



This month in your garden:

- **Plant Vegetables** from transplants like broccoli, cauliflower, strawberries, collards, and lettuce.
- **Plant Seeds** for lettuce, radish, and carrots. Begin seeding spring tomatoes inside.
- **Plant Rosebushes** in prepared soil where they receive 6-8 full hours of sun every day. Prune rosebushes in February.
- **Plant Fruiting Plants** such as blueberries and blackberries; it is a good time to get them established.
- **Plant Spring flowering trees and shrubs** such as redbuds, fringe trees, Mexican plums, azaleas, and spirea. Now is a great time to plant.
- **Water-** Maintain watering on newly planted seeds and transplants. Continue to deep water trees and shrubs. A well-hydrated plant holds up to frosts and freezes better than a drought-stressed plant.
- **Mulch-** Mulch to protect from cold and keep small weeds from growing larger.
- **Help the birds** -Keep bird baths scrubbed and filled with clean water. Keep seed in feeders fresh. After rain check for moist or damp seed, replace promptly to keep birds healthy and happy. Continue to put out suet cakes for high energy winter snacks.
- **Hold off on pruning** -Crepe Myrtles need no pruning. If you must, you may shape gently now, but don't commit Crepe Murder. Wait to prune spring-flowering trees such as deciduous magnolias, Mexican plums, and redbuds until after they bloom.
- **Freezes-** WINTER IS NOT OVER! Have frost cloth on hand to cover tender plants in case of freezing weather. Wrap plants completely down to ground level. The fewer drafts that move under the frost cloth, the better.

Save The Date* All our meetings and field trips are on the NFWC calendar

January

Meeting – Thursday, January 19th

NFC clubhouse 1:00

guest speaker- *Callie Murphy*

Learn to Bloom

Spring Kitchen Gardens

Garden Workshop – Thursday, January 26th

NFC Clubhouse 12:30*

guest speaker- *Laura Levenson*

The Garden Club of Houston

Botanical Arts - pressed flowers and more!

**Stay tuned – more info coming soon*

February

Meeting – Thursday, February 16th

NFC clubhouse 1:00

guest speaker- *Elizabeth White-Olsen*

Go Native Landscaping

Gardening for Butterflies

Field Trip – Thursday, February 2nd

Houston Botanic Garden*

**Stay tuned – more info coming soon*

Field Trip – Thursday, February 23rd?

Houston Botanic Garden*

**Working on this – in time for spring planting*



You Can Read more here: <https://today.tamu.edu/2022/05/18/the-positive-effects-of-gardening-on-mental-health/>

Garden Happenings this Month—



Introduction to Herbalism **Making Medicine with Plants**

Saturday, January 28, 2023
10:00 am — 12:00 pm
Health & Wellness
\$30
<https://hbg.org/events/introduction-to-herbalism-2023-01-28-10-00/>



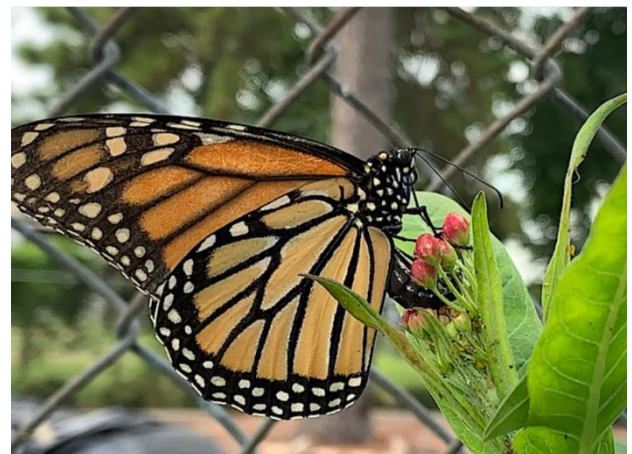
[Wabash Feed & Garden Store](#)
[4537 N Shepherd Dr, Houston, TX](#)

