

# TEXAS CO-OP POWER

## GARDEN PLEASURES

---

INCLUDING PASS-ALONG PLANTS, GREAT GEAR & WATER GARDENS



# SEVERE WEATHER! ARE YOU READY?

## Flooding

Don't mess with floods. Flooding is the leading cause of weather-related fatalities in Texas. The simple decisions you make can mean the difference between life and death.


### Flood Safety Rules:

- Never drive through water on a road. It can be deeper than it appears. Floodwaters can damage roadways, creating invisible sinkholes or washed out bridges.
- Quickly leave your car if it stalls in water. Water displaces 1,500 pounds of weight for every foot it rises. It takes only 2 feet of water to push a 3,000-pound car downstream.
- Don't attempt to walk through rapidly running water. As little as 6 inches can knock adults off their feet.
- Keep an emergency kit in your car, including a flashlight with extra batteries, drinking water and a battery-operated radio.
- If you have a cell phone, program the number for police or fire department rescue.

Take the high road when it comes to flood safety. Your life depends on it.



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# TEXAS CO-OP POWER

A MAGAZINE ABOUT TEXAS LIVING

## Growing Season

I've been poring over gardening catalogs, dreaming of fresh-cut flowers, homegrown vegetables and landscaping worthy of a botanical garden. I suspect many of you are doing the same right now. That's why we chose March for a special gardening issue.

Editor Kaye Northcott and Art Director Suzi Sands have been talking about doing a gardening issue ever since Suzi came to work here last winter. As a matter of fact, they met when Suzi designed Kaye's backyard garden. Garden planning and installation is another of Suzi's many talents.

We hope to make the gardening issue an annual affair, as it was hard to narrow our choice of subjects to just three—pass-along plants, tools and water gardens. I was inspired by my brother Lou's water garden when I visited home last fall. As usual in our family, Lou built the more challenging in-ground design.

This is an all-in-the-family issue. The darling girl in the photo above right and on page 8 is Advertising Director Martin Bevin's oldest daughter, Sarah, posing with my neighbor Sukey Wright in Suzi Sands' garden. Food Editor Shannon Oelrich's baby daughter was photographed for Kids in the Kitchen. And the festival is the Rio Grande Valley Livestock Show and Rodeo in Mercedes, headquarters of Magic Valley Electric Cooperative. You won't believe the amazing photos of bugs and insects we received for Focus on Texas. We end with a profile of a very personable roadrunner in Texas, USA.

Enjoy!

Peg Champion  
Vice President, Communications/  
Publisher

## Gardening Issue



GENO ESPONDA

Gifts from your garden are thoughtful and practical.



LORI GORDON found this "strange moth" on the window screen of her home. "It had no problem being photographed with a macro lens just inches away," she said. Lori and David Gordon are members of Fannin County EC. For more Insects and Bugs, turn to page 37.

### FEATURES

#### Pass-Along Plants: Growing Memories . . . . 6

By Kaye Northcott, Photos by Geno Esponda  
Giving a bouquet of cut flowers is a nice gesture, but passing along plants from your own garden can make a lasting impact.

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By Suzi Sands and Kaye Northcott, Photos by Rick Patrick  
Simple or high-tech, the right tools are essential in the garden.

#### Water Gardens: Making a Splash . . . . . 13

By Janet R. Edwards and Stephan Myers, Photos by Stephan Myers  
Make your own backyard oasis. It's worth the exertion.

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Kids in the kitchen. Rio Grande Valley Livestock Show and Rodeo in Mercedes.

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Photos of insects and bugs turn into works of art.

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By Helen Hensley  
A Fine Feathered Friend, Robertson County.

# TEXAS CO-OP POWER

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VOLUME 61 MARCH 2005 NUMBER 9

Texas Co-op Power is published by your electric cooperative to enhance the quality of life of its member-customers in an educational and entertaining format.

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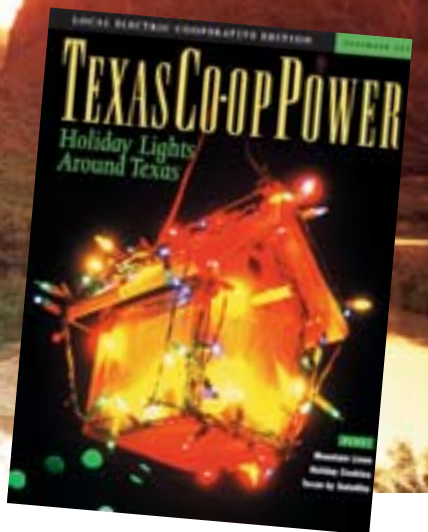


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## SHARE THE POWER!

*Texas Co-op Power* is the Texas living magazine with a rural, suburban and small town focus. Each month you will read entertaining articles about Texas people, Texas history, Texas nature, Texas travel and Texas food.

And, in every issue we feature a personal look at chosen towns in "Texas, USA" along with "Around Texas," featuring selected events around the state.

For just \$15 a subscription, you can share *Texas Co-op Power* with friends and family members who live far away or in big cities!

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Include a \$15 check for each subscription made out to *Texas Co-op Power*. Mail to Subscriptions, *Texas Co-op Power*, 2550 South IH-35, Austin, TX 78704

### Good Tips and Great Food

I absolutely love your recipes and cooking tips offered in your magazine. I can hardly wait to open it to that section to see what is featured and what surprises it holds for my cooking talents. I usually try at least one recipe an issue, but I have been known to try them all! My recipe box is crammed with cutouts. I also share them (along with the dish) at every opportunity. Thank you for the good tips and great food. I just had to try your cookbook—I'll look forward to receiving it!

JAMIE MANN, Bluebonnet EC

**Editor's reponse:** To order a copy of Texas Co-op Power Cookbook: Recipes From Co-op Kitchens, contact your local co-op or send a check or money order for \$18.75 to Cookbooks, Texas Co-op Power, 2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704.

### Biscuits Three Times a Day

What memories the article "Please Pass the Biscuits, Pappy" [January 2005] brought back to me! Governor W. Lee

O'Daniel was a household name in our home in the 1930s. The family listened to the Light Crust Doughboys daily on the radio. "Please Pass the Biscuits, Pappy" was our favorite song.

My mother baked with Light Crust flour. We were a family with 11 children. My mother baked biscuits three times a day, getting out of bed at 4:30 a.m. to start the fire in the wood stove. We could smell sausage cooking, the hot biscuits in the oven, and the brewing of the Eight-O'Clock coffee. Mother called "Breakfast!" only once. We knew if we didn't get out of bed, there would be no biscuits left.

My father sat at the end of a large wooden table near the biscuits. We would say, "Please pass the biscuits, Pappy."

DOROTHY POOLE, FEC Electric

### Landowners Sought for Photography Contest

I want to share with you and the readers of Texas Co-op Power an exciting opportunity for landowners in the Texas Hill Country: the Pro-Tour of Nature Photography. Developed by John F. Martin, creator of the Valley Land Fund Wildlife Photo Contest, the Pro-Tour is the world's first all-professional tournament of nature photography. It teams 20 top nature photographers with 20 private landowners of a featured region. The 20 teams compete for a share of up to \$200,000 in cash.

Landowners also receive a world-class portfolio of their ranch's wildlife.

