

# The Green Thumb



April 2004

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## April meeting – Patsy Rosen; Irises

April's meeting will be held Thursday, April 29 at the Bob Duncan Community Center. Doors open at 7 p.m. and the meeting will begin at 7:30 p.m. Our speaker will be Patsy Rosen, AOGC member, member of the Ft. Worth Iris Society, and Iris Master Judge.



Patsy opened her garden to club members on April 18, and those who went were treated to a beautiful sight. She has over 600 irises growing in her backyard! She is a wealth of knowledge about irises, how to grow them organically, what works in Texas and what doesn't, desirable qualities in an iris, and more! Join us as we learn all about these beautiful plants from a real enthusiast and expert!

## Arlington Smart Yard Contest

The Smart Yard Contest supports the design concepts developed from Texas SmartScape (visit [www.txsmartscape.com](http://www.txsmartscape.com)), a regional initiative that promotes the usage of native and adaptive plants and trees to create landscapes that require less water, pesticides and fertilizer to thrive in the hot North Central Texas climate.

Smart Yard is an event to recognize Arlington residents who have incorporated environmentally friendly yard management and design into a "smart yard" using the design concepts from Texas SmartScape™ and similar sources. This event is only open to residents.

Yards will be evaluated by a panel of judges. To be considered, photos (digital is preferred) must be received by July 23, 2004. If necessary, a site visit may be part of the judging. You will be notified before judges visit your property. Please limit your submission to 5 recent photos. All entries will be considered for the Best Overall category. Photos submitted will become the property of the City of Arlington. Photos can be emailed to [crottyr@ci.arlington.tx.us](mailto:crottyr@ci.arlington.tx.us) or mailed to Roni Crotty, P.O. Box 90231 MS 01-0220, Arlington, TX 76004-3231. For more information call Roni Crotty at 817-459-6587.

[http://www.ci.arlington.tx.us/publicworks/pdf/smartyard\\_registration.pdf](http://www.ci.arlington.tx.us/publicworks/pdf/smartyard_registration.pdf)

## AOGC Helps with Children's Discovery Garden

By Esther Chambliss



Two ladybugs, Minnie and Max, were chatting over a luncheon of aphids one day, when one explained how *he* (even though *he* was a *ladybug*) was quite concerned about the children's garden. "Yes," said the other ladybug. "How are the children going to know about plants and nature if no one comes to help Nancy?" (Nancy Hagwood) That's when Max had this great idea. Let's get Arlington Organic Garden Club to help, after all we are the club's mascot. One thing lead to another and before anyone knew what was happening, AOGC (Esther Chambliss & Robbie Pritchard) came to the rescue with plants and seeds in hand. The word got out and members from the Master Composters and the Starflower Garden Club also came with shovels and rakes and, oh! you should have seen those earthworms, as they were spread out with the compost on the beds.

Vegetables, flowers, & herbs started to appear in the garden. What excitement: there was to be a gourd patch, rabbit weathervane, wind chimes, and even a bench to sit on and enjoy the view of the garden.

Everyone is invited to come by and see the garden. It is located at the Fielder House, 1616 W. Abrams, next to the small building in the parking lot.

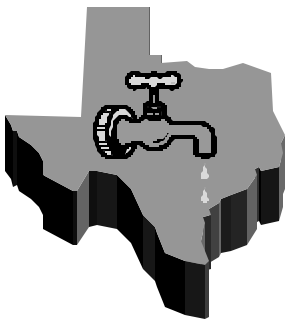
If you would like to help out in the garden please contact Nancy Hagwood at 817-265-7421. There are no set times or days to work the garden. If you have some time and want to help, that's great!

There are only 5 rules we have for the garden:

1. Produce will be donated to a shelter.
2. Produce will be donated to each club for their raffle.
3. No pick rule.
4. Please don't touch the beans when they're wet!
5. No smoking in the garden. "Mother Nature" really doesn't approve, and the tomatoes just don't like it!

## Texas Water Rights

By Susan Horn



Currently there is a water rights debate occurring in Texas. The Texas Land Commissioner is proposing to sell the aquifer (ground water) rights to a private company. This brings an interesting issue to light: The Texas Rule of Capture which governs all Texas ground water rights. This law states that underground water is the sole right of the property owner-the state of Texas in this instance. The water is subject to barter, sale or lease and with the exception of a few statutes pertaining to conservation, protection, and waste. The state of Texas does not regulate the production or use of underground water.