Growing Mushrooms

by Michael Frederick, Lone Star Mushrooms
Saturday, January 21
10:30 am
Cost: \$10, receive \$10 Off coupon
Wabash Feed and Garden | 4537 N. Shepherd | 713-863-8322

Learn how to grow mushrooms and how they can change the future.

https://www.eventbrite.com/e/growing-mushrooms-by-michael-frederick-tickets-489934757047?fbclid=IwAR0ZD8p4nTZ1fr90GcuEfbVzF0dbDKdjR_lhuB9oc72Fgt7FMSsKQP8gtLg



Habitat Creation For Insects, Birds & Mammals by Kevin Topek

Learn how to create a wildlife habitat in your yard.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/habitat-creation-for-insects-birds-other-mammals-by-kevin-topek-tickets-495189945457>

Coming up in February

3 Houston Home & Garden Show
FEB Fri, Feb 3 – Sun, Feb 5
NRG Center, NRG Park, 1 Fannin St
Houston, TX





Upcoming Classes



FRUIT TREE TRAINING & PRUNING 3 CLASS SERIES

SATURDAY JANUARY 7, 14, 21, 2023 @ 10:00 AM – 12:30 PM

LIVE ZOOM CLASS & IN-PERSON

DR. BOB RANDALL

https://www.urbanharvest.org/stec_event/basic-fruit-tree-care-for-winter-2/

STARTING SPRING TOMATOES AND PEPPERS

January 17 2023 07:00pm - 08:00pm

Reminder

Online Learning

**STARTING SPRING TOMATOES AND PEPPERS
TUESDAY JANUARY 17, 2023 @ 7:00-8:00 PM
ZOOM LIVE CLASS**



https://www.urbanharvest.org/stec_event/starting-spring-tomatoes-and-peppers/



The Texas AgriLife Extension Service and the Harris County Master Gardeners are pleased to offer the **FREE Green Thumb Gardening Series of Lectures** now provided [virtually](#) twice a month. We have collaborated with the Harris County Public Library and Houston Community College. Join us for one or both!

Every month, there is a new topic presented by experienced Harris County Master Gardeners. We share in-depth information for beginners to experienced gardeners. To access a printable version of the 2023 Green Thumb schedule, click [HERE](#).

Green Thumb Lecture Series

Second Monday, 10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

Houston Community College

[Register in advance to receive the link:](#)

hccs.edu/community-learning-workshops

Second Monday of each month

January 9 – Soil and Food Web

February 13– Spring Vegetable Gardening

March 20 – Benefits of Growing Native Plants

April 10– Tips for Great Lawns

May 8 – Gardening with Less Water

June 12 – Pollinator Gardening

July 10– Fall Vegetable Gardening

August 14 – Exploring Ethnic Vegetables

September 11 – Growing Roses in Texas

October 9 – Trees and Tree Care

Third Tuesday, 11:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.

Harris County Public Library Facebook Live

[No reservation required. Watch on Facebook –](#)

facebook.com/harriscountyppl/live

Third Tuesday of each month

January 17 – Soil and Food Web

February 21– Spring Vegetable Gardening

March 21 – Benefits of Growing Native Plants

April 18– Tips for Great Lawns

May 16 – Gardening with Less Water

June 20 – Pollinator Gardening

July 18– Fall Vegetable Gardening

Garden to Kitchen – *Dill...*

This is the time of year that dill grows in Houston, and in case you weren't sure about why to plant dill or about how to use up the dill in your garden, read on –

added bonus to planting dill? It is a host plant for the swallowtail butterfly – meaning butterflies lay eggs on the plant and caterpillars eat the plant before making a cocoon.



Teryaki Salmon Marinade – I got this recipe from a neighbor years ago (Ann Gregg) and it has become my go to recipe for marinating salmon for the grill – I figure it makes enough for a filet of 1 pound...



