

# The Green Thumb

*arlington organic garden club*

*January 2005*

## September Speaker:

*Kelly McGonigle – Nature’s Touch Landscaping – Water Gardening*

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September’s speaker is Kelly McGonigle, from Nature’s Touch Landscaping. Kelly will be giving us practical advice on backyard water gardening, including recommended equipment and maintenance tips.

September also marks our first plant swap: bring plants or seeds from your garden and trade them with other club members. Don’t have any plants to trade? Get creative!

How about cookies or treats?

The club will provide ice cream sundaes for the refreshments this month, so come hungry and ready to share in this tasty treat!

As usual, there will be tons of raffle prizes: tickets are \$1 each and proceeds are used for general club costs (newsletter, printing materials, room cost, etc.).



## Energy Star: Home Energy Advisor

*Doug Brown*

The EPA provides an interactive tool to see if there are ways to improve your energy usage. One of these is the Home Energy Advisor (<http://advisor.lbl.gov/hit/Controller>).

It takes about 15 minutes and requires some information such as your Zip Code, details about the house, and energy costs in your area. You can even input your real energy costs. It is compared with an average house in your area and gives you the top five ways you can reduce

energy costs and save money. Most of the information, since you can't be extremely specific, is of the form of how much each appliance costs to operate. The program also encourages you, when appliances do need to be replaced, to purchase EnergyStar-rated appliances or windows. There is a heavy emphasis on Compact Fluorescent Lights as well.

A really nice aspect of the site is that there are a lot of links on each page that you

can follow for more information. Most of them point to other Federal government sites but some show programs within each state or with the local energy providers.

For more information see <http://www.energystar.gov>



## Note from the President

*Angie Brown*



*We need volunteers to serve on the AOGC board in 2005!*

With the Club year nearing an end, it is time to think about next year's AOGC board. We will have several positions opening up in January (including my position, President), and are looking for enthusiastic people to fill them. Election of board members will take place at the October meeting. The Board works as a team to provide direction to the club, arrange for speakers, organize field trips, and conduct general club business.

Members serving on the 2004 board are: David & Cheryn Barnett, Esther Chambliss, Robbie Pritchard (and though not a board member, we get lots of help from Robbie's dear husband Joe), Nancy Hagwood, Susan Horn, my husband Doug Brown, and me (Angie Brown). Teresa Saldana had started the year on the board, but has since moved across the Metroplex. I would like to personally thank all these people for a great year, and

for many more to come.

Many of us would like to step down from our regular Board duties to form a committee dedicated to the Natural Urban Living Garden Show (NULGS). The NULGS has grown by leaps and bounds over the years, and those of us who are NULGS veterans want to dedicate our resources in the coming year to making sure our 2005 show – our 10<sup>th</sup> one! – is a resounding success.

The AOGC bylaws were rewritten last year and approved by the membership in the October 2003 meeting, where we moved from the standard President/VP/Secretary/Treasurer format to a team-oriented board: only President and Treasurer have to be named (this keeps our finances straight), and other board members serve at-large positions. This breaks up the work so no one is saddled with too much.

Each AOGC board will bring in particular strengths, and it is exciting to see where it is headed next!

If you are interested in serving on the board and would like to know more, please call me (817-795-3300) or let me know at the September meeting. If you'd like to check out a board meeting before committing to anything, let me know and I'll make sure you are notified of our next board meeting.

We are also looking for a newsletter editor for 2005. I very much enjoy production of the newsletter, but am finding that my time is scarce. You don't have to have a fancy publishing program: if you have access to and a bit of knowledge of Microsoft Word, I'll be happy to spend some time showing you how I've been doing it. Or you may decide to recreate the whole thing from scratch: that's fine too!

## Garage Sale for Children's Garden October 16

Esther Chambliss and Nancy Hagwood are planning a garage sale to raise money for the Children's Garden.

Their hope is to have raised beds for spring planting. The garage sale will be held at the Fielder House on October 16, the same day as the Star-Flowers' plant swap. If anyone has ANYTHING to donate that they can sell to make money please contact Esther or Nancy and they

will pick it up. Or please bring the items to the September 30 meeting.

To help out, please contact Esther at 817-263-9322 or Nancy at 817-265-7421.