Rio Nuevo is the private company trying to purchase the water rights from land owned by the state of Texas. Under the Rule of Capture, this means that a private company will be able to sell water pumped from public land with limited restrictions to the amount of water they are able to pump for private gain. The 5 West Texas Counties involved are Culberson, Jeff Davis, Hudspeth, El Paso and Presidio counties. The General Partner of Rio Nuevo has acknowledged that no one knows how much water is under these state-owned lands, where it is, how fast it

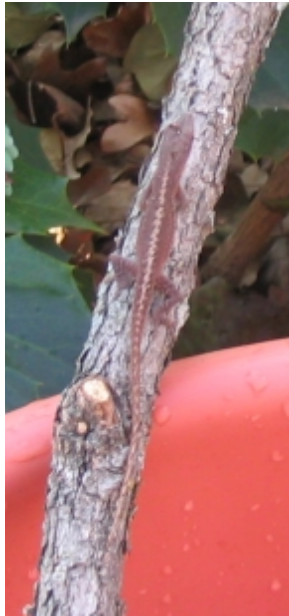
will recharge or whether it will recharge at all. AND NONE OF THESE QUESTIONS will be answered until after the lease with the Texas General Land Office is signed.

The future of the current uses of this land is in question if this sale of public land water rights is done. This gives us all something to consider for the future of our Texas water. Water is quickly replacing oil as the most valuable commodity on our planet. Whose water is it? It's up to us to help make these decisions for our future. The public comment period is currently open and this is our opportunity to let our Texas public officials understand our concerns and opinions about our land and the water stored below it.



## Protect your lizards, grass snakes, and frogs!

By Angie Brown



For the first time, I am trying to grow potatoes. I planted them in the bottom of a very large pot, and have been adding more compost and mulch as the plants grow.

Being very impatient, I went out the other day and poked around in the pot to see if anything's growing, and was greeted by an anole, the small smooth lizard that can camouflage himself by being green when he's on foliage, but turns brown when near wood or soil. My yard is full of them, so I didn't think too much about it.

Two days later I went back out to water. My watering in the big pot disturbed the lizard, who was still there, and while he was frantically running around inside the pot, I realized he was stuck there and couldn't get out! The sides of the plastic pot were too smooth for him to get a foothold and escape. I immediately found a large stick and put it in the pot so that the bottom touched the soil and the top poked out over the rim. Within 2 minutes, the little lizard was up and out of there! I now have sticks in both pots, and will keep them there until I've added enough compost over the potato plants to fill the pot.

Some other pitfalls to watch out for if you're trying to protect the slithery wildlife in your garden:

1. Shake out your water hoses before hooking them up. They make an attractive hiding place for small grass snakes, and you could harm them if you turn on the water with an attachment at the end (I've found this out the hard way).
2. Likewise, shake out any watering wands before attaching them to the end of your hose. For the last several winters, we have had a lizard living in the watering wand that we leave standing upright leaning against the house.
3. If you leave watering cans outside where they can fill up with rainwater, or if you leave them sitting partially full, put a tall stick inside and lean it against the rim. That way, if a frog decides to live in your watering can (I've seen that before as well!) he will have an easy way out.



### 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:  
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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

