

SAVOR THE FLAVOR WITH HERBS...

Enjoy the colors, textures, and aroma with herbs/spices!

Augusta Public Library – Wednesday, June 22 -- 12:00 noon to 1:00 p.m.

Fresh herbs add fantastic flavor, help us enjoy the colors and aroma of foods and reduce salt, sugar and fat.

Learn how to grow and to use fresh herbs. We can make healthy choices AND enjoy great taste! Contact Lisa Daniels at APL for more information, 316-775-2681.

Master Gardeners Accepting New Applicants!!!

It's that time of year again, time to start thinking about dusting off the Master Gardener applications and spreading the word about the next class.

WHAT is a Master Gardener? Do I have to be a gardening expert to take the Master Gardener course? Why would I want to be a Master Gardener? What does a Master Gardener do? These and many other questions come to mind when Master Gardener training is mentioned. Let me try to clarify a few of these points.

A Master Gardener is a person who has a thirst for knowledge about home horticulture, you know, all that stuff growing around your house - the lawn, the shade trees, the shrubs, the garden, the fruit trees, and even your houseplants. It is a person who wants to know things like; which tomato does best in Kansas, what are the best shade trees to plant in a small yard, what kind of fertilizer is best for my fescue, when should I prune my lilac, and how do I get rid of moles that are tunneling throughout my yard.

And things like; how many apple trees do I need for good fruit production, how about peaches and pears, will raspberries do any good here, what can I do to improve the soil in my garden/flower beds/yard, do I need to add lime to my soil, what can I do to control ticks, fleas, and chiggers in my yard. Let's not forget about bagworms. What about herbs, and did I mention crabgrass, or dandelions. How many hours of sunshine should you have on your water garden? How much sun does your vegetable garden need?

This is just a small sample of some of the questions that commonly come up in the everyday world of home horticulture. A Master Gardener is not a person who knows all the answers to these questions, but someone who wants to know these answers and wants to learn where to go to find out the answers to other questions just like these.

WHY would anyone want to become a Master Gardener? Well, first to gain the aforementioned knowledge, and second, to share this information with friends, neighbors, and other people in the community. Past classes of Master Gardeners have participated in such projects as the landscaping and planting of the courthouse grounds, conducting a tomato taste test at the Butler County Fair, volunteering to assist at the compost site, routing traffic and taking surveys during the Household Hazardous Waste Collection day, and provided assistance during the county fair with the horticulture judging contests and judging of the horticulture exhibits, downtown planting of the planter boxes and establishment and planting of the Extension Demonstration Garden. Most recently the Butler County Master Gardeners have installed a water garden at the demonstration garden, and are currently working on the landscaping of that new feature. There's also the Numana community garden that Butler County Master Gardeners are involved with.

HOW do I become a Master Gardener? By simply filling out an application form at the Extension office (we will even mail it to you) and being available to attend twelve training sessions between 9:00 AM and 4:00 PM on Thursdays from September 8th to December 8th. Thanksgiving is excluded of course, along with the week of October 27th. **IN EXCHANGE** for over 40 hours of

comprehensive training in home horticulture you will be asked to give back 40 hours of volunteer service to the horticulture programming efforts of the Butler County Extension office. There is a fee of \$110.00 to cover the cost of the program and educational materials, but what a small price to pay for what you receive. Sessions on landscaping, gardening, fruit and nut production, lawn care, insect and disease control, organic methods, soil management, annuals and perennials, nuisance animals, plant propagation, houseplants and more are all part of the program.

ANYONE that thinks they might be interested in taking the Master Gardener training should call 321-9660 or come down to the Extension office at the 206 N. Griffith(the fairgrounds) and pick-up an application.

Fruit Reminders

We should have good fruit crops this year as long as we can avoid severe weather. Keep in mind some tips to help ensure healthy trees, vines and fruit.

* Remove fruit from heavily loaded apples and peaches (if the flower buds weren't killed by frost) to improve fruit size and prevent limbs from breaking. Apples should be spaced every 4 inches and peaches every 6 to 8. Note that is an average spacing. Two fruit can be closer together if the average is correct.

* Remove sucker growth from the base of fruit trees and grape vines.

* Remove water sprout growth from fruit trees. Water sprouts grow straight up.

* "Comb" new growth on grape vines so these new shoots hang down for greater exposure to sunlight.

* Continue disease and insect control to prevent fruit damage.

New Potatoes

Many gardeners look forward to harvesting new potatoes this time of year. New potatoes are immature and should be about the size of walnuts. Pull soil away from the base of the plants to see if the tubers are the desired size. If they are, dig entire plants and allow the skins of the exposed tubers to dry for several hours before gathering. These young potatoes are very tender and prone to the skin "slipping" unless they are given a few hours to dry. Even then these immature potatoes will not store well. Red-skinned varieties are often preferred as they are the earliest to produce.