The Pro-Tour's goal is to establish the Hill Country as a major destination for nature photo tourism—a new, wildlife-based revenue stream for private landowners. Landowners with a minimum of 500 acres in the Texas Hill Country have until April 1 to apply. The Pro-Tour takes place in April 2006.

For Pro-Tour details, applications or sponsorship opportunities, call (956) 381-1264 or visit [www.imagesforconservation.org](http://www.imagesforconservation.org).

SAM MASON, Magic Valley EC

We want to hear from our readers. Send letters to: Editor, Texas Co-op Power, 2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704.

Please include the name of your town and electric co-op. Letters may be edited for clarity and length and will be printed as space allows.



Photo by Jeremy Woodhouse, one of next year's Pro-Tour contest participants.

## SAFE LIVING

### Don't Overlook Electric Appliances

**D**o you take your appliances for granted?

Don't, warns the Electrical Safety Foundation International. Taking a moment to check appliances can save lives.

To make sure your appliances are in good condition, check appliance cords for fraying, damaged wires, knots or melted insulation. Look for breaks in power cords, plugs or connectors. An appliance that repeatedly blows a fuse or trips a circuit breaker could indicate a defect that may

cause a fire or electrical shock.

Unplug the appliance immediately and have it repaired or replaced.

If an appliance emits smoke or sparks, or if you feel a tingle or light shock when it's on, stop using it. Discard or replace the appliance or electrical device, or have it checked and repaired by a qualified technician.

When using an electric appliance with removable cords, always connect the cord to the appliance first, then plug it into the wall outlet. To disconnect the appliance, unplug it

from the wall outlet first, and then disconnect it at the appliance.

Remember, electricity and water don't mix. Always dry your hands before touching electric appliances. Keep the floor around your washer and dryer clean and dry. Keep all electrical cords and products such as radios, TVs, hairdryers and curling irons away from water in a sink or tub. Unplug small appliances when washing them. Never immerse appliances in water. This could result in electric shock.



# GROWING MEMORIES

{ By Kaye Northcott, Photos by Geno Esponda }



I suppose all gardeners have pass-along plants. If they don't, they're missing out on one of the joyous rituals of gardening. I received my first pass-along plant almost 30 years ago when I bought a house in South Austin. I despaired of finding something vigorous enough to survive in the shade under the north eave of my house. While visiting deep East Texas long ago, my friend Pam Murfin grabbed a formidable pitchfork and dug up clumps of cast-iron plant (*Aspidistra*) for me.

Cast-iron plant, with its large dark green leaves that sprout from the ground, is about as common as pig tracks. But it was ideal for the site and has filled in a good 36 feet along the north wall of my white masonry house. Tall nandina, also called heavenly bamboo, with its red berries, is another common plant many people dismiss as a nuisance because of its tendency to wander. But mine lords over the shiny, dark green cast-iron leaves and looks quite jaunty. With side-walks to discourage its aggressive nature, the nandina is under control.

There's nothing glamorous about these plants, but they suit the space. And I like remembering when my friend Pam wrested those first cast-iron plants from the red soil of East Texas as her baby daughter watched. That baby is now grown and married and probably has a garden of her own.

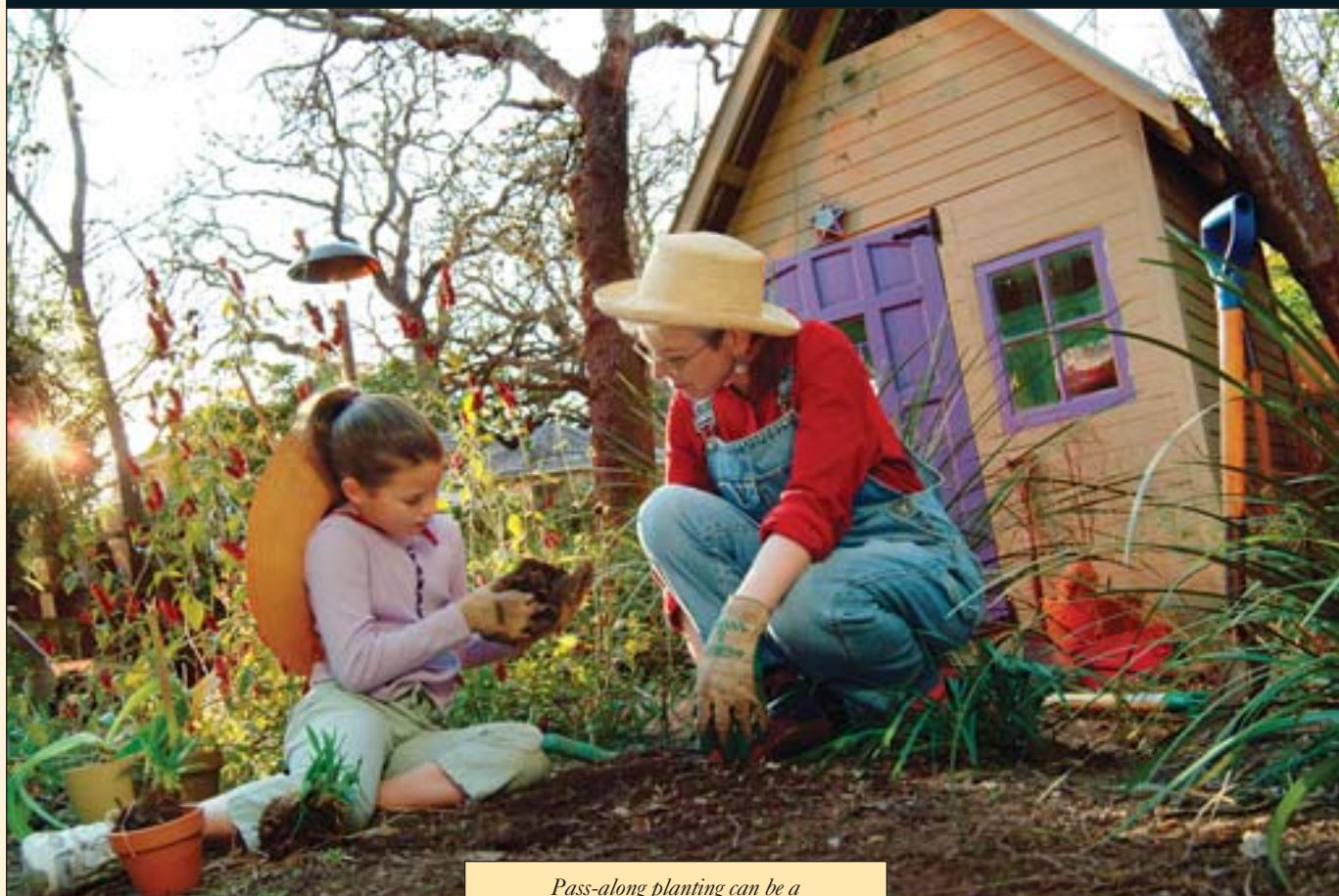
The fact the *Aspidistra* has a history—provenance would be the word if the plants were antiques—makes them special to me. Rosie and John Nieman, who live in Austin, asked landscaper C.L. Williams to design their garden using nothing but pass-along plants. Rosie, who is of retirement age, received her first pass-along, an iris, from a friend, Rudi Ranieri, when she was 13. She planted it at her parents' home. After her father's death, she took some of the rhizomes for her Austin garden. She even shipped some of the irises to her childhood friend. "He wrote me to say said he would put some of them on his wife's grave in Baltimore, Maryland," she said.