### AOGC Garden Word Search

```
V N V B N R J C I Z X G S M D
Q Q G S A E G A Q A F E O R M
N E Q B D O T H E B S G P O D
P H B R A U M U J E Y C H W O
A I F R O G N M L L C T Y H R
T T X X C P I W F G X S G T G
R E Z I L I T R E F N M I R A
N E D R A G E S I R P R Q A N
R L D Y E T E L R S U K O E I
S W W K T J F F A S W N V C C
G X K U Y C D T Y D Z V A R R
O L B C O M P O S T Y Y H M E
A F I D Q Z J D O Y X B W S T
Q H G F M X H U Y Q H M U F A
Y Y U M X F W T O X C P R G W
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AOGC

CORN GLUTEN

FROG

LADYBUG

RABBIT

BUTTERFLY

EARTHWORM

GARDEN

MANURE

WATER

COMPOST

FERTILIZER

IRIS

ORGANIC



## Natural Urban Living Garden Show Volunteers Needed – June 19, 2004

### Gallon size pots needed:

David Barnett needs gallon-size nursery pots for plants he is transplanting for this year's plant sale. Six-inch round pots are also needed, especially if you have the "flats" with the round compartments for those pots.

If you have some to donate, please contact Dave at 817-483-7746 or bring them to the next meeting.

### Raffle Prizes

We would like to thank **Rabbit Hill Farm** and **Redenta's Garden** for their continuing support of our club through their generous raffle prize donations.

We also extend our gratitude to several new raffle sponsors: **Green Mama's Nursery**, **Ladybug Brands**, and **Harvest Supply**.



**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.

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

The Natural Urban Living Garden Show will be held on Saturday, June 19 from 9-5 at the Bob Duncan Community Center. We are pleased to announce that we have booked three fantastic speakers: Jay Mertz at 10:30, John Dromgoole at 12:30, and Howard Garrett at 2:30. We are looking for people to work different areas of the show. Thanks to Elaine Couch, Bev Elbert, Diane Feldman, Robbie & Joe Pritchard, Judith Edwards, and Dan Anderson for signing up already.

Sheets will be out at this month's meeting for additional volunteers. Below is a description of ways you can help out. Can't work the show? That's OK, we could also use volunteers to provide food for the Hospitality Room. Below is a list of volunteer positions we have open:

**Hospitality Room:** We need someone to oversee this area. Duties include: coordinate refreshment donations from our members, ensure the food is out for breakfast and for lunch (this does not require you to stay in that area all day), set up area, keep it neat and stocked. After lunch cleanup should only take about 30 minutes: would like to have three volunteers for clean-up around 2:15 p.m.

Covered dishes for breakfast and lunch are needed, just like at our October meeting, except we also need juice, jelly, butter, etc. for the breakfast menu.

Breakfast: juice, coffee cakes, muffins, fruit

Lunch: potluck dishes (meat and meatless), Vegetables, Fruit, Tea, Desserts

The room is set up behind the stage; this room is a way to say thank you to our vendors and club members who volunteer at the show.

**Information Table:** Greet people, answer questions about our club, direct people to the speaker's room, children's room, and nonprofit room. Request our guests complete information cards to have a reminder mailed to them for the 2005 show (this is important, since it also serves to give us a count of how many people attended). There will also be literature on the tables from various organizations. You get to "sit down on the job," too!

**Plant Sale:** This is a great opportunity to learn more about and share your knowledge of various plants. All plants will be labeled, so you don't have to be an "expert."

**Kids' & Family Room:** This is *not* a day care, it is a place for adults and children to mutually participate in the various activities which include: earthworm table – hand out stickers and information on earthworms; crafts area – make a coffee filter butterfly & pipe cleaner worms; bee'n bag toss game – hand out prizes.

**Vendor Assistance:** We need volunteers to help customers, vendors, and nonprofit groups haul in and haul out their "stuff."

**Non-Profit Room:** Make sure room is set up with appropriate number of tables and chairs for the various nonprofit groups. Answer any questions that they may have about the show. Be available to intermittently check on air coolness (the A/C went out last year and that room got hot).

**Raffle Table:** Keep an eye on the raffle table, announce raffle numbers, ensure an appropriate number of prizes are on the table for the raffles throughout the day.

## Lawn Chemicals Linked to Cancer in Dogs

[http://news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=storyu=/nm/20040420/sc\\_nm/environment\\_sties\\_dc\\_1](http://news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=storyu=/nm/20040420/sc_nm/environment_sties_dc_1)

