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Hale County Master Gardeners



The Garden Gate

Maria Vasquez

Since the days are starting to get hot quickly, I hope all your planting is nearly complete but if you are wanting to try some new patio plants try some tropicals in pots. These are beautiful and love our heat and sun. A few of my favorites are jasmine, tropical plumbago and bougainvillea.

Continue your garden maintenance by keeping weeds pulled, clear off dead flower stalks and deadhead spent blooms to keep your plants blooming. Don't panic if your plants stop blooming because sometimes this will happen in our hot months. The plants will bloom again in the fall.

Keep your vegetables and plants well watered and fed and, if necessary, add additional mulch to your beds. Here is a garden gate...
al mulch to your beds. Here is a garden gate...
flower and vegetable sneak peak through my hope you enjoy the pictures.



HOW TO PREVENT AND SOLVE PROBLEMS ORGANICALLY

Because organic gardeners usually want to avoid using pesticides of any type, they grow plants in ways that help prevent pests and diseases from gaining a foothold. These techniques work in any garden—organic or not.

- ◆ **Right plant, right place.** Give plants the most ideal conditions possible, and they'll grow healthy and strong—and better able to resist pest and disease attacks. Pay attention to requirements for sun exposure and spacing, which can be found on the plant tags or product description pages for veggies and herbs.
- ◆ **Choose disease-resistant varieties.** This info will be included on product description pages as well.
- ◆ **Space plants correctly.** Adequate airflow between plants reduces many disease problems.
- ◆ **Rotate crops.** Changing crop locations year to year is a key tactic in foiling pest attacks. Just moving a crop a few feet makes it impossible for some insects to find their necessary food supply.
- ◆ **Keep a clean garden.** Gather and dispose of fallen leaves and fruit. Clip diseased leaves.
- ◆ **Inspect crops daily.** When you catch pest or disease problems early, they're much easier to control.

Choose Simple, Hands-on Solutions

Combat pests or diseases using the simplest solution possible, which usually means hands-on gardening. For example, hand-pick caterpillars off broccoli or cabbage and drop them into soapy water. Dislodge aphids with a blast of water from a garden hose or handheld sprayer. Use floating row covers to keep pests from reaching plants.

If simple, hands-on techniques don't beat pest or disease outbreaks, organic and sustainable gardeners will turn to natural chemicals, or pesticides. These materials may be:

- ◆ derived from plants or natural sources, such as insecticidal soap, neem oil or pyrethrin
- ◆ naturally-occurring bacteria or microbes, such as Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) or spinosad developed from natural minerals, such as sulfur or copper for disease control

When using natural chemicals, follow label instructions carefully, and look for warnings about toxicity to bees, fish, beneficial insects or others. If pesticides are indeed needed to get through a crisis, choose one compatible with your needs. The label is a legal document, so follow its directions.

If you need to use a synthetic compound, select the most targeted one and apply it carefully, treating only necessary plants and avoiding spraying beneficial insects (especially when using insecticides).





Alex Kingston working
in Community Garden

Community gardens provide fresh produce and plants as well as satisfying labor, neighborhood improvement, sense of community and connection to the environment

Community gardens range from familiar "victory garden" areas where people grow small plots of vegetables, to large "greening" projects to preserve natural areas, to tiny street beautification planters on urban street corners. Some grow only flowers, others are nurtured communally and their bounty shared. There are even non-profits in many major cities that offer assistance to low-income families, children groups, and community organizations by helping them develop and grow their own gardens.

Advocates say locally grown food decreases a community's reliance on fossil fuels for transport of food from large agricultural areas and reduces a society's overall use of fossil fuels to drive in agricultural machinery.

Community gardens improve users' health through increased fresh vegetable consumption and providing a venue for exercise. The gardens also combat two forms of alienation that plague modern urban life, by bringing urban gardeners closer in touch with the source of their food, and by breaking down isolation by creating a social community. Community gardens provide other social benefits, such as the sharing of food production knowledge with the wider community and safer living spaces. Active communities experience less crime and vandalism.

Escalloped Cabbage

1 head cabbage

1 jar (15 oz) Original Cheez Whiz

1 Can (10 oz) Cream of Chicken soup

1 Jalapeno, seeded & finely diced

1/4 Cup milk

Paprika to taste

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Slice cabbage into six to eight pie shaped pieces. Remove hard inner core. Parboil slices until nearly done but still slightly firm. Drain very well, then arrange in a buttered 9x13 inch dish.