When C.L.'s work was done, the Niemans had a party to show off their eclectic garden: giant iris bed, ferns, daylilies, dogwood, holly, incense cedar, Indian hawthorn,

burr oak, banana trees and bougainvillea and other gifts too numerous to mention. Those who attended the party received a list of all the plants and their sources.

In Fort Worth in the 1990s, I lived in Mistletoe Heights, a charming historic neighborhood of prairie houses and bungalows—a Disneyland setting with bad plumbing. Each house had a big front porch close to the sidewalk so you could talk to people as they strolled by.

My neighbor Rose Lynn Scott believed that gardening was one of the best ways to organize and unify a neighborhood. She would tool around Mistletoe Heights delivering cuttings with instructions to plant them out front where neighbors would actually see them. Rose Lynn restored houses in another historic neighborhood, Fairmount, which had been going downhill until pio-



*Pass-along planting can be a multi-generational activity.*

neers like her got involved. She and other energetic folks organized the Fairmount Garden Club and Marching Band. When the band wasn't in a parade, it sometimes performed in someone's front yard. At any rate, sharing plants and music made Fairmount and Mistletoe Heights great places to live.

In addition to making perennial memories, trading plants with others in your region is an economical way to gather healthy specimens suitable to your climate. After all, if a friend has an abundance of plants to give away, he or she must know what grows well.

Be sure to ask how and where the plants will flourish. Are they suited for sun or shade or dappled shade? How much water and fertilizer do they need? The same usually goes for plants or cuttings you find at area garage sales. You can even ask to see the setting in

which they are growing.

And then there's the party angle: Hold a pass-along party at your house and ask fellow gardeners to bring offerings for exchanges. Someday you might be able to pass on the offspring of those plants to your children and grandchildren as Rosie Nieman is doing.

Kaye Northcott is editor of Texas Co-op Power.

## PASS-ALONG PICKS SUN/PART SHADE

- **ANTIQUE ROSES** (*Rosa*)—Propagation: cuttings. Easier to grow; better for landscaping and smaller than modern varieties offered at nurseries. Plus, they have a scent. Some are climbers.
- **BLACKBERRY LILY** (*Belamcanda chinensis*)—Propagation: seeds or division of rhizomes. Called lily, but actually a member of the Iris family. Fan-shaped leaves will reach 2-3 feet; orange flowers with red dots. Poisonous to humans.

- **CATNIP** (*Nepeta*)—Propagation: seeds, rooted cuttings. Spreading perennial herb with pinkish flowers and a strong odor cats love.
- **CHILE PEQUIN** (*Capsicum*)—Propagation: seed, transplants. Tender perennial vegetable. Its tiny red peppers pack a knockout punch, so prepare and eat with care. Birds love the seeds.
- **CRINUM LILIES** (*Crinum*)—Propagation: seeds, offshoots from mother plant. Lily-like flowers in rose, pink and white. Flowering is more prolific if clumps are left undisturbed for several years.
- **DAYLILIES** (*Hemerocallis*)—Propagation: division. Perennial bedding plant that produces dramatic flowers in many colors. The common orange variety is the most reliable.
- **FLAME ACANTHUS** (*Aniscanthus quadrifidus*)—Propagation: seeds, cuttings. Perennial shrub with red, orange or yellow flowers from midsummer to frost. Attracts hummingbirds.
- **FRANGIPANI** (*Plumeria*)—Propagation: stem cuttings. A tropical shrub or small tree with summer flowers in a variety of colors. Easy to grow. Dies to ground in fall but to get head start on spring growth, uproot and place in greenhouse, garage or other dry area.





Garden heirlooms can come in the form of seeds, roots, bulbs and cuttings.

- **HENS AND CHICKS** (*Sempervivum tectorum*)—Propagation: division. Spreading perennial groundcover. Leaves grow in clusters of rosettes, gray-green with red-tipped leaves. Flowers also grow in clusters and are red, orange or yellow.

- **HOJO SANTA** (*Piper auritum*)—Propagation: division. Perennial herb that grows 4-8 feet tall. Its large heart-shaped leaves are used to flavor dishes and to wrap meat and fish. Also called yerba santa, Santa Maria and root beer plant (for its distinctive smell).

- **IRIS** (*Iris*)—Propagation: division. Sun-loving perennial with many beautiful species. Because so many varieties of this sword-like bedding plant have been bred for special coloration, get specific instructions on care.

- **LARKSPUR** (*Delphinium grandiflorum*)—Propagation: seeds. Blue and purple flower clusters on tall spikes, can reach 3 to 4 feet. Annual, reseeds itself easily.

- **MEXICAN FIREBUSH** (*Hamelia patens*)—Propagation: seeds, soft wood cuttings. Tubular red flowers grow in clusters. Red foliage in fall. Long blooming period, June to November. Attracts hummingbirds.

- **MEXICAN HONEYSUCKLE** (*Justicia spicigera*)—Propagation: vegetative cuttings, underground shoots. Evergreen flowering perennial with orange flowers. Attracts hummingbirds.

- **OXALIS** (*Oxalis*)—Propagation: division, seed. Perennial bedding plant. Mounds with clover-like leaves and an abundance of small blossoms. Easy to grow. Also called wood sorrel.

- **OXBLOOD LILIES** (*Rhodophiala bifida*)—Propagation: bulbs. Looks like a small red amaryllis. Blooms in the fall with several flowers per stem.

- **PINK SKULLCAP** (*Scutellaria suffrutescens*)—Propagation: seed. Low-growing, flowering perennial that mounds attractively.

- **PURPLE CONEFLOWER** (*Echinacea angustifolia*)—Propagation: seeds, division. Perennial herb. Large flowers are dark pink to light lavender with yellow centers. Care-free and drought tolerant.

- **RAIN LILIES** (*Zephyranthes*)—Propagation: seeds, division. Easy to grow. Pink, yellow or white single flowers grow on 6- to 8-inch stems. Also called zephyr lily, magic lily or fairy lily.

- **ROCK ROSE** (*Pavonia lasiopetala*)—Propagation: seeds, cuttings. Perennial shrub with hibiscus-like flowers. Biennial, subject to freezing, reseeds easily.

- **SOFT-LEAVED YUCCA** (*Yucca gloriosa*)—Propagation: seeds. Evergreen shrub with softer leaves than the Spanish dagger. Grows in any well-drained soil.

- **SHRIMP PLANT** (*Justicia*)—Propagation: seeds, cuttings. A tender perennial in Texas that prefers healthy, organic, well-drained soil.

- **SPIDER LILY** (*Hymenocallis*)—Propagation: division. Large, dark green foliage and spiderlike white flowers in the summer.

- **SPIDERWORT** (*Tradescantia gigantea*)—Propagation: seeds, division. Perennial bedding plant for shade to dappled sun. Flowers on tall stalks are white to deep purple.

- **SPINELESS PRICKLY PEAR** (*Opuntia*)—Propagation: cuttings. Cactus with large, elongated pads and little or no spines. Bowl-shaped flowers can be yellow to orange, or red.

- **TEXAS TUBEROSE** (*Manfreda maculosa*)—Propagation: offshoots. Member of the amaryllis family. Green agave-like foliage with purple spots, sends up tall flower spikes in summer.