A Purdue University survey of 83 owners of Scotty dogs (a breed particularly susceptible to bladder cancer) recently diagnosed with bladder cancer revealed that the risk of this type of cancer was 4 to 7 times more likely in dogs who were exposed to lawn chemicals. Which specific chemical(s) is unknown at this time; more studies will follow, where the survey will be expanded to include other pets, and children as well.

# Water Gardening- the missing link in your organic garden?

By Martha Whitehouse

I put a water garden in my backyard because, like a lot of people, I watch way too much Home and Garden television. I was in a stressful job two years ago and everything I saw and read promised me that the soothing sound of water and gentle splish-splash of fish would be the cure for my stress. I've had my pond for two years now and what I've discovered is that the relaxing quality of the pond is the least of the benefits that water gardening provides to the organic gardener.



*My water garden . . .  
For more information: Visit  
this website or come by and  
see my pond! I'll make you  
a watercress tea sandwich.  
<http://www.exoticwaterscape.com/PondKits.htm>*

My water feature is a 1600-gallon pond with a single story waterfall. The pond system I have is called an Aquascape Ecosystem™. It uses a biological filtering method, which basically means that it uses the same organic principals that organic gardeners use. The basic components of an Aquascape Ecosystem™ are the BioFalls™, Filter, Pump, liner, rocks, plants, beneficial bacteria and fish (I keep Koi and a couple of goldfish). Each of these components plays a part in keeping the pond beautiful and balanced.

There are a variety of kit sizes depending on how large a water feature you want. I started off with a smaller pond (600 gallons) and had it enlarged after the first year.

There are many other types of pond systems, but I haven't found another system that fits better into an organic home garden than the Aquascape system. You can have a professional pond company install your pond or you can

buy a kit with an instructional video. I had my pond dug for me by guys with much better backs than I have. I maintain the pond myself.

## Key Benefits of Water Gardening:

**Mosquito Control.** . . The fish eat the larva. They eat the mosquitoes too if they can catch them. Dragonflies love ponds and they also eat mosquitoes.

**Abundant liquid fertilizer.** . . The pond is emptied and cleaned once a year at the beginning of the spring. The water and muck at the bottom is invaluable to my garden. I flood all of my planting areas with it to give everything a quick start for spring growth.

The pond also has a filter mat that you have to clean once a month by spraying it out with a garden hose. The runoff from this process is a rich organic fertilizer and great for heating up your compost pile.

**Opportunity to grow water plants.** . . Water plants are easy to grow and maintain. I don't have to fertilize or weed them. I grow Papyrus, Watercress, Water lilies, Irises and water parsley. The plants help keep the water clear and the fish like to take a nibble now and then. I keep my fish from eating all of the plants by giving them leaf lettuce and the occasional slice of watermelon.

**Fish Make Great Pets (When they're outside!).** . . If you've visited the Japanese Garden in Ft. Worth you already know how friendly Koi are. Mine eat out of my hand and their favorite treat is when I dig up grubs for them in the spring. Last Spring they made me a grandmother. They spawned and I now have twelve baby koi who are growing up fast. During cold weather the fish don't eat. They go into a low-energy mode. They get active again when the water temperature gets above 50 degrees.

**Wildlife Attractor.** . . Ponds attract birds and beneficial insects.

**Organic Motivator.** . . Having a pond encourages organic gardening practices. All the pond owners I know are very devoted to their fish. They work hard to keep chemicals away from their ponds.

**Stress Reliever.** . . Last but not least, the area around your pond will become your favorite spot in your garden. It's soothing to the senses and healing to the soul.

**perennials  
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old fashioned annuals  