Mix Cheez Whiz, cream of chicken soup, jalapenos and milk. Pour over the top of the cabbage. Sprinkle with paprika, then bake for 30 minutes or until golden and bubbly.

Saving Storm Damaged Trees

By: Kate Harrell, summer intern for Hale/Swisher IPM

On June 5th, Hale and Swisher County experienced a storm that left some rainfall, some hail, and a great deal of wind. The rain will help green up lawns, but hail and wind left some wreckage behind. The wind speeds generated by this storm got up to 80 miles per hour, similar to hurricane conditions. These conditions caused damage to the roofs and trees as well as the crops in the area. Most of the hail was received in the southern part of Hale County, but high winds caused damage across Hale and Swisher County.



Winds did tear limbs from trees, and in some cases, even knocked them completely down. Trees damaged by severe weather were often stripped of some leaves. While that is damaging, the problem that holds the largest IPM concern will be the broken and snapped branches. What is left behind for the trees are jagged and open wounds that are ready targets for insects to attack or infest. These open wounds heal best if sawed off to a flat surface. Painting that smooth wound over with insecticidal paint can also help save the tree from possible infestation. If left uncut and open, the tree could lose fluids and nutrients through continual bleeding of sap, but also wood borers and other insect pests will be attracted to that injury site. Some of the pest insects that will flock to the tree to feed can spread throughout the tree, devouring it from the inside. The damage can even lead to the death of the tree. If insecticidal paint is hard to come by, Malathion mixed with a white or off white paint will work in a pinch. Saving a tree that has already been infested with some of these pests is costly and often not successful. Taking these preventative measures now will cost much less and could save an already damaged tree in the long run.

Checking the trees on your property soon after damaging weather events and taking appropriate action by cutting the injury to a flat surface and painting over it with insecticidal paint can save time and money.

*If you have time to read this,
then you have time to weed*

VITEX, OR CHASTE TREE (VITEX AGNUS-CASTUS)

by Dr. William C. Welch, Professor & Landscape Horticulturist, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX

The Chaste Tree, also known by its common names Lilac Chaste Tree, Hemp Tree, Sage Tree, or Indian Spice, is a native of China and India, although long ago it became naturalized throughout the South. The early American nurseryman Peter Henderson stated that Vitex has been cultivated here since 1670. For folks in the warmer part of the South, the "Lilac Chaste Tree" has been the shrub of choice to mimic lilacs, which are restricted to cooler regions.

Vitex is an excellent choice for a large shrub or small flowering tree in the smaller, modern suburban landscape. It does best in full sun and will grow in a variety of soils, provided they are well drained. After it has been established, the Vitex is a good candidate for planting in a xeric garden, where hot, dry surroundings prevail.

Like many members of the Vervain family, Vitex attracts butterflies and other insects. The older strains had small spikes of flowers in pale lilac, mauve, off-white or light pink, but modern, much improved varieties such as 'Montrose Purple', 'LeCompte', or the pink 'Salinas Pink' have spikes as long as 8 to 12 inches in length. Many aromatic black or brown seeds may be set, but if the spent spikes are cut off promptly after the first flowering the shrub will bloom again.

The common name 'Monk's Pepper' refers to the medieval belief that utilizing potions made from the berries helped monks maintain their vows of chastity. Vitex is still an ingredient in herbal remedies for a variety of conditions.

The blossoms of Vitex emerge from May to September, and the aromatic leaves are palmate, with five to seven leaflets. All dead wood and lower limbs may be removed from the shrubs in wintertime.

Propagation is from cuttings in summer or winter. Lower limbs may be layered by burying in the ground, and there are sometimes volunteer seedlings that may be transplanted elsewhere in the garden. Vitex is hardy in zones 6-9.



Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

Gary Cross, CEA-Ag/NR

Hale County Extension Office

225 Broadway, Suite 6 Plainview, Texas 79072

Tel. 806.291.5267 Fax: 806.291.5266

Website: <http://hale.agrilife.org>

Clean Up

Saturday, June 22 at 8:00 a.m. We will start at 5th St. and go up past the Art Gallery. We want to be weed free for the Art Walk on June 28th. Please bring hoes and weed eaters.



*Texas Master Gardener*SM



Farmer's Market coming to Gebo's parking lot on Thursday's! (Probably sometime in June) If you have homegrown vegetables that you would like to sell call the Extension office 806.291.5267.

Seed to Table gardening/cookbook available at Extension office for \$10. This comes in book or cd. Great information on growing vegetables!