## Poisonous Plants

Angie Brown

Did you know that some plants commonly found in Texas landscapes are poisonous? Different parts of these plants (or in some cases, the entire plant) can be toxic to varying degrees, from a digestive irritant, to a fatal poison.

**Amaryllis** (*Hippeastrum puniceum*): bulbs

**Bird-of-Paradise Bush** (*Caesalpinia gilliesii*): pods and seeds

**Bird-of-Paradise Flower** (*Strelitzia reginae*): seeds and pods

**Boxwood** (*Buxus microphylla* and *sempervirens*): leaves and twigs

**Texas Buckeye** (*Aesculus arguta*): seeds, flowers, and leaves

**Caladium** (*Caladium*): all parts

**Castor Bean** (*Ricinus communis*): entire plant, especially the seeds

**Elephant's Ear** (*Colocasia antiquorum*): all parts

**Daffodil** (*Narcissus pseudonarcissus*) and *Narcissus*: bulbs

**Daturas** (*Datura meteloides* and *stramonium*): all parts

**Bracken Fern** (*Pteridium aquilinum*): all parts

**Four O-Clocks** (*Mirabilis jalapa*): roots and seeds

**Holly** (*Ilex sp.*): berries

**Hydrangea** (*Hydrangea sp.*): entire plant

**Iris** (*Iris sp.*): leaves and rootstock

**Ivy** (*Hedera helix* and other species): berries and leaves

**Carolina Jessamine** (*Gelsemium sempervirens*): entire plant

**Lantanas** (*Lantana sp.*): all parts, especially the berries

**Lupines** (many types, including bluebonnets) (*Lupinus sp.*): entire plant, especially the seeds

**Oleander** (*Nerium oleander*): entire plant, especially the leaves

**Privet** (*Ligustrum japonicum*): berries and leaves

**Pyracantha** (*Pyracantha sp.*): berries are suspected of being poisonous

**Rhododendrons and Azaleas** (*Rhododendron sp.*): entire plant

**Tansy** (*Tanacetum vulgare*): leaves, stems, and flowers

**Virginia Creeper** (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*): berries and probably leaves

Source:

*Plants that Poison* by Ervin M. Schmutz and Lucretia Breazeale Hamilton, 1979



Susan Horn and Esther Chambliss did a talk on Organic Gardening and the Children's Garden for the Arlington Women's Club last Tuesday (Sept. 14). Thanks for helping to spread the word about organics!

### 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](mailto:lucygeorge5208@sbcglobal.net)

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

## American Association of University Women (AAUW) 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Used Book Sale

Over 20,000 used books will be for sale at St. Stephen United Methodist Church, 1800 West Randol Mill Rd., Arlington, October 27-30. Hours are as follows: Wednesday 5-8; Thursday & Friday 11-8; Saturday 10-5 (1/2 price day). Most books will sell in the \$.50 - \$2.00 range.

Admission is FREE except for \$2 opening night, Wednesday October 27<sup>th</sup> from 5-8 p.m. Profits benefit programs in literacy and education:

Reading is Fundamental (RIF), UTA scholarships for women, and educational grants through AAUW's Educational Foundation.

This year's sale, in addition to the fiction, mysteries, and children's areas, has lots to choose from in biography, history, hobbies, and religion. There are books in the "House & Garden" and "Nature & the Environment" categories that may be of particular interest to club members.

The Collector's Corner has 1000 titles, including first editions, autographed, and coffee table books for gift-giving, a special silent auction, and a 30-page catalog of the sale's finest books.

For more information, call 817-461-2096 or 817-265-2565.

Several of our AOGC members are also AAUW members and contribute lots of time and energy to this sale. What a wonderful way to recycle books!

### NATIVE PLANT SALE

*LOCAL ORGANICALLY GROWN TEXAS NATIVE PLANTS\**

## SEPTEMBER 25TH

### 9:00 A.M. TO 3:00 P.M.

THE WILDSCAPE AT VETERANS PARK-ARLINGTON

**Location:** Arkansas Lane & Spanish Trail, Arlington.  
Green Oaks Blvd., East on Arkansas Ln, South on Spanish Trail, second parking lot entrance.