- **TROPICAL SAGE** (*Salvia coccinea*)—Propagation: seeds. Red trumpet-like flowers attract bees, butterflies and birds. Also called Texas sage and scarlet sage.

## PART SHADE/SHADE

- **CAST-IRON PLANT** (*Aspidistra elatior*)—Propagation: division. Tall ground cover for low-light area or containers. A perennial evergreen. Prefers lots of water but can handle almost any environment.

- **INLAND SEA OATS** (*Chasmanthium lariflorum*)—Propagation: seeds, division. Ornamental perennial grass with graceful, drooping, wheat-like seed heads. Reaches 6 to 8 feet tall and is aggressive. Prefers moist areas.

- **WOOD VIOLETS** (*Viola missouriensis*)—Propagation: seeds. Ground cover with violet flowers. Grows best in moist, shady area. Aggressive.

- **SOUTHERN WOOD FERN** (*Thelypteris kunthii*)—Propagation: division. Deciduous. Likes moisture and shade. Also called Southern shield fern, maiden fern or river fern.

## INVASIVE BUT HARDY

- **DWARF RUELLIA** (*Ruellia brittoniana*)—Propagation: seeds, plants that need thinning. Petunia-like flower with attractive leaves for border or understory. Sun/part shade.

- **OBEDIENT PLANT** (*Physotegia*)—Propagation: seeds, division or cuttings. Blooms spring through fall, flower spikes up to 3 feet tall. Blue to purple or pink flowers. Perennial, sun/part shade.

- **PURPLE HEART** (*Tradescantia*)—Propagation: cuttings. Purple or variegated foliage, often used as a ground cover. Small white or lavender blooms. Also called purple queen, wandering Jew, inch plant.

- **TRUMPET VINE** (*Campsis radicans*)—Propagation: cuttings. Sprawling vine for sun to part shade. Beautiful trumpet-like flowers attract bees and hummingbirds. Very deep roots.

- **WISTERIA** (*Wisteria sinensis*)—Propagation: cuttings. Purple spring-flowering vine suitable for sun or part shade. Needs pruning.



## Tree Climbing

# DON'T GO OUT ON A LIMB!

Your safety is a top priority at your electric co-op. And it's even more important when it comes to our kids. They don't always know—or remember—what can be dangerous, so it's up to all of us to watch out for their safety.


## Safety Rules for Trees:

- Don't plant trees or install tall playground equipment under or near power lines.
- Don't build tree houses in trees near electric lines.
- Don't allow children to climb trees growing near electric lines.
- Teach your children always to look up to check for power lines before climbing trees or any tall objects.
- Keep children away from ladders, poles or work equipment that may be near power lines.
- Set a good example by following these rules yourself.

And the Number One safety rule for everyone to remember is this: Don't touch a power line or anything that's touching the power line. No one can tell simply by looking at a line whether it is energized or not, and contact with a power line can be deadly. Remember, electricity always seeks the easiest path to reach the ground, and, unfortunately, human beings are good conductors of electricity. Look up and live!



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# GARDEN GEAR

{ By Suzi Sands and Kaye Northcott, Photos by Rick Patrick }



**H**igh-quality garden tools—like high-quality cooking pots and kitchen knives—are worth the investment. They serve you best in the long run and spare you unnecessary labor. We would no more plant bulbs with a kitchen spoon than we would carve a turkey with a butter knife. Here we present a few of our favorite things.



## Sun Hat With UV Protection; Tough, Washable Garden Gloves

Always wear sunscreen and a hat, preferably with a 50 percent or higher ultraviolet protection factor rating. Check out [coolibar.com](http://coolibar.com). We also like these Tool Grip gloves with tough vinyl for the palm and cotton for the back of the hand. Machine wash in cold water and line dry.



## Bucket Accessory

Our spiffy canvas “bucket pocket” made by Garden Basics converts a standard 5-gallon bucket into a multi-pocket carrier and organizer. We couldn’t find a source on the web but several other companies make similar products. Sometimes they are called “garden aprons.” Check out the gardening accessories section of [fiskars.com](http://fiskars.com). Or for a pattern to make your own bucket accessory, go to [garden-guides.com](http://garden-guides.com). Click on Article Library/Additional Topics/Projects & Crafts/Bucket Apron.





## Rolling Cart With Seat

The Grass Hopper is a handy seat on wheels. Lift the side hinge on the seat and there's space for transporting tools and accessories. There's a handle for portability. Go to [toysandhome.com/store/](http://toysandhome.com/store/) and click on the Home & Garden section.



## Japanese Garden Knife

The Hori Hori Weeding Knife saws, digs, plants, cuts and protects you from your enemies. The carbon steel blade comes with a sheath for safe, clean storage. Ours came from [brackengardens.com](http://brackengardens.com). Click on Digging & Cultivating.



## High-Quality Basic Tools

Save your knees from wear and tear with a kneeling pad. Our pad came from Home Depot and is a FrostKing from Thermwell Products Company. Trowels and diggers should have comfortable handles.



## Pruning Stik® Tree Pruner

All hail this magnificent tool, which empowers any 98-pound weakling to lop small tree branches like cutting through butter. Go to the Cutting Tools section of [fiskars.com](http://fiskars.com).



### Sharpshooter Shovel

Every gardener needs a sharpshooter shovel for digging deep holes and slicing pesky tree roots. You can stomp on the top edge for extra leverage. The shovels are available at virtually all hardware stores. Be sure to get a sturdy one with a smooth handle.



### FELCO Pruners

Professional gardeners swear by FELCO's top-of-the line products. We counted 13 varieties of pruners, including left-handed ones, at [felcostore.com/pruners.jsp](http://felcostore.com/pruners.jsp). Order online or check area nurseries and hardware stores.



### Kids' Garden Gear

Children love to help, especially if they have their own colorful boots, gloves and tools.

