pinching back the herb before it flowers will produce a bushier plant with a longer growing season.

To propagate basil you need ideal conditions: germination temperatures need to range from 75-85 degrees in both the soil and air. Plant seeds 1/8” deep, pressing the soil gently over the seed. When seedlings are 3” in height,

thin out to 12” apart (6” for bush basil). As the plant grows, pinch out the center to ensure spreading of the leaves. Basil likes well-drained rich compost soil.

Bush basil can grow in pots since it’s compact; French fine leaf basil is also appropriate for pots in an inside garden. Plant 3-4 seeds in a pot, then thin out seedlings to the sturdiest looking one by removing the others to another pot.

Culinary uses: sauces, vegetables, poultry, fish, oils and vinegars, sandwiches

Craft usage: potpourris and sachets (heavily-scented opal basil and the lemon fragrance of lemon basil are great together

Medical usage: used to help in digestive complaints, stomach cramps, and nervous headaches.

-- Esther Chambliss

Sources:

Herbs – Their Cultivation and Usage, Hemphill Rodale’s *Illustrated Encyclopedia of Herbs*

Photos:

<http://organiclifestyles.tamu.edu/herbs/herbcooking.html>

<http://aggie->

horticulture.tamu.edu/extension/newsletters/hortupdate/jul02/art5jul.html



Basil

Creature Feature: Mediterranean Gecko (*Hemidactylus turcicus*)

I've seen little green anoles in our yard ever since moving into our house in Arlington seven years ago, but in the last couple of years we've watched another lizard grow more and more plentiful: the Mediterranean Gecko. The Mediterranean Gecko is a pink or white, almost translucent lizard with small brown lumpy spots all over its body. About 4-5 inches in length, they are most active at night, hanging around buildings where they feast on insects attracted to the light. The breeding season in Texas is March through July, when one to two eggs are laid.

As its name suggests, this Gecko is native to the Mediterranean regions of Africa, Asia, and Europe, and on into Somalia and western India. In the United States, the Mediterranean gecko was first reported in southern Florida in 1915, and has since spread throughout the southern US. Its colonization pattern is scattered rather than continuous, as they spread by stowing away on ships and trucks.



Sources:

<http://www.lifesci.utexas.edu/research/txherps/lizards/hemidactylus.turcicus.html>

<http://oregonstate.edu/~criscioc/ORST/criscioneJP01.pdf>

<http://wld.fwc.state.fl.us/critters/exotics/SpeciesNumberResults.asp?SPPNO=8>

Bottom Photo by Jason Penney (used with permission)

<http://www.kingsnake.com/hudspeth/otherpics.htm>



Although introduced, the Mediterranean Gecko is not known to pose a threat to native species. In fact their numbers are declining in Florida, where they are being displaced with other introduced geckos that breed year-round. They are beneficial, eating ants, small roaches, and flying insects. Among their natural enemies are Casper (shown above trying his best to be a predator) and other cats.

North Texas Regional Water Conference

To better understand the demands on valuable water resources for people and wildlife, the Sierra Club of Texas is sponsoring a North Texas Regional Water Conference on Saturday, October 4th at the Dallas Downtown Public Library 1515 Young St. Registration \$15.00/person. More info at www.texas.sierraclub.org or from Molly at 214-369-6667 or Rita at 214-373-3808. Registration Deadline Sept 30th.

– Susan Horn

Editor's Note:

I'd like to thank Esther Chambliss and Susan Horn for their contributions to our newsletter. Their continued work month after month really helps make this come together!!

If you have an article you would like to see in our newsletter, please send to me at board@aogc.org. . . include "Newsletter Article" in the subject line. Thanks!

– Angie Brown


redenta's
garden shops
Organics
Natives
Design

arlington	5111 west arkansas ln. 817.451.2149
colleyville	6230 colleyville blvd. 817.488.3525
dallas	2001 skillman st. 214.823.9421



Next meeting. . .

Thursday, September 25, 2003

7:00 pm social, 7:30 pm meeting

JoAnne Boudreau, “Herbs”

Club Information

Membership dues: \$20/year (individual or family) – membership year begins in April.
Join/renew at any meeting, or send check to return address above.

Meetings are last Thursday of the month (January – October)

- Doors open at 7 p.m. for refreshments, meeting begins at 7:30
- Open to the public unless meeting is designated “members only”
- Awesome raffle prizes are donated by Redenta’s Garden and by Rabbit Hill Farm!
- Meeting Location: The Garden Room, Bob Duncan Community Center, 2800 South Center Street (Vandergriff Park)

If you would like to serve on the AOGC board, please contact any of the current board members, or send email to board@aogc.org

Newsletter deadline: Third Thursday of each month

Please send newsletter submissions to Angie Brown, angie@aogc.org (include “Newsletter Submission” in the subject line, please), (817) 795-3300.

Want the newsletter but live too far away to go to meetings? Subscribe to the newsletter for \$10/year (to cover printing and postage). Send a note to us (see return address) along with payment and the newsletters will keep coming.

When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world.

- John Muir, Naturalist -