old garden roses  
native shrubs and trees  
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colleyville	817. 488. 3525
dallas	214. 823. 9421
cedar hill	972. 291. 7650

**r** redenta's  
garden shops  
[www.redentafas.com](http://www.redentafas.com)

## Native Plant Sale at the Wildscape

Veterans Park, Arlington  
May 1, 2004; 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Directions: from I-20, north on Green Oaks Blvd. east on Arkansas Lane, south on Spanish Trail, second parking lot entrance is the Wildscape Native Plant Demonstration Garden. All plants are propagated by Wildscape volunteers and proceeds go to the improvement of the Molly Hollar Wildscape. Some of the plants available are:

<u>Perennials</u>		<u>Ground Covers/Vines</u>	<u>Grasses</u>	<u>Trees</u>
Columbine	Mexican Butterfly	Frog Fruit	Gulf coast Muhly	Eastern Red Cedar
Flame acanthus	Weed	Golden Groundsel	Lindheimer's Muhly	Roughleaf Dogwood
Four Nerve Daisy	Mealy Blue Sage	Violets	Inland Sea Oats	
Purple Coneflower	Salvia Coccinea	White Avenas	Other Grasses	
Lanceleaf coreopsis	Turks Cap	Lyre Leaf Sage	Provided by	
Blackeyed Susan	Gayfeather	Snakeherb	Bluestem Nursery	
Violet Ruellia	Zexmenia	Horseherb		
Maximillian Sunflower	Winecup	Passion Vine		
	Coral Berry			



## 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Standard Flower Show & Festival The Fielder Blooms Again

Saturday, May 1<sup>st</sup>, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

### “Music In The Garden”

11:00 – 11:30 Tom Champion, The Piano Man  
11:45 – 12:15 Marvin and Betty Willis, Fiddle and Keyboard  
Noon to 3:00 Musical Jam Session (bring your instruments)

### Dotty Woodson

*Tarrant County Horticulture Ext. Agent,*  
**12:30 - 1:15 pm Planting To Attract Birds**

*1:15 Arbor Day Celebration*

**AOGC  
volunteers  
needed to  
man a table;  
please  
contact  
Esther  
Chambliss at  
817-263-9322**

### **ANNUALS! PERENNIALS! HERBS! HOUSEPLANTS!**

Agro Innovators, @ The Cross, DAVA's Salsa, Elbert Seal, Emma's Bloomers, Homemade Gourmet, Hummingbird Road, Kith Kath Bath, Lang-n-Crew, Linda Dinn, Mary Kay, Peggy Hammel's Garden, and more

#### **JAMES RICE**

**Noon – 3:00 for Autographs**  
*Author and Illustrator of children's books*

#### **MARY PENSON**

**11:00 – 2:00 for Autographs**  
*Author of Billy Bardin and The Witness Tree*

#### **Compost Demonstration**

**11:15** by Arlington Master Composters

#### **Children's Craft Activities**

**11:00 – 3:00** by Arlington Garden Club

**The Fielder House, 1616 West Abram, Arlington, Texas**

**(817) 460-4001**

**www.fielderhouse.org**

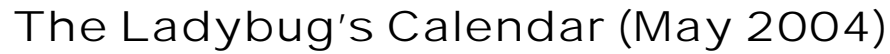
#### **MEMBER CLUBS INCLUDE:**

Arlington Garden Club, Federated  
Arlington Men's Garden Club, Affiliated

Star Flowers Garden Club, Federated  
Arlington Organic Garden Club, Affiliated

Sponsored by

**Star-Telegram**



AOGC: Arlington Organic Garden Club meets at 7 PM at the Bob Duncan Community Center, 2800 S. Center St., Arlington, TX. <http://www.aogc.org>  
 BRIT: Botanical Research Institute of Texas meets at 7 PM in the Ft Worth Botanic Gardens, 3220 Botanic Garden Blvd, Ft. Worth, TX. <http://www.brit.org>  
 DA: Dallas Arboretum is located at 8617 Garland Road, Dallas, TX. <http://www.dallasarboretum.org>  
 DOGC: Dallas Organic Garden Club meets at 6:30 PM (lecture starts at 7) in the King of Glory Lutheran Church, 6411 LBJ Hwy, Dallas, TX. <http://www.dogc.org>  
 DOS: 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.  
 FWBG: Ft. Worth Botanic Garden is located at 3220 Botanic Garden Boulevard, Fort Worth, TX.  
 NPSTX: Native Plant Society of Texas meets at 7 PM on the first Thursday of every month at the Ft. Worth Botanic Gardens. <http://txnativeplants.org>  
 OGCFW: Organic Garden Club of Ft. Worth meets at 7 PM at the Ft. Worth Botanic Gardens, 3220 Botanic Garden Blvd, Ft. Worth, TX. <http://www.organicgardenclubfw.org>  
 TDG: Texas Discovery Gardens at Fair Park is located at 3601 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Dallas TX. <http://www.texasdiscoverygardens.com>

*address correction requested*



*Next meeting. . .*

**Thursday, April 29, 2004**

*7:00 pm refreshments, meeting starts at 7:30*

**Speaker: Patsy Rosen -- Irises**

*Refreshments: Robbie Pritchard, Maud Huber*



#### **Club Information**

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](mailto: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.

*When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world.*

*- John Muir, Naturalist -*