

The Green Thumb



January 2004

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January meeting – John Darling, Master Composter

January’s meeting will be held Thursday, January 29 at the Bob Duncan Community Center. Doors open at 7 p.m. and the meeting will begin at 7:30 p.m.

Our guest speaker is John Darling. John is a City of Arlington Master Composter, is an active member of the Arlington Conservation Council, and the recipient of the Tarrant County Corporate Recycling Council’s Environmental Vision Award in the “Individual” category. Join us as we welcome John and learn all about composting!

At this meeting will also be voting on **new bylaws** for the club, so please arrive promptly. The bylaws for consideration were included in the September and October newsletters and discussed at our October meeting.

Volunteers needed to man booth at Arlington House & Organic Garden Show (“Howard’s Show”)

The Arlington House & Organic Garden Show will be held January 30 – February 1 at the Arlington Convention Center. As in previous years, the AOGC will man a booth at the show. This is a wonderful opportunity to meet fellow gardeners and organic vendors. It is also a great way to tell others about our Natural Urban Living Garden Show (to be held June 19 this year).

If you are interested in participating, please call Angie at 817-795-3300 and let me know what time slot(s) you would be willing to fill. If you can only work part of a time slot or if you can take a shift that overlaps those listed below, that’s OK too – we are very flexible!

Friday, Jan. 30	2:00 – 5:00 p.m. 5:00 – 8:00 p.m.
Saturday, Jan. 31	10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. 2:00 – 5:00 p.m. 5:00 – 8:00 p.m.
Sunday, Feb. 01	11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. 2:00 – 5:00 p.m.



To learn more about the show, please visit
<http://www.showtechnology.com/shows2004/arlington2004.html>.

TOGFA Focus Group

TOFGA (Texas Organic Farmers & Gardeners Association) is participating in a \$22,000 research grant as part of the Sustainable Agricultural Research and Education Program. This is the first step in expanding the public awareness and availability of locally grown sustainable and organic products in Texas.

This grant's purpose is to be the first step in attaining larger grants for public education and awareness. The first step in this process is currently occurring as TOFGA hosts focus groups divided into consumers and growers or those interested in growing for public consumption.

The District 2 focus group took place at the Dallas Farmers Market on January 17th where I attended and participated in the consumer focus group.

There were only 5 consumers participating, however many more growers were there. This is good as the public demand for organics is continuing to grow and the supply is fairly limited.

From these focus groups, survey questionnaires will be developed and mailed throughout the state. This process will take several months as there are 3 more focus groups to go. The survey will be mailed out shortly thereafter.

The survey results will be posted on the website for TOFGA, www.texasorganicgrowers.org, in about a year. This will include all sustainable education, including cleaning supplies, clothing etc. Congratulations to TOFGA for their grant and support to our future.

In the meantime, we can continue to help share the benefits of organics with others and pass along information. The website

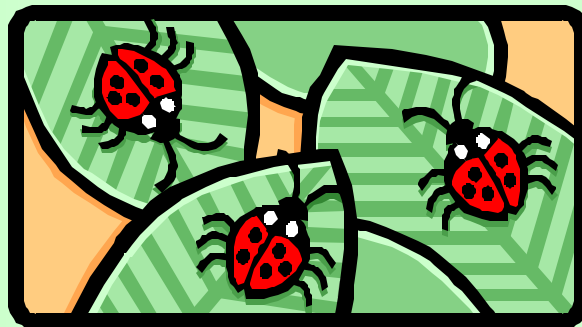
www.organicconsumers.org

is a good starting point for information.

- Susan Horn



AOGC 2004 Meeting Schedule Mark Your Calendar!



*Meetings at 7 p.m. at the Bob Duncan
Community Center, 2800 S. Center St.,
Arlington*

Jan. 29	John Darling, City of Arlington Master Composter, on Composting
Feb. 26	Malcolm Beck, Founder of Gardenville, on Fruits & Berries
Mar. 25	Coppell Community Garden
Apr. 29	Patsy Rosen, Ft. Worth Iris Society, on Irises
May 27	Bob Danfield, Cowtown Gourd Patch, on Gourds
Jun. 15	Natural Urban Living Garden Show, Saturday, 9-5
Jul. 29	Speaker TBD
Aug. 26	Speaker TBD
Sept. 30	Speaker TBD
Oct. 28	Annual Business Meeting & Potluck, special guest Jay Mertz
Nov./Dec.	No meetings

Become an Arlington Master Composter

The City of Arlington has partnered with the Texas Commission for Environmental Quality to offer a Master Composter Training Program, open to anyone. This free program is designed to train and recruit local volunteers who will promote backyard composting and yard waste reduction.

Where: City Municipal Building, 101 W. Abram St.