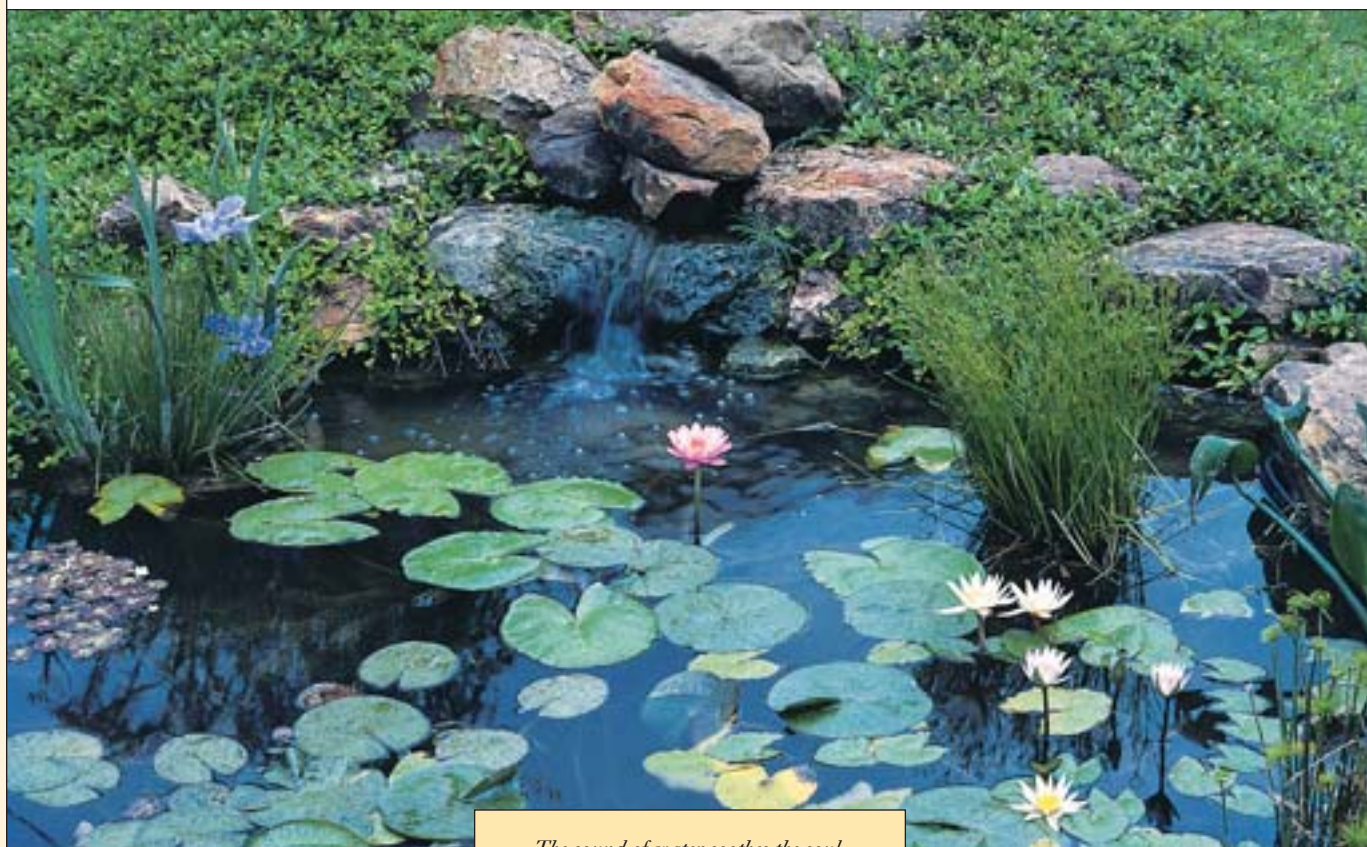


# MAKING A SPLASH

{ By Janet R. Edwards and Stephan Myers, Photos by Stephan Myers }



**W**hat could be more delightful on an arid August afternoon than a backyard oasis? Bordered by masses of soft ferns and weathered boulders, a waterfall gurgles invitingly, while gleaming goldfish slide among the water lilies. Whether your budget is miniscule or majestic, you can create a little piece of paradise to refresh your senses and soothe your soul. Start the project now, and by summer you'll be enjoying your own water garden.



*The sound of water soothes the soul.*



*The heart of your pond's water circulatory system is the submersible pump.*

## GETTING STARTED

Two basic options are available:

1) a sturdy, waterproof container placed above or below ground, or 2) a hole dug in the ground and covered with a special waterproof liner designed for water gardens.

A preformed, plastic water garden container is the simpler choice. It can be placed in a hole dug into the ground or (if properly supported below and along the sides by sand) above ground, surrounded by a stone or brick wall less than 3 feet high. However, this method allows far less flexibility in shape and size, limiting your options for custom waterfalls and spillway designs.

For something a bit more challenging, consider an in-ground custom design, which can be created with a vinyl- or rubber-lined hole dug to meet your exact speci-

fications regarding size and shape. Depending on the condition of the soil, this project may require hard physical labor, enough to leave you with blisters and a sore back unless you pace yourself. In any case, garden centers sell excellent water gardening books to help you determine your options and specific installation requirements.

Once your water garden pond is built and filled with water, you'll probably want to add an underwater pump to service an above-water fountain, waterfall or small stream. If you don't already have a convenient outdoor electric outlet, now is the time to assign the task to a licensed electrician.

Some little pumps can calmly push 50 to 60 gallons of water per hour while others as big as coffee-makers propel an amazing 4,000 gallons of water per hour! Consult

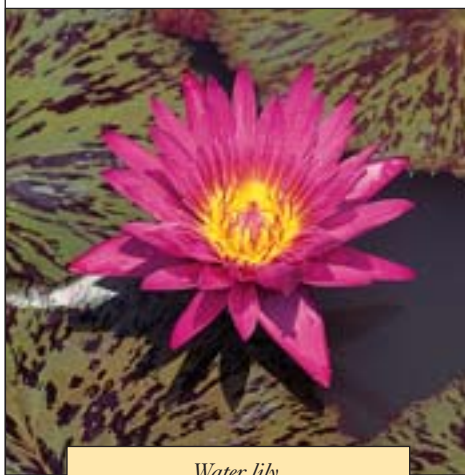
your local home store or water garden expert to make sure you get the appropriate pump. There's no need to pay for extra pumping power.

Once your pond is set up and filled with water, it's a good idea to let the system run for a few days to pinpoint leaks or circulation problems. When your water garden structure and pumping system appear to work properly, it's best to turn off the pump and allow the water garden to drain. (Always remember to turn off the pump anytime water is not moving through it.) This helps flush out any chemical impurities from the pump and pond lining.

Next refill the pond with fresh water and restart the pump. It's very important to let the pond operate for three or four days before placing plants or fish in the water garden. This way, you won't have to use chlorine remover and the water will "age" naturally, establishing a good balance of bacteria species in the water.

## PLANTING

Your patience rewarded, it's time for the real fun to begin! By now, you'll already have chosen among myriad

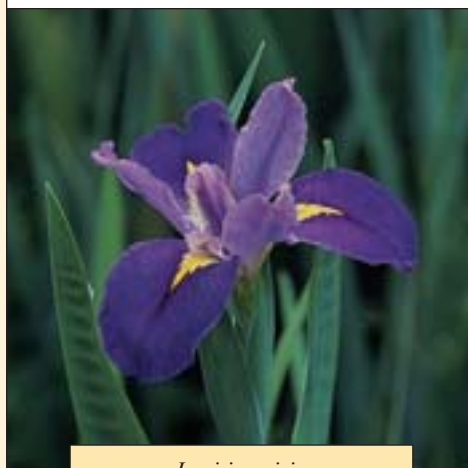


*Water lily.*

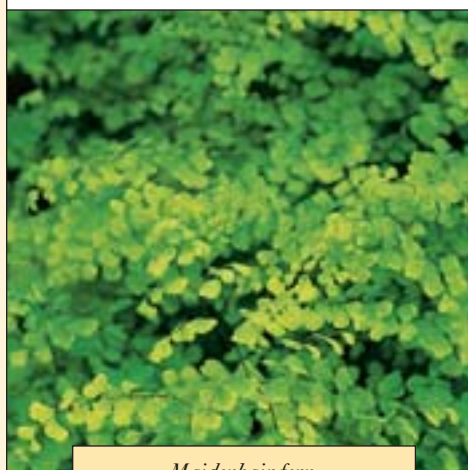
exquisite aquatic and bog plants available from water garden supply and home stores. True aquatics, such as water lilies—ranging in hue from



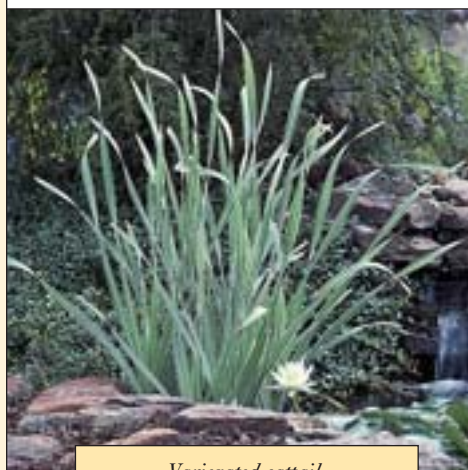
## WATER GARDENS



*Louisiana iris.*



*Maidenhair fern.*



*Variegated cattail.*

snow white to crimson red, or even blue—can be placed in special, inexpensive plastic containers to serve as a centerpiece. They need a sunny spot (at least half a day of sun) to bloom properly, and some

are better suited to cold temperatures than others. If you live in the southern half of Texas, most of the tropical species will survive winter, although all water lilies die back and go dormant until spring. If you live in the northern half of the state, you should probably stick with hardy varieties.