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <p><b>PERENNIALS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Blackfoot Daisy</li> <li>Butterfly weed</li> <li>Columbine, yellow</li> <li>Fall Aster</li> <li>Four nerve Daisy</li> <li>Lanceleaf Coreopsis</li> <li>Mex. Butterfly Weed</li> <li>Pavonia</li> <li>Purple coneflower</li> <li>Salvia Coccinea</li> <li>Zexmenia</li> </ul> | <p><b>GROUND COVERS/VINES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cedar Sedge</li> <li>Frogfruit</li> <li>Golden groundsel</li> <li>Honshorb</li> <li>Lynleaf Sage</li> <li>Texas sedge</li> <li>Violet naclia</li> <li>White avens</li> </ul> <p><b>SHRUBS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Beautyberry</li> <li>Flame Acanthus</li> <li>Lantana Horrida</li> <li>Salvia Greggii</li> <li>Turks Cap</li> </ul> | <p><b>GRASSES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lindheimer's Muhly</li> <li>Little Blue Stem</li> <li>Mexican Feather Grass</li> <li>Indian Grass</li> <li>Other grasses provided by Bluestem Nursery</li> </ul> <p><b>TREES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carolina Buckthorn</li> <li>Eastern Red Cedar</li> <li>Mexican Buckeye</li> <li>Roughleaf Dogwood</li> <li>Snapberry</li> </ul> |
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**BOOKS & INFORMATION TABLE**  
Native Texas Plants (Wasowski & Wasowski)  
Texas Wildscapes (Damude/Bender)  
Butterfly Gardening for the South (Ajilvsgi)

**PRICES:** 4" - \$2; Quarts - \$3; 6" - \$4; Gallon \$6; 4" flats - \$30

*\*Plants propagated by Wildscape Volunteers*  
**Sale benefits the Molly Hollar Wildscape at Veterans Park**



# BOOK FAIR



**OCTOBER 27-30, 2004**

St. Stephen United Methodist Church  
1800 W. Randol Mill Road, Arlington  
(across from Randol Mill Park & National Guard Armory)

| Wednesday                  | Thursday              | Friday       | Saturday     |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Oct. 27                    | Oct. 28               | Oct. 29      | Oct. 30      |
| 5:00-8:00PM                | 11:00-8:00PM          | 11:00-8:00PM | 10:00-5:00PM |
| \$2.00<br>Donation at door | <b>FREE ADMISSION</b> |              |              |

Benefits Literacy and Educational Grants  
Used and Antiquarian Books




AMERICAN ASSOCIATION of UNIVERSITY WOMEN

## Pictures for 2005 Directory

Cheryn Barnett and Angie Brown are hard at work on a new club directory. We would like to include pictures of our club members in this year's directory.

If you have a favorite picture of yourself that you would like to appear with your listing,

please bring it to the September or October meeting. Pictures can be returned after scanning, if you desire. If we receive no picture from you, we may be forced to hunt you down and shoot you (with a camera, of course!).

Also, the AOGC year

now coincides with the calendar year. Please try to pay your 2005 dues before January. This will help us to keep our membership list current, and will help us get the directory out in early 2005.



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*The ladies at the **Fielder House** are looking for a microwave to use for meetings and events in the annex building. If you are replacing yours, please consider donating your old one. They would also like to find a mini-fridge.*

## Allergy Problems? It's the Male's Fault!

The modern urban landscape is full of many allergy-laden plants. Many are male clones – planted to avoid the “mess” the female plants make with fruits and seeds. The result? Lots and lots of pollen being released into the air without female plants to absorb it.

People who suffer from allergies can look for plants that rank low on the OPALS (Ogren

Plant Allergy Scale).

This scale was created by Thomas Ogren. Mr. Ogren, whose wife suffers from allergies and asthma, was frustrated at the lack of allergy-potential information available for plants. He began studying the effect different plants had on people and eventually earned an MS degree, working largely in plant/allergy connections.

For more information, visit [www.allergyfreegardening.com](http://www.allergyfreegardening.com) or find a copy of one of Mr. Ogren's books, *Allergy-Free Gardening* or *Safe Sex in the Garden*.

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In the spring, pollen counts are highest in the afternoon. In the fall, early morning is worst.