- 1/2 cup soy sauce**
- 2 tablespoons minced dill**
- 2 tablespoons oil**
- 1 clove garlic minced**
- 1 tablespoon sugar (I cut this in half)**
- 1 tablespoon fresh gingerroot (I grate it) or 1/8 tsp. ground**
- 1/4 cup dry white wine**
- Parsley (I chop fresh and add 1tablespoon)**

Mix ingredients and add salmon filet in bag or glass dish to marinade at least an hour before grilling

January 2023

Lemon Dill Compound Butter

Lemon dill compound butter is quick and super easy to make. This herbed butter goes well with sea food, steak, chicken or potatoes. It does not only boost their flavor but also makes them extra creamy and juicy.

<https://www.happyfoodstube.com/lemon-dill-compound-butter/>



Ingredients

- 1 stick Unsalted Butter , softened (110g)
- Zest of 1 Lemon
- 1-2 tbsp Lemon Juice
- 1 tbsp Finely Chopped Fresh Dill

Instructions

1. In a bowl, combine the softened butter with lemon zest, lemon juice and finely chopped dill. Mix well. Transfer onto a plastic wrap and roll it into a log.
2. Refrigerate until firm. When hard, slice it and use on anything you like!

Notes

1. **Butter** – use real butter. I used unsalted butter as this way I can easily control the amount of sodium in our diet. If you like, you can use salted butter.
2. **Lemon juice** – you can add less or more lemon juice, if you like. Just note that the more juice you add, the thinner the mixture. If you feel it way too thin, chill it for a while so it hardens a bit before you continue.
3. **Storage** – up to 7 days in the fridge or several weeks in the freezer. I suggest pre-cutting the chilled butter before you store it in the freezer. That way you just take as many slices of butter as you need without having to wait for the whole log to soften.
4. For detailed information and tips or if in doubt, please read the full post.

Dill Vinegar Recipe

Dill lends itself well to herbal vinegar. Add it to fresh vegetables from the garden like carrots, cauliflower, or cucumbers. It also makes a nice low cal ingredient in salad dressing, sauces, and marinades. Make up a batch to instant-pickle your peppers, or spice up your mustard crusted salmon.

Ingredients

- 3 cups of cider vinegar
- 8 to 12 sprigs of fresh dill (You can also use two tablespoons of crushed dill seed)
- 1 clove of garlic, sliced (optional)
- 10 peppercorns



Dill Vinegar Recipe continued...

Instructions

1. Wash dill thoroughly and place in a clean jar with a plastic (non-reactive) lid.
2. Add sliced garlic and peppercorns. Fill with warm vinegar (105 Degrees F or thereabouts) to cover. Place the jar in a sunny window, shaking daily for three weeks to a month.
3. After three weeks, test for flavor and add more fresh dill if necessary.
4. When you like the flavor, strain the mixture and use a funnel to move it to a decorative container in which you've placed a flowering sprig of dill. This makes a nice presentation, and it also helps to identify the vinegar if you make more than one variety.

If you are not a garlic lover, it can be omitted, but try adding a flavorful alternative instead, like lemon balm, ginger, mustard seeds, or a small sprig of rosemary.

Keep refrigerated. <http://theherbgardener.blogspot.com/2008/04/dill-vinegar.html>

Dill Potato Salad

Prep Time: 5 minutes Cook Time: 30 minutes

Yield: 8 1x

This tasty dill potato salad is just like Grandma's: it's bursting with fresh herbs and flavored with olive oil and vinegar.