Indigenous bog plants, such as the lovely Louisiana iris, horsetail, moneywort and sagitaria, also make excellent water garden embellishments. Bog plants must stay damp, but not totally submerged, so make sure the base of the plant rests right at water level or just slightly below. Placing bog plants too deep will kill them. To elevate bog plant containers, put them on a rock or brick. However, if you'd like to use native bog plants, just take a trip to a local ditch that stays wet most of the year, carefully dig up a few specimens, carry them home, and voilà!

Texas native ferns can be used to decorate the edges of your water garden, provided the sunlight is not too bright in the summer. Delicate maidenhair fern grows profusely near spring seeps in the limestone regions of the Texas Hill Country. If you remove some sprigs with roots (keep them moist), you can place them on damp rocks or soils at the edge of your water garden. (Be sure to get permission from the landowner before removing any plant.)

Before you take any plant from its natural habitat, carefully examine the light, soil and moisture conditions and try to mimic them in your water garden. This extra forethought can make all the difference to your water garden's ultimate health and beauty.

### FISH

After your water garden is fully landscaped with plants, consider adding a few fish, if you like. Believe it or not, common goldfish, available from local pet shops, do



*Add koi to your water garden.*



*Water attracts amphibians.*

quite well in water gardens and can grow to about 5 inches in length. The hardy creatures often survive the winter in below-ground ponds. Koi are another choice and also can survive the cold. However, they're expensive and can grow to lengths in excess of 12 inches.

Once your water garden is complete, it should remain relatively maintenance free. With each passing year, as the plants continue to mature and fill in the empty spaces, you'll find many good reasons to spend time outside enjoying your very own aquatic oasis, just a few steps away from home.

Janet R. Edwards and Stephan Myers have constructed a lovely water garden behind their Brookeland home in the Piney Woods of East Texas.

# BACK UP YOUR ELECTRICITY SAFELY

**B**lackouts, rolling brownouts and fierce weather have led more people to buy generators in case the electricity goes out for an extended time.

But the dangers of home generators can far outweigh the benefits if they're not installed and used properly.

## Safety guidelines:

- Hire a licensed electrical contractor to install your generator. If you connect the generator directly to your home's wiring, it can "backfeed" into your electric cooperative's utility lines and electrocute lineworkers who think they're working on a "dead" power line. A contractor will know that a generator needs a transfer switch, which makes sure that doesn't happen.
- Likewise, plugging a portable

electric generator into a regular household outlet can also backfeed electricity, which can harm or even kill utility crew members or your neighbors.

- Plug appliances directly into the generator, using heavy-duty, outdoor-rated extension cords.
- Check the output rating of the generator. It will tell you how many appliances it can operate at once. Overloading the generator can damage your appliances and expensive electronic equipment. Use generators only during emergencies, and plug in only necessary appliances.
- Place your generator outdoors in a dry, protected area where its deadly exhaust fumes cannot enter the house.



- Properly ground your generator to protect from electrical shocks.
- Turn off all appliances and equipment powered by the generator before turning the generator off.
- Don't touch the generator while it's running; it can get hot enough to burn you. And keep children away from the generator—even when it's turned off.



# TURN POT HANDLES INWARD

**Y**our mother wasn't kidding when she told you to always point pot handles toward the back of the stove while you're cooking.

A study in the January issue of *Pediatrics* says the most common kitchen injury involving children occurs when a youngster pulls a pot of hot liquid off the stove and it spills on the child.

"Although the kitchen is recognized as a room that is hazardous for young children, parents don't seem to recognize or anticipate the risk for

burns and scalds," writes the study's author, Dorothy Drago, a product safety consultant.

Parents, she notes, apparently fail to realize that kids can reach the top of the stove. In fact, Drago says, 1-year-olds are most likely to be scalded by hot soup, sauce or water dragged from a stovetop.

Scaldings, the author says, are among the worst kitchen injuries and are twice as common as burns. A scalding injury can lead to a skin graft and long-term care.

# CLEAN LINT TRAPS; AVOID FIRES

**H**ere's an easy way to keep your house from burning down: Clean the lint trap in your clothes dryer every time you use it.

Twenty people die every year in fires caused by a clothes dryer's clogged exhaust system, says the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.

The clogs most often are caused by lint buildup.

## To prevent the buildup:

- Clean the lint trap before drying each load of laundry.
- Periodically vacuum the gasket around the dryer door and anywhere else lint and dust might accumulate.
- Check around the exhaust hood covering the outlet for lint buildup every few months.
- Properly vent your dryer so it exhausts to the outdoors.

Aside from preventing fires, a lint-free exhaust system helps your dryer operate more efficiently, so it will dry your clothes quicker and use less energy.





## TEMPORARY MEANS TEMPORARY!

**N**ot enough cord for your lamp or radio to reach the nearest outlet? Are you plowing through the junk drawer for an extension cord? This may not be a good idea. The Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) suggests you follow these tips:

- Do not substitute extension cords for permanent wiring.
- Do not run cords through walls, doorways, ceilings or floors.
- Do not use an extension cord for more than one appliance.

If an extension cord is needed for a longer period of time, temporary power taps (multiple plug outlets) can be used when insufficient electrical receptacles are available. These devices may have three to six electrical receptacles, a circuit breaker, a 6- to 15-foot cord with a surge protector, and should bear the mark of a certified testing organization.

- Multiple plug outlets must be plugged directly into mounted electrical receptacles. They cannot be chained together.

- Make sure the extension cord or temporary power strip you use is rated for the products to be plugged in and is marked for either indoor or outdoor use.

- Never use a cord that feels hot or is damaged in any way.

## ALLERGIC TO YOUR HOUSE? TRY AN AIR CLEANER

**I**f the only time you sneeze and sniffle is when you're at home, you could be allergic to the indoor air.

Carpets, furniture, pets and even houseplants can harbor dust mites, dander and mold.

You can keep Fido out of the bedroom and dust and vacuum until your house sparkles, but it's almost impossible to get rid of all of the airborne allergens in a home—especially if it's a tightly constructed, energy-efficient house.

The next step might be to invest in a mechanical air cleaner—either a portable one that stands alone in a particularly offensive room or one that is installed in the home's ductwork.

### There are four kinds:

- Mechanical filters, like a furnace filter.
- Ion generators, which act by charging the particles in a room. The charged particles are then attracted to walls, floors or a charged collector.
- Electronic air cleaners, which trap charged particles using an electrical field.
- Hybrid devices, which contain at least two particle-removal devices.