When: Saturday, February 14, 2004, 9 AM to 4 PM
and Saturday, February 21, 2004 9 AM to 4 PM

Attendance on both days is required to become a Master Composter. Master Composters will receive a total of 12 classroom hours of formal training on appropriate yard trimmings management options.

Class graduates will receive books and workshop materials, and a compost thermometer.

To complete their training, Master Composters are required to spend 20 volunteer hours on public education regarding composting. These hours may also be spent working at one of the compost demonstration sites, or training other citizens on the how's and why's of composting. Upon completion of the volunteer hours, you'll be certified by TCEQ.

To learn more, feel free to contact Lorrie Anderle, City of Arlington Recycling Coordinator at 817-459-6778 or at anderlel@ci.arlington.tx.us.

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

Other Area Organizations

Organic Garden Club of Fort Worth

Meets at 7 PM at the Ft Worth Botanic Gardens, 3220 Botanic Garden Blvd, Ft. Worth, TX.

<http://www.organicgardenclubfw.org>

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| February 24 | Esther Proctor, owner of R&E Plants at Weatherford, on Plant Propagation |
| March 23 | Dr. Edit Pewitt, Tarrant County Master Gardener and A Master Composter, on Growing House Plants Organically |
| April 27 | Sonny Hines, owner of Wild Bird Center on Hulen, on Wild Birds in Your Back Yard |
| May 25 | Jo Anne Boudreau, Boudreau Herb Farm, Mineral Wells, on Can Weeds Be Useful?" |

Dallas Organic Garden Club

Meets at 6:30 PM in the King of Glory Lutheran Church located at 6411 LBJ Hwy, Dallas, TX. Lecture starts at 7 PM

<http://www.dogc.org>

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|-------------|---|
| February 26 | Brice Creelman of Shades of Green, on Native Plants and Trees for DFW |
| March 25 | Monthly meeting, speaker TBA |
| April 3 | Annual Plant Sale |
| April 22 | Monthly meeting, speaker TBA |
| May 8 | Annual Tour of Organic Gardens |
| May 27 | Monthly Meeting, speaker TBA |

Denton Organic Gardening Club

Meets at 7 PM on the third Wednesday of the month at the Denton Senior Center, 509 Bell Avenue, Denton, TX. For more information, please call Steven or Margaret Ambuehl at (817) 243-1632.

Denton Organic Society

Meets at 7 PM on the third Wednesday of the month at the UNT Environmental Sciences Building, West Hickory and Avenue D, Denton, TX

Botanical Research Institute of Texas

Meets at 7 PM in the Ft Worth Botanic Gardens, 3220 Botanic Garden Blvd, Ft. Worth

<http://www.brit.org>

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| February 5 | "Bamberger Ranch Preserve: Land Restoration and Education"
Speakers: David and Margaret Bamberger, Selah Ranch (Texas Hill Country) |
| March 4 | "The Last Great Habitat - Biodiversity of South Texas"
Speaker: Fred Bryant, Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute, Texas A&M-Kingsville |
| April 8 | "The Ancient Cross Timbers Project"
Speaker: David Stahle, Professor of Geosciences, University of Arkansas |
| May 6 | "Texas Coastal Wetlands and the Houston Wilderness"
Speaker: Jim Blackburn, attorney, Blackburn & Carter, P.C., author, Book of Texas Bays, and co-founder of Houston Wilderness, a non-profit organization |

Creature feature: Downy Woodpecker (*Picoides pubescens*)



The downy woodpecker is a bird that is fairly common in heavily wooded areas such as north and west Arlington. As an adult, the small black and white bird will grow to almost 6 inches in length. It has a very short bill with a mostly black head with broad white stripes. The downy and the hairy woodpeckers are the only woodpeckers with a white back. The downy has black wings with white spots. Its rump is black with white outer tail feathers with black horizontal bars. Only the adult male has a red spot at the rear of its head. Juveniles may have a red tuft on their foreheads.

It has a short "cheap" call, which we are fortunate to hear when the back door is open.

The downy woodpecker tends to be a permanent resident, building a cavity nest in dead trees in a woodland environment. Its diet consists chiefly of insects and some fruits and seeds. To attract them in your environment, they like peanut feeders made from metal mesh. They grab onto the mesh with their claws and peck at the peanuts inside, occasionally making their call. Suet feeders can also be used. I always like to stop and listen when they feed.

They usually have three to six 0.8 inch-long eggs at a time with a 12 day incubation period. They typically have 1 brood per year in the northern states and up to 2 in the southern states.

The downy woodpecker is more commonly seen in the eastern U.S. due to the larger concentration of trees. Here in north Texas we are along the border of the forest, so we get to see them somewhat often.

Both of the web sites below offer recordings of the the downy woodpecker calls.

