



## Waller County Master Gardeners *e-Blast*

Growing Waller County one garden at a time.

March 2026

### President's Corner:



Hello to all you fellow gardeners,

Our annual collaboration with A&M Forest Service to give away trees was a huge success. We had approximately 1,000 saplings and we gave away all. Many thanks to the First Baptist Church for allowing us to use their parking lot, Scott Duncan with the City of Hempstead, for making

signs, and Lt. Shelton with the Hempstead Police Department, for his help with traffic flow. If you missed the event, watch for our posts next January.

Coming on March 7 is our annual Spring Plant Sale. We will have a wide range of tomatoes, peppers, herbs, vegetables and ornamentals. We will also have MicroLife fertilizer and Magic Worm compost. New this year is a bake sale. Our Master Gardeners will be baking treats you will not want to miss. Check out the flier further down in this newsletter.

Mary Ann Drawl  
President  
Waller County Master Gardeners

### Waller County Master Gardeners

#### Officers

Mary Ann Drawl---President  
MaryAnn Miron---Vice President  
Kathy Nasr -----Secretary  
Irma Canney-----Treasurer

#### Ag. and Natural Resource Agent Matthew March

Waller County Extension Office  
Waller County Master Gardeners  
846 6<sup>th</sup> Street  
Hempstead, TX 77445-5402

979-826-7651

[waller.mg@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:waller.mg@ag.tamu.edu)



Welcome to the Waller County Master Gardeners' monthly *e-Blast* keeping you up-to-date with educational programs and events going on during the month plus links to timely AgriLife Horticultural articles. All programs are supported by the Waller County Master Gardener Association through the Waller County AgriLife Extension Service.

# March Calendar

**WCMG Business Meeting, March 5<sup>th</sup>, 9:00 -10:00, @ Waller Co. Extension Office, Members only, Plant sale meeting afterwards.**

**WCMG Speaker Series: March 5<sup>th</sup>, 11:00 to 12:00, Guest Speaker: AG Matthew March, Topic: “What Really Feeds Your Plants”, @ Waller Co. Extension Office, Open to the Public.**

**WCMG Plant Sale: March 7<sup>th</sup>, 9:00 to 12:00 @ Waller Co. Extension Office, 846 6<sup>th</sup> Street, Hempstead, TX. (See flier below)**

**South Central Texas Landowners Program “Roots to Results” Topic: Bees/Trees----March 20<sup>th</sup>, 1:00 to 5:00 @ Location: Waller or Washington Co., To Register call: 979-542-2753 or email: [lee@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:lee@ag.tamu.edu) Fee: \$30.00. (See Flier below)**

**HEB Spring Fling: March 28<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 to 2:00 @ Fairfield Market H-E-B | 28550 US- 290, Cypress, TX. (Volunteer opportunities see Irma)**

**WCMG Speaker Series: April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 11:00-12:00, Guest Speaker: Ben Plunkett (TX A&M Forest Service) Topic: *Planting & Growing Trees* @ Waller Co. Ext. Office.**



Welcome to our new 2026 WCMG Interns. Led by President Mary Ann Drawl, the group took a field trip to Brookshire for a tour of Brookwood’s green houses.

# Community Outreach

## *January Seminar—a success*

Saturday, January 31st, sixty community members attended the ***Branching Out: An Orchard Grower's Seminar*** presented to help small backyard gardeners as well as 100-acre growers set up their orchards. The seminar, organized by Waller County Master Gardeners and TX A&M AgriLife, was held at the St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church in Hempstead.

Speakers for the event included TX A&M AgriLife Fruit Specialist Stephan Janak, who spoke on “Fruit Varieties” and “Considerations for Starting a Pecan Orchard”, TX A&M Professor Dr. Young-Kim Jo discussed “Pecan Diseases”, Fort Bend Co. Master Gardener Deborah Birge presented a power point on ”Basics of Fruit Tree Diseases for SE Texas”, Chad Hugo of TX Farm Bureau discussed “Farm Liability” and Waller County Agent Matthew March with Grimes County Agent Matthew Pfeiffer spoke on an “Agent Perspective on Marketing”.