To ensure the air cleaner works properly, install it according to the manufacturer's instructions. Buy one that has been rated as safe by Underwriters Laboratories or another testing agency.

## SHORTEN SHOWERS FOR SAVINGS



**B**e aware of how much water you use for various household chores. In the typical home:

- Most water rinses down the shower drain. About 37 percent of water use is for showers, 12 percent for baths, and 11 percent for sinks. A family of four, each showering for five minutes a day, uses 700 gallons

of water a week, enough for a three-year supply of drinking water for one person. You can cut that amount in half by using low-flow showerheads.

- The next-biggest water hog is the clothes washer, which accounts for 26 percent of home water use.

- The dishwasher uses 14 percent of the household's water.

# The Iconoclast of Waco

BY BILL CRAWFORD

Unlike today's political commentators, sharp-tongued social critics in late 19th century Texas had to defend their contentious words by actually fighting. With words or weapons, there was no better scrapper than William Cowper Brann.

Brann's clever, vicious diatribes stimulated battles among his supporters and detractors, and ultimately led to his death.

Born in Illinois in 1855, Brann learned to fight for survival at a young age. He dropped out of school at 13 and worked at a variety of jobs before he found his true calling as a writer.




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**"Texas can furnish forth more hidebound dogmatists, narrow-brained bigots and intolerant fanatics in proportion to the population than any other section of these United States. That's why the *Iconoclast* is located in Texas."**

**—William Cowper Brann**

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The self-educated Brann laced his essays with references to Goethe, Shakespeare, Rabelais and Lao Tse. The wordsmith was always outrageous and eminently quotable, once describing marriage as "the only game of chance ever invented at which it is possible for both players to lose."

Readers found it alternately entertaining and aggravating that Brann was willing to take on any opponent, regardless of the consequences. His personal prejudices, to name a few, encompassed Baptists, Episcopalians, women, blacks and anything British.

In 1891, Brann launched his own publication in Austin, the *Iconoclast*, a word Webster's defines as "one who attacks settled beliefs or institutions." Though some readers enjoyed Brann's journal of personal protest, the publication failed quickly, then failed again

when it was resurrected briefly by another aspiring Austin writer, William Sydney Porter, later known as O. Henry.

In 1894, Brann found himself at the *Daily News* in Waco, the combative town known in those days as "The Athens of the West" and "Six-Shooter Depot." There, in February 1895, Brann published the first issue of a newly revived Brann's *Iconoclast*.

Within a few years, Brann's *Iconoclast* had 100,000 subscribers, more than any other magazine published west of the Mississippi. For a sense of the magnitude of his popularity, the *Iconoclast's* circulation before Brann's death was

more than five times the population of Waco. Subscriptions rolled in from every state and 20 foreign countries.

In the *Iconoclast*, Brann served up an "intellectual cocktail," mixed with equal parts humor and vicious social commentary, aimed at fighting injustice, deflating pomposity and exposing hypocrisy.

"It strikes to kill," Brann bragged proudly of his incendiary publication. Brann described the Duke of Marlborough as having "the mug of an ape that has met with an accident." He scornfully referred to poets as "he-warblers." He repeatedly skewered Waco's leading educational institution, Baylor University, accusing the school of practicing moral hypocrisy.

Brann described Baylor as "that great storm-center of misinformation." In return, Baylor supporters

attacked Brann as "a literary maggot, produced and nourished by the fecund filth of social decay." When the *Iconoclast* reported an assault on a female Baylor student from Brazil in 1897, Baylor supporters took direct action to silence Brann.

A bold group of Baylor students kidnapped the outspoken editor at gunpoint, dragged him to the Baylor campus, beat him, and threatened to hang him. Later, a Baptist judge and two other men attacked Brann at gunpoint and beat him with a cane. A three-way shootout over Brann's work left two men, including the editor of the *Waco Times-Herald*, dead and one man without an arm. That dispute erupted over the newspaper's refusal to publish an article taking the student kidnappers to task.

And the bad blood kept flowing. "I will give it [Baylor] \$1,000 any time to move to Dallas," Brann wrote, "and double that amount if it will go to Honolulu or hell."

The controversy ended on April Fool's Day in 1898. Brann was strolling with a friend on Fourth Street in downtown Waco when a longtime critic, Waco businessman Tom E. Davis, stepped out of a doorway and into the street behind Brann. Davis raised a pistol and shot the maverick journalist in the back, "right where his suspenders crossed," according to one newspaper account. Brann spun around and emptied his own pistol at Davis. Both men later died from their wounds, and the *Iconoclast* ceased publication soon thereafter.

Brann's supporters erected a marble obelisk in his memory, decorated with an enormous lamp, a quill pen and the word "Truth." Shortly after the monument was erected, someone shot it twice with a pistol. Today, visitors to the Oakwood Cemetery in Waco can still see the marks left in Brann's monument. He never lost the power to infuriate readers, even from the grave.

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Bill Crawford lives in Austin and writes about history.



## Call Before You Dig

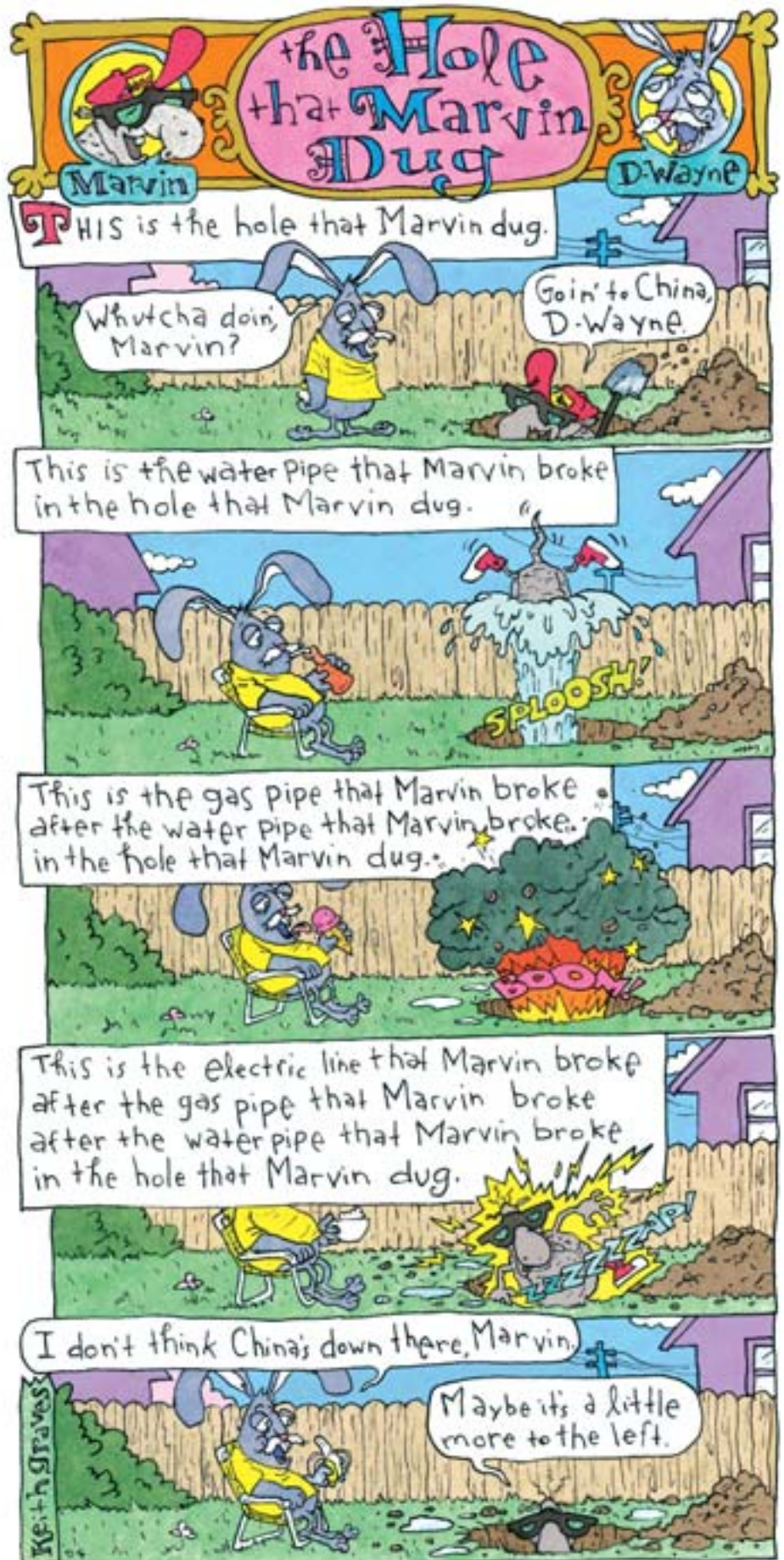
**B**eing an armadillo and all, Marvin naturally likes to dig. But even armadillos should call to find out where underground lines are before poking holes in their yards.