Ingredients

- 3 pounds baby yellow potatoes
- 1/4 cup minced shallot (about 1 large)
- 1/4 cup fresh dill, minced
- 2 tablespoons fresh parsley
- 3 green onions, optional
- 1/4 cup white wine vinegar
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/4 cup capers, drained
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- Fresh ground pepper



Instructions

1. Fill a large pot with cold water and add 1 tablespoon [kosher salt](#). Add the whole potatoes and bring to a boil. When it comes to a boil, boil for about 5 to 8 minutes, depending on the size. Cook until fork tender (taste test to check).
2. Mince the shallot. Finely chop the dill and parsley. Thinly [slice the green onions](#), if using.
3. When the potatoes are done, drain them. When they are cool enough to handle, slice them into bite sized pieces. Place the potatoes in a bowl and gently mix in the minced shallot, white wine vinegar, [kosher salt](#), and 1/2 cup warm water. Let stand for 5 minutes, gently stirring occasionally. The potatoes will absorb the water as they stand.
4. Add the dill, parsley, green onions, drained capers, olive oil, and a few grinds black pepper. Taste and add additional salt if necessary (we added 1/4 teaspoon more). Serve warm or room temperature.

<https://www.acouplecooks.com/dill-potato-salad/>

More ideas for cooking with dill

<https://www.thekitchn.com/dill-recipes-200413>

There is even a Master Class on cooking with dill

<https://www.masterclass.com/articles/learn-how-to-cook-with-dill-plus-11-dill-recipes>

GARDEN CREATIONS - *How to Make Homemade Soap with Olive Oil and Coconut Oil* *by Rebekah Bostick*

When the pandemic hit and everyone became obsessed with cleaning, I decided to try to make soap at home. After a bit of trail and error, I've developed a pretty good recipe and now my family only wants to use my soap! It cleans very well and also moisturizes your skin. Here is my recipe and method:



Ingredients*:

Olive Oil - 40 oz
Coconut Oil - 10 oz
Lye (Sodium Hydroxide) - 6.9 oz
Distilled Water - 16 oz
Essential Oils - 2 oz

Other essentials:

Stick blender, plastic bucket or large bowl, thermometer, food scale, rubber gloves, goggles, mask, soap molds or rectangular mold, plastic containers for holding ingredients, spoon for stirring lye.

Note: Because lye is used in this process, I have dedicated my supplies to making soap and do not use them for food preparation.



What is Lye? Lye has been used in soap making for centuries. It is a natural and necessary ingredient for soap. However, lye must be used carefully. In its base form, it is extremely dangerous and caustic. But after mixing with oils, the lye begins to neutralize. If you have enough oil in your soap and cure it for several weeks, there will be no lye left in the soap. This recipe yields a very clean moisturizing bar of soap with no trace of lye.



* Lye can be found at most hardware stores. I got mine at Ace. Lye also cleans drains! I got most of my soap molds on Amazon, but you can also find some at Michaels or Hobby Lobby. Most of my candle oils are compatible with soap, so I just use those. I get them from candle supply stores such as Lone Star Candle supply, Candle Science, or Makesy. But I have seen oils at Hobby Lobby in the candle/soap aisle, and those should work just fine and you will not have to pay for shipping.

Directions:

Step 1:

I recommend doing this step outside or in a well ventilated area. Measure the distilled water into a plastic container. **Now time to put on your goggles, rubber gloves and mask!** Carefully measure the lye, then add it to the water. **Always** add the lye to the water, not the other way around!! Stir carefully. It will be cloudy and start to smoke. It will heat up to around 190 degrees. Leave your thermometer in the mixture and wait until it cools to between 110 and 120 degrees. This step can take 30 to 40 minutes, so start on step 2 after about 20 minutes.



Step 2:

Melt the coconut oil in the microwave just until it becomes liquid. Add it to the measured olive oil. Your container can be a large bowl or a bucket. It should have high sides. I got my bucket from the dollar store.

Step 3:

When your lye mixture has cooled, add it carefully to the oils. Begin blending slowly with your stick blender. When the mixture resembles pancake batter, add your essential oils. (Make sure the

essential oil is cleared for use in soap - not all oils are good for your skin). You can also add soap coloring if desired. Keep mixing until you see "trace." Trace is when you can stir and see the trace of the spoon in the mixture.



Step 4:

Pour soap into your desired molds. You can smooth the tops or leave a rough texture. Put the molds into a cardboard box or something similar and cover them with cardboard and towels. Keep them covered that way for 36 hours.



