

# Making a Difference

## 2019 Horticulture in Williamson County Kate Whitney – County Extension Agent for Horticulture


The horticulture program in Williamson County is growing like weeds in 2019! Williamson County residents can learn all about lawn and garden care, vegetable gardening, fruit and nut trees, water conservation, and tree care through a variety of programs. County Extension Agent, Kate Whitney, writes a bi-weekly lawn and garden column in the Williamson County Sun and a monthly email newsletter to reach residents with timely information.

The Williamson County Master Gardener Volunteer program has 135 active volunteers. The volunteers have contributed more than 7,719 volunteer hours to educational and service projects throughout the county in 2019. Master Gardener projects include demonstration gardens, vegetable variety trials, Junior Master Gardener classes, a help desk, and monthly educational meetings. Through their projects and programs, the Master Gardeners have reached 4,775 contacts in 2019.

- Green Thumbs Up Gardening: Monthly program offered at both the Cedar Park and Round Rock Public Libraries about lawn and garden topics. 256 participants since beginning in January 2019.
  - January: Roses
  - February: Basic Garden Maintenance
  - March: Plant Selection
  - April: Turf Management
  - May: Lawn and Garden Insects
  - June: Irrigation
  - July: Tree Problems
  - August: Fall Gardening
  - September: Bulbs
  - October: Shrubs
  - November: Tree Selection, Planting, and Pruning
  - December: Weed Management
  
- Hands on in the Garden: Monthly program offered at the Master Gardener Demonstration Garden to offer training and hands-on experience in fruit, vegetable, and ornamental gardening. 306 participants since January 2019.
  - January: Seed Starting
  - February: Soil
  - March: Grafting & Propagation
  - April: Bugs in the Garden
  - May: Square Foot & Container Gardening

*The members of Texas A&M AgriLife will provide equal opportunities in programs and activities, education, and employment to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation or gender identity and will strive to achieve full and equal employment opportunity throughout Texas A&M AgriLife.*

- June: What to Do with Herbs
  - July: Roses
  - August: What's a Weed?
  - September: Fall and Winter Gardening Preparation
  - October: Saving Seeds
  - November: Compost
  - December: Garden Problems – Pests, Diseases, and More
- **Master Gardener Monthly Meeting:** Monthly program offered to the public about a variety of gardening topics. 1,173 participants since January 2019.
    - January: Winter Season Care of the Perennial Garden
    - February: Garden Tool Maintenance
    - March: Pest Management for Vegetable Gardening
    - April: Soil Improvement & Amendments
    - May: Succulents
    - June: Snakes of Central Texas
    - July: Gardening for the Bees
    - August: Canning and Food Preservation
    - September: Garden Preparation for the Fall
    - October: Native Grasses for Central Texas
    - November: To Be Determined
  - **Pecan Grafting & Integrated Pest Management:** Field day workshop offered to commercial pecan growers and homeowners about grafting and managing pests. 34 attended.
  - **Peach Pruning & Planting Workshop:** Hands-on workshop about good peach varieties for Williamson County. Demonstration for proper planting and pruning techniques. 36 attended.
  - **Tomato Lunch & Learn:** Workshop to teach homeowners how to grow and prepare tomatoes. Participants were given two tomato transplants and the FCH Agent demonstrated a tomato soup recipe. 34 attended.
  - **Vegetable Variety Trials:** We are working to conduct variety trials of vegetables in the demonstration garden to find out which new and classic favorite varieties grow well in Williamson County. In July 2019, the Master Gardeners and Kate Whitney started the first trials with tomatoes and peas.
  - **Senior University:** A six-week course about Texas Landscaping for homeowners. The course was conducted for 50+ participants in the Senior University program. Topics included: botany, turf, native & adapted plants, trees, landscape design basics, and water conservation.

V A L U E	
<b>Earth-Kind® Landscaping</b>	
	<p>The Earth-Kind® program teaches participants how to care for gardens and landscapes with environmentally friendly, research-proven techniques. Instructional topics include water conservation, responsible fertilizer application, and non-chemical options for controlling pests. Use of Earth-Kind® practices benefits Texas by saving water and protecting surface and groundwater resources from potential contaminants.</p>