Windy days are harder on allergy-sufferers

than still days because pollen can blow in from far away.

Bathe pets often if they go outdoors. . . they can pick up lots of pollen and bring it inside.

*Source: “Tips to Prevent Garden Allergies” by Dr. Leonard Perry, <http://pss.uvm.edu/ppp/articles/allergy2.html>*

## Arlington Fall Cleanup Day

### Saturday, October 16, 2004, 9 AM – 4 PM

Please take items such as trash, brush, tires, furniture, carpet, lumber, appliances and old auto batteries to any of the following sites:

1. Arlington Sanitary Landfill  
800 Mosier Valley Road
2. Six Flags Hurricane Harbor  
1800 E. Lamar Blvd.

3. Sam Houston High School  
2000 Sam Houston Drive

4. Summit High School  
1071 W. Turner Warnell Rd.

Proof of residency is required, either a driver's license with an Arlington address or a current water bill. Rules are as follows:  
- No contractors

- No children will be allowed on the sites.  
- **No household hazardous waste**; no paint, no pesticides, no motor oil.  
- No roofing material.  
- Limit of 4 tires

For information on how to properly dispose of household hazardous waste, call Neighborhood Services at 817-459-6777.

**perennials**  
**herbs**  
**old fashioned annuals**  
**old garden roses**  
**native shrubs and trees**  
**organics**  
**gardenware**  
**design**  
**installation**

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|             |                |
|-------------|----------------|
| arlington   | 817. 451. 2149 |
| colleyville | 817. 488. 3525 |
| dallas      | 214. 823. 9421 |
| cedar hill  | 972. 291. 7650 |


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redenta's  
garden shops  
[www.redentas.com](http://www.redentas.com)

## The Ladybug's Calendar



Thursday, September 23, 7pm – Dallas Organic Garden Club: Don Lambert, Director of Gardeners in Community Development at King of Glory Lutheran Church ([www.dogc.org](http://www.dogc.org)).

Saturday, September 25 – City of Arlington Front Street Festival, 10 am – 6 pm. AOGC will have an information table at the festival.

Saturday, September 25, 9-3 – Native Plant Sale at Molly Hollar Wildscape.

Saturday, October 2 and Sunday, October 3 – Organic seminar at Rohde's Nursery in Garland. For more information visit <http://www.beorganic.com/> or call Rohde's at 972-864-1934.

Saturday, October 2, 9-5 and Sunday, October 3, 10-4 – Greater North Texas Orchid Society Golden Anniversary Show and Sale. Texas A & M Dallas, Pavilion Bldg., 17360 Coit Rd., Dallas, TX. Admission is FREE.

Sunday, October 17, 2-5 – Arlington Gourd Patch: Linda Hughes on Basket-Weaving on Gourds. Fielder House Museum, 1616 West Abram Street in Arlington. Email [arlingtongourdpatch@hotmail.com](mailto:arlingtongourdpatch@hotmail.com) for more information.

Wednesday, October 20, 7pm – Denton Organic Society: JoAnne Boudreau "Can Weeds Be Useful". Call 940-382-8551 for more information.

Thursday, October 28, 7pm – Dallas Organic Garden Club: annual seed swap ([www.dogc.org](http://www.dogc.org)).

Thursday, October 28, 7pm – Arlington Organic Garden Club: Annual Pot Luck and Business Meeting. Special guest Jay Mertz of Rabbit Hill Farm.

Wednesday, November 17, 7pm – Denton Organic Society monthly meeting, TBA.

Sunday, November 21, 2-5 – Arlington Gourd Patch.

## Preserving Leaves and Flowers – Microwave Pressing

Angie Brown

We've all seen flowers and plants that have been pressed between the pages of a book – in fact, many of us might have preserved favorite plants like that ourselves. However, more modern technology has given us an option for pressing plants much more quickly using the microwave.

My experience with pressing plants in the microwave has been with very small specimens: one or two leaves or flowers, about the size of a business card. This method can be scaled up for larger or more plants, but a tougher board will be required. Complete instructions can be found on Joanna Sheen's website (<http://www.joannasheen.fr.eeserve.co.uk/howto.htm>) or in a book *Microwaved Pressed Flowers*, also

written by Joanna Sheen.