Sponsors for the event were Adam's Tree Service in Brookshire and Napa Auto in Waller. HEB-Fairfield provided door prizes.



## ***February Speaker***

Mary Ann Miron presented *The Meaning of Rose Colors* Thursday, February 5<sup>th</sup> to a room full of master gardeners and visitors. The attendees enjoyed putting together a single rose Valentine arrangement to take home as well as competing in a rose arrangement competition.



## ***February Vegetable Conference***

20 interns and Master Gardeners attended the 41<sup>st</sup> Annual Fort Bend Regional Vegetable Conference at the Fort Bend Epicenter in Rosenberg, February 17. They enjoyed classes on small market gardens and producers, backyard and master gardeners, food preservation, teacher/community gardens and pesticide licenses.



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## ***Seed Planting Workshop Held at WHS***

Students in Mrs. Morgan's and Mrs. Shelton's 18+ and science classes were taught how to plant bell pepper seeds by Mary Ann Miron, Waller County Master Gardener. Tags were color-coded according to the bell pepper's color the students chose to grow. Mrs. Miron also shared how to use the hydroponics bucket system that she had used when teaching science there, as well as reviewed the garden's current status, which was originally started under the guidance of Mrs. Patricia Gayer.

Waller County Master Gardeners are looking for more teachers in the Waller County area that want to start or need help with a school garden. If interested, please leave a message at the Extension Office—979-826-7651 or comment on the WCMG Facebook page.

# *In the Garden*

## ***THE VICKS PLANT***

(PLECTRANTHUS TOMENTOSA)

By: Cheryl Thomas



The Vicks plant is a rare succulent that has a beautiful aroma to it. It comes from the Lamiaceae (mint) family and genus *Plectranthus*, a genus of warm climate. This genus is commonly found in the Southern Hemisphere, the Indonesia archipelago, Africa, Australia, India, among other Pacific Islands.

These plants are usually grown for decoration, but gardeners keep them as herbs, vegetables, and sometimes for medicinal use. The Vicks plant is sometimes labeled as the Succulent Coleus, its ancient name. A mature Vicks plant's average height is up to two feet, spreading around 2.5 feet wide. It has a decumbent (i.e., its stems lie along the ground, but the tips turn up) and freely branched body with a varying structure, depending on cutting and location of growth. The plants can form cascading vines, subshrubs, or ground covers, depending on how gardeners maintain them. Its leaves can grow to 2-3 inches as the plant matures and are covered with short, hairy outgrowths. It also bears flowers, producing beautiful white to light purple flowers, usually blooming twice a year.

## *The Vicks Plant* cont.

Just like other herbs, the Vicks plant offers various health benefits. Its fragrance can clear up sinuses and ease congestion in our respiratory tracts, especially if inhaling the steam from leaves in a pan of boiling water or brewed into tea. You can also use its leaves to prepare ointments with carrier oils, whether to treat inflammation or to repel mosquitoes. The plant's leaves can also help with muscle aches, bruising, or symptoms of arthritis.

Another impressive thing about the Vicks plant is how easy it is to care for.

**Light requirements** – Ideal is to expose it to bright and indirect light source, whether growing it outdoors under trees or in a southern window in the house.

**Water requirements** – They do well with medium to low water levels, which is water soil thoroughly, leave it to drain first, then let the soil turn dry before watering again.

**Location** – Avoid placing your plant in windy locations since they are prone to breakage. These plants do very well in hanging baskets or on the edges of elevated containers.

**Temperature** — An ideal temperature for these plants is between 65-80 degrees Fahrenheit. When the weather cools, move outdoor plants to warm indoor areas (grow lights can give adequate lighting during darker winter days.)

**Humidity** – Succulents will tolerate various humidity levels, monitor plants more in dry days. Avoid misting the plant as this might lead to fungus or root rot.

**Soil** – It is vital to use well-draining soil (equal parts of peat moss and succulent mix) and avoid exposing them to significantly low or high pH levels.