January 2023

Step 5:

Remove the soap from the molds. If you used a rectangular mold, then slice the log into soap bars. Place each bar of soap into a container, uncovered, making sure they aren't touching each other. Then place them in a closet or dark place and let them cure. Curing is the process of allowing saponification to complete and for the soap to fully dry. This process takes 30 days and as tempting as it is, **the soap must not be used until it is fully cured.**



These Are a Few of My Favorite Things

As her plant exchange offering at our December meeting Holly Saunders brought a stalk from a plumeria plant. Many seemed interested in learning more about these plants, so Holly is our guest author this month, and she wrote about her experience with **Plumerias**.

My plumeria experience has fit the bill for my interested, but fair-weather gardener needs – opportunities to randomly ignore the plant, while alternately learning and scrutinizing my plant care after years of neglect. For several years my mom has brought me various plumeria branches/sticks/cuttings from a friend in Corpus Christi. Her friend trims her large, established trees occasionally and hands out the trimmings to friends. I have repeatedly just stuck these trimmings in random pots in my yard. Over the years I've mostly neglected these plumeria plants but moved them from house to house and protected them from freezing. I joined a plumeria Facebook group to casually learn more about them. Last year I finally got the pots settled around my yard and decided to fertilize them. They responded well and had beautiful blooms of various colors that I enjoyed from June through October. I hope to proceed with more attention to their care this year, knowing that they've already tolerated a lot of mistakes and survived.



Plumerias in various pots, varying sun placement last spring

In our area, plumeria are best grown in pots because they require protection from freezing temperatures. Plumeria bloom best with a minimum of 6-8 hours of sun, with some shade from the afternoon hottest summer sun, if possible. If you can position the pot to be more shaded, while the top of the plant is in the sun, that's great. However, I have potted plumeria in full sun, partial sun and mostly shade spots, and they have all ended up looking pretty. They respond well to fertilizer with a higher phosphorous level (and not a lot of nitrogen). I buy a plumeria fertilizer and sprinkle it on every couple of weeks through the spring and summer. They bloom better with regular fertilizer.

Plumeria like a well-drained potting soil, so don't put them in a potful of your backyard clay. We think of them as tropical plants that love moisture and constant wet soil, but it's better to allow the top soil to dry out between waterings. They need water, but have been forgiving on my out of town trips or forgetfulness on watering the pots. They need more watering during blooming season. The flipside is that during the winter months they need NO water. Once the "real" winter is on the horizon here, stop watering them completely. The leaves will fall off (or you can clip them off), and they shouldn't be watered again until new leaves start forming and it's consistently 60 degrees or warmer.

Since winter in Houston can range from non-existent to heavy fluctuation, I have tried a lot of plumeria hibernation methods. Some years I've worked harder than others, and it's all worked out fine. They will definitely freeze, so I always put them into the garage or cover and heat them in some way. Some years I've put them in the garage at the first freeze and left them there untouched until "spring." Most years I put them in garage, I don't water them, leaves fall off, and on the warm days/weeks I pull them back outside. I've heard of some people with small plants pulling them in the house during cold spells, and keeping them like a house plant during our short our short winter season. Other people start prepping to help plumeria go dormant (decrease watering in Sept/Oct), then pull them out of the soil completely for storage in winter. They can be stored in the garage on a shelf in something that doesn't hold moisture for the winter season, then repotted in March. I've never tried this, except with the branches/stems that accidentally get broken off in my moving plants around.

Plumeria seem fragile with their delicate looking blooms and breakable branches, but they've handled abuse and experimentation well from me! – Holly Saunders



Current plumeria pics after moving in and out of garage according to temperature. Haven't lost their leaves, but probably will before regrowing in spring.