- Doug Brown

Credits:

Gough, G.A., Sauer, J.R. *Patuxent Bird Glossary*. 1997. Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, Laurel, MD.

<http://www.mbr-pwrc.usgs.gov/Infocenter/Glossary/glossary.html>

<http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/downyhairy.html>



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

PLU (product look-up) codes . . . Look for produce “dressed to the nines”

The stickers on the produce you buy often display a 4- or 5-digit number. This number is known as the product look-up (PLU) code. The base code is a 4-digit number that identifies the type of fruit or vegetable. A Gala apple, for example, may be labeled 4133.

Codes sometimes include the relative size of the produce, and different codes may be assigned for “East” (east of the Mississippi River) and “West” (west of the Mississippi River, and also for imported produce) to give some indication of where the fruit was grown. This is done mainly because of pricing differences between produce grown in different areas.

For example, 4137, 4020, and 4021 all refer to Golden Delicious apples: 4137 is large and from the East/Central region; 4020 is a large apple from the West (or imported); and 4021 is a small apple grown in the West.

A fifth digit at the beginning of the code gives some indication of how the produce was grown. If the PLU begins with “9” then it was grown organically (the Gala apple would be labeled 94133). If the first number of a 5-digit code is an “8”, then the produce is a genetically modified product.

You are not likely to find produce labeled with an “8” because most genetically modified produce are subsequently processed (corn and soybeans are two prime examples) rather than sold whole. There are a few exceptions to this rule: a genetically modified papaya from Hawaii is on the market now. In the mid-1990’s a company came up with a genetically modified tomato, but took it off the market a few years later because it was not profitable (the company said it was because it “required special transportation equipment” – critics said it was expensive and tasted bad). In the late 1990’s, Monsanto had to give up on a genetically modified potato because a major potato processor refused to buy it.

Use of the PLU is voluntary so it is doubtful that many genetically modified fresh fruits and/or vegetables will be labeled as such even when they do come to market, so buyer beware!

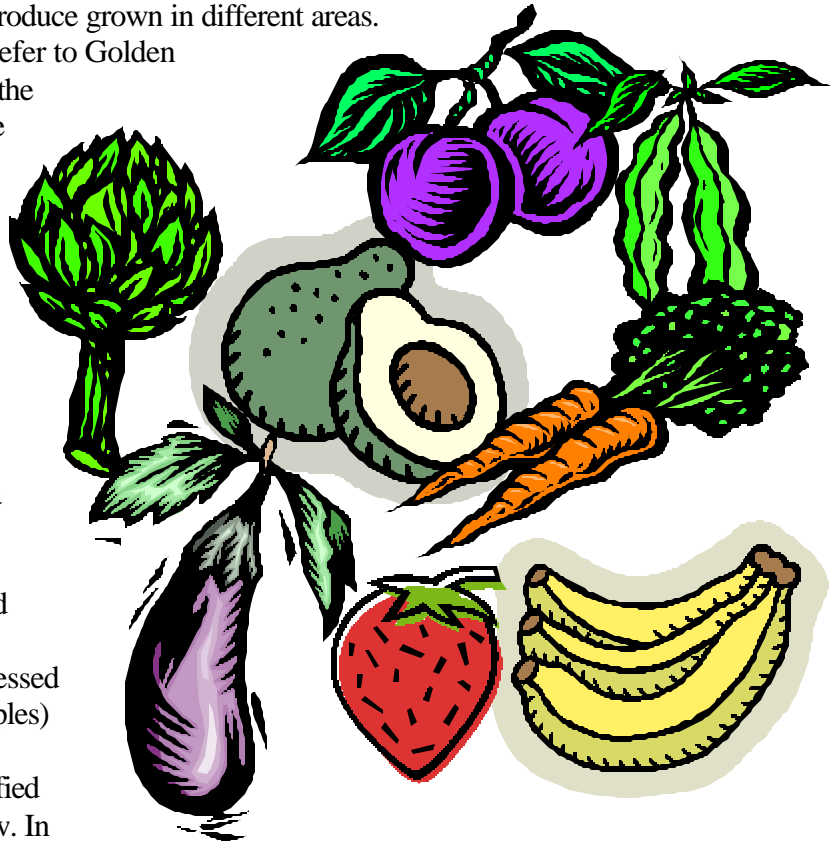
- Angie Brown

See a list of PLUs here: <http://freepages.misc.rootsweb.com/~culbert/pluindex.htm>

References:

<http://www.wired.com/news/medtech/0,1286,60911,00.html>

<http://freepages.misc.rootsweb.com/~culbert/plu.htm>



address correction requested



Next meeting. . .

Thursday, January 29, 2003

7:00 pm social, 7:30 pm meeting

John Darling

Master Composter

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 pm for refreshments, meeting begins at 7:30 pm
- 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 -