**Fertilizer** – You can use a common half-strength succulent fertilizer once a year during the early spring and repeat every two weeks throughout the growing season. Liquid fertilizer is recommended, taking care not to over fertilize the plant and burning its delicate foliage.

**Pruning** – These plants can get leggy, so frequent cuttings are recommended to maintain an attractive look. Remove 3-5 leaves from the plant's basal side on a regular basis. You can also pinch the plant back every few weeks to prevent flower formation and to produce a fuller, lusher plant; pinch above a set of leaves or at a branching junction.

**Propagating** – It is best to do so by stem tip cuttings in the spring and summer. Cuttings can be rooted either in water or moist growing medium.



Saturday, March 28, 2026  
Indiangrass Preserve  
31975 Hebert Rd  
Waller, TX 77484  
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Registration Required



## Native Plant Propagation

Propagate native plants to spread their benefits! Join **Chris Bailey** and **Lan Shen** in the Coastal Prairie Conservancy Indiangrass Preserve greenhouse.

Join us for hands-on practice in the greenhouse and learn:

- How to start plants from seeds, plugs, and cuttings
- Where to obtain seeds
- When to start seeds and when to plant
- Best dates for planting native grasses based on weather records

All materials will be provided, or bring seeds to share. You are encouraged to leave your starters to contribute to the Indiangrass Preserve, or you can take them to your own prairie restoration project.

Bring your lunch, enjoy the beauty of the prairie, and take some time to stroll along the marked prairie trails after class.

**Waller County Master Gardeners**  
**WHAT REALLY FEEDS YOUR PLANTS?**  
**Presented by Matt March**

**March 5, 2026**  
**11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.**



Join us at the Extension Office to hear Matt March, Waller County Extension Agent, share results from a fertilizer trial using worm castings, alpaca manure, synthetic dry fertilizer and no fertilizer.

**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Waller County AgriLife  
Extension Office  
846 6th Street  
Hempstead, TX 77445

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Persons with disabilities needing accommodations for effective participation in the program should contact the County Extension Office at least one week prior to the program or event to request mobility, hearing, visual or other assistance.

# Waller County Master Gardener ANNUAL PLANT SALE

March 7th 9:00am-12:00pm



Vegetables, herbs and ornamentals available for purchase at the Extension Office. Shop early to get the best selection of plants, worm castings, and MicroLife products for your spring garden needs.

Accepted forms of payment: Cash, check or Credit Card



Home - baked goods will be available for cash purchase!



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## South Central Texas Landowners Program

# ROOTS TO RESULTS

### About the program

The upcoming New Landowners Program is designed not only for those who are new to owning or managing rural land, but also for individuals looking to refresh their knowledge or gain more information on land stewardship, management practices, and available resources. Whether you're just starting out or have years of experience, this program offers valuable insights to help you make the most of your property. The 2025-2026 schedule dates are to the right. All programs registration starts at 1:00pm and the program will begin at 1:30pm. Ending at 5:00pm. Some programs will offer CEU's.

### What is included in full enrollment?

Binder full of publications and resources.  
Opportunity for discussions with experts.  
Opportunity to network with other landowners.  
Get your agriculture and natural resource questions answered!

### Registration Costs

If attending all sessions:  
\$90.00 per person or \$80 per couple  
If attending select sessions  
\$30.00 per person for each session  
Payable at the door or in advanced

Exact cash or check,  
made out to Lee LAB

For questions or to register please call 979-542-2753 or email [lee@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:lee@ag.tamu.edu)

- **January 16, 2026**

Location: 15025 Warren  
Ranch Road, Hockley, TX  
77447

Topics:  
Grazing/Livestock/Range

- **March 20, 2026**

Location: Washington or  
Waller

Topics: Bees/Trees

- **May 15, 2026**

Location: Thomas Ranch  
Topics: Forage/Hay  
Production

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The logo for Texas A&M AgriLife Extension. It features the text "TEXAS A&M" in a dark red, serif font at the top. Below it, the word "AGRI" is in a large, grey, serif font, with "LIFE" in a smaller, grey, serif font to its right. At the bottom, the word "EXTENSION" is in a bold, dark red, sans-serif font.

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