Some Videos of Note for This Month:

<https://www.facebook.com/ArborGate/videos/1628624697304498> **How to Grow Sprouts at Home**

<https://www.click2houston.com/video/houston-life/2021/11/10/rooted-gardens-nicole-burke-shares-tips-on-growing-fresh-salad-greens-in-your-own-garden--houston-life--kprc-2/> **Tips on Growing Fresh Salad Greens**

<https://www.click2houston.com/houston-life/2019/09/17/how-to-create-a-container-garden-in-houston-this-fall/> **Tips for Growing Salad Bowl Garden**

Some Articles of Note for This Season:

It's time to start fresh in the garden. Here's what to plant now in Houston *by Kathy Huber*

<https://www.houstonchronicle.com/lifestyle/home-garden/article/It-s-time-to-start-fresh-in-the-garden-16749489.php>

What to Plant in Your Houston Garden in January *by Rooted Garden*

<https://rootedgarden.com/blog/what-to-plant-in-your-houston-garden-in-february>



***Have a Gardening Question?
Ask a Master Gardener!***

Email your gardening questions to Harris County Master Gardeners-

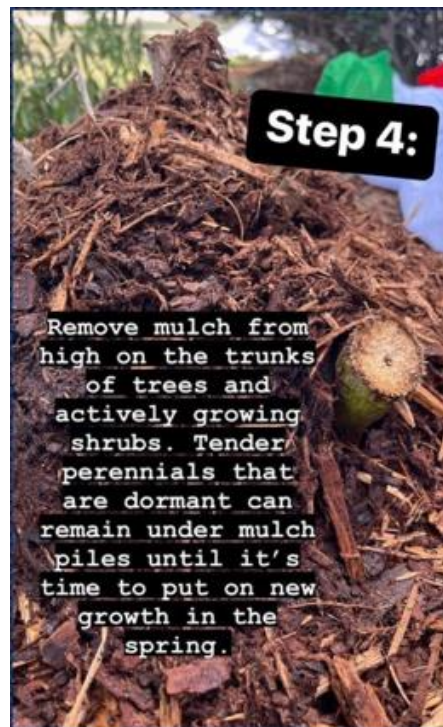
Use this link for more info on how to get those tricky questions answered:

<https://hcmga.tamu.edu/ask-a-question/>

Freeze Cheat Sheet – thanks to Enchanted Gardens Instagram...



Freeze Cheat Sheet – page 2



PLANTING TIME!

January

Transplant Veggies	Seeds - Direct Sow	Transplant Herbs
asparagus crowns	arugula	chives
broccoli	carrots	cilantro
cabbage	lettuce*	dill
cauliflower	mizuna	lemon balm
collards	radish	mint
kale	snap peas	oregano
kohlrabi	spinach	parsley
lettuce*	turnips	rosemary
mustard		sage
onion bulb & scallion		thyme
swiss chard		

*seed or transplant

	Vegetable Garden Planting Dates												FACT SHEET	
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	Texas AgriLife Extension Service 3033 Bear Creek Dr, Houston, TX 77084 281.855.5600 • http://harris-tx.tamu.edu	
ASPARAGUS, Crowns														
BEANS, Lima & Snap Bush														
BEANS, Lima & Snap Pole														
BEETS														
BROCCOLI, Plants														
CABBAGE, Plants														
CAULIFLOWER, Plants														
CARROTS														
CHARD, Swiss														
CHINESE CABBAGE														
COLLARDS														
CORN														
CUCUMBER														
EGGPLANTS, Plants														
KOHLRABI, Plants														
LETTUCE														
MUSKMELON, Cantalope														
MUSTARD														
OKRA														
ONION, Bulb-type setes														
ONION, Transplant for scallions														
ONION, Multipliers														
PARSLEY														
PEAS, English & Snap														
PEAS, Southern														
PEPPER, Plants														
POTATO, Irish														
POTATO, Sweet														
PUMPKIN														
RADISH														
SPINACH														
SQUASH, Summer														
SQUASH, Winter														
TOMATO, Plants														
TURNIP														
WATERMELON														

On a Lighter Note...

You may think this is a corner of lettuce, but it's really just the tip of the iceberg.