For pressing small specimens, here is the equipment required:

- ψ Chipboard – I used the hard backing from a pad of paper (don't use anything with staples or other metals in it)
- ψ Parchment paper – available in the cooking supplies
- ψ Tissues ("Kleenex", not wrapping paper)
- ψ Rubber Bands (wider ones work better)
- ψ Flower or leaf specimens

Cut the chipboard into four rectangles of the desired size, approximately 4" x 3" each – you'll use a double thickness for each side of the press. Cut or fold the tissue so you have two pieces, each at least 2 tissues in thickness, the same size or slightly larger than your chipboard pieces. Cut two pieces of parchment paper to the same size as the board.

Place two pieces of chipboard on a table and stack tissue paper and one of the parchment pieces on top. Carefully position the plant specimen on the parchment paper, then cover with the second piece of parchment, tissue, and the remaining two pieces of cardboard.

Gently press it all together, secure with two or three rubber bands (they sometimes snap in the microwave).

The amount of time to microwave will depend on the type of specimen, and may take a little trial and error. For this reason, start out with a similar but less perfect specimen: don't try this for the first time on your "good" one. Microwave the press with plants on medium heat for approximately 30 seconds. Check the press for any signs of overheating or scorching (if it scorches, you've cooked it too much and may have ruined the specimen). If everything's OK, microwave for another 15 seconds and check again.

For a thick or watery specimen more time might be required, just be careful not to set anything on fire!

Immediately upon removing your press from the microwave, set it on a flat surface and pile a couple of heavy books (like phone books) on top. Leave it to cool, about 20 minutes. Unwrap the press and carefully remove the plant specimens.

I have tried this method on Mexican Petunia, Japanese Kerria, and Turk's Cap flowers, on leaves of Redbird Cactus, and on

Inland Sea Oats seeds. All were fairly successful. An attempt to dry a flower head of garlic chives left me with a sticky, onion-smelling mess.



After microwave pressing, the flowers or leaves can be used immediately, either mounted on paper for a botanical illustration or for use in crafts. The book mentioned earlier has lots of craft ideas for pressed plants.

The pressed plants can also be laminated to make a bookmark. Use standard laminating pouches. Only the thinnest specimens are likely to make it through the laminating machine. For thicker specimens, the pouch can be ironed on medium heat, under a dishtowel and parchment paper (to keep from sticking).



### Join . . .

the Dirt Doctor's Ground Crew and receive 12 issues of the Dirt Doctor's Dirt as well as a membership card that can be used for discounts at organic suppliers.

Sign up on [www.dirtdoctor.com](http://www.dirtdoctor.com) or call 866.444.DIRT.

# arlington organic garden club

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Arlington, TX 76003-3954

Phone:  
(817) 795-3300



E-mail:  
board@aogc.org

Web:  
www.aogc.org

## About arlington organic garden club...

Membership dues: \$20/year (individual or family) – membership year begins in January.

Join/renew at any meeting, or send check to return address above.

Meetings are last Thursday of the month (January – October, except June garden show on third Saturday)

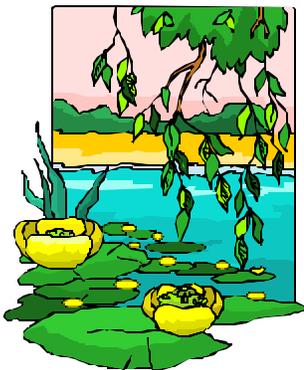
- Doors open at 7 pm for refreshments, meeting begins at 7:30 pm
- Open to the public unless meeting is designated “members only”
- Awesome prizes are raffled off at each meeting!
- Meeting Location: The Garden Room, Bob Duncan Community Center, 2800 South Center Street (Vandergriff Park)

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](mailto: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.

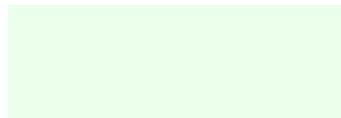


Next Meeting . . .  
**Thursday, Sept. 30**

Kelly McGonigle will  
speak on “Backyard  
Water Gardening”

Refreshments: Ice  
Cream Social

Bring plants, seeds,  
and/or cookies to swap!



*address correction requested*