Did you know that it's against the law to dig deeper than 16 inches without notifying the proper authorities? The law is called the Texas One Call Law, and there are plenty of good reasons for it. For instance, any number of lines or pipes could be buried just about anywhere around a house or building. Accidentally damaging or cutting an electric line or a gas pipe could be life-threatening and extremely dangerous, not just to the person doing the digging, but also to the workers who must make the repairs and others who may be nearby. Cutting a water, gas or electric line can also cause a lot of trouble for your neighbors and anyone else who uses the same line or service.

The Texas One Call number is 1-800-545-6005, or, if you have trouble remembering their phone number you can call Dig Tess (Texas Excavation Safety System), a nonprofit organization, at 1-800-344-8377 (or 1-800-DIG-TESS). You must call one of these numbers at least two days before you dig. Once you have made the call, the local utility companies will be contacted and will send someone to the site to mark the location of their lines and equipment.

For more information, direct your parents to [www.onecalltexas.com](http://www.onecalltexas.com). Don't just dig anywhere you want without finding out whether or not it's a safe place to dig. In other words, act responsibly, not like our crazy armadillo friend. Dig it?

Cartoonist Keith Graves is a popular artist and author of children's books. Among his greatest hits are *Frank Was a Monster Who Wanted to Dance*, *Uncle Blubbafink's Seriously Ridiculous Stories* and *Loretta: Ace Pinky Scout*. He lives in Austin with his wife, Nancy, and the twins, Max and Emma.



# *You Just* **DO** *the* **BEST** *You* **CAN**

BY JEAN BRASHEAR

**I** can still see him sitting there, my father, on that scorching afternoon. I perched on the towel-covered couch; he rested in his towel-covered recliner. The air conditioner of his mobile home fought a losing battle with the cruel Texas heat baking through thin aluminum walls.

Two feet closer and our knees could have touched, mine as bony as his in our shared resemblance of long legs and angular frames. My husband once horrified me by observing that with my hair pulled back, I looked just like my father, and it was years before I'd tie my hair back again. No offense meant—my father was a handsome man, but I was not possessed of any desire to resemble a man, regardless of looks. Yet now that my father is gone, I'd grab whatever chance I could get to look like him, look at him, anything but the pallid choices left to me now: to seek him out in weakening memory, to listen

for a voice I can barely hear. To wish I had known him better. To wish I had understood.

But that day, my bony knees were holding up the cherub who was my daughter—my firstborn, the miracle that had me terrified of screwing up. The afternoon was sweltering, the words between Daddy and me few as always.

And then he spoke the ones I will never, ever forget. The ones that, after all the years of “yes sir” and “no sir” and turning myself inside out for his approval and then rebelling, at last made him ... human. Simply human. Simply a father who hadn't, after all, known everything or even believed he did. Who, despite all those pronouncements and orders and dictates and prescriptions, had not known any better than I the sure way to make his kids strong and healthy. To keep them safe.

A man of the West, my father. A lawman retired before his time when

honor wouldn't let him bow before the altar of politics. A man born a century too late. A John Wayne who felt too much but couldn't say it. In my father's world, a real man didn't have feelings, much less show them.

So I spent my life trying to make him proud of me and had no idea, for the first half of our years together, if I'd ever achieved it. But after that day, the water of my new and startling perception wore away at the rock that was my image of my father.

Because what he said to me was this: “You care about them so much, and you never know if what you're doing is right. You don't mean to do the wrong thing. You just do the best you can.”

Not a lot of words for some, but a raging torrent from him. We both choked up and looked away, stalled out and ran scared. But the apology I heard in those words was water on dry ground. Dawn after a long night



alone. In those few sentences, I saw him at last, the man who had loved me since my first minute, the man who'd played with me years ago, who'd taught me how to dance, and told a slumping almost-teen to stand straight and be proud that she was tall. The man who'd wanted to do right by me every bit as much as I prayed to do right by the miracle grinning up from my lap.

And who'd known as little as I did about how to make that happen. How to bestow perfect happiness and protection when every day, my control over her world would weaken. With every stage of her growth, she would take another step out of the bubble I was trying to create. I just didn't know it then.

But in the moment when he said those words, I realized that even though I'd laid a thousand shortcomings at his door and knew everything about how he should change, I'd sold him short. I'd been blind to the pearl inside the oyster when I'd assumed that every misstep between us was a result of his inability to understand or his perfect assurance that he was right and I was wrong.

Without the veil of youthful arrogance, I saw him for the first time as a kindred soul, a man who might have made mistakes but who also knew the terror of responsibility for a brand new soul. In that instant, I looked at him with new eyes ... and forgave. Maybe he'd made mistakes, but not out of malice. He'd had the best of intentions, tried to do the right thing, just as I was fumbling to do now. It was a moment of clarity as is seldom granted in this life. I wish I'd told him, never mind that neither of us might have survived the gaffe. He ran from emotion as though it was a poison cloud, and I was too unsure of myself, too shocked by this new knowledge. My father, vulnerable. I couldn't find my voice.

I hope he knew. After that day, I tried to put more into words, even knowing he would squirm. Toward the end of his life, he got better at saying them, too. Not good, no. Not facile or glib. He was a man who felt too deeply and those feelings often choked him. But at least I matured enough to know that he felt them,

and he relaxed enough to try to speak, choked or not. I'll thank him forever for that. I lost him years too soon, but when the end came so unexpectedly, I had the consolation that on a hot and surprising afternoon, he had opened a door and let each of us slide fingers out into a brave new world. And because he spoke those crucial words, hands that

had missed making contact for years finally brushed.

He cared deeply, and so did I. We didn't do it all right. We never meant to do it wrong.

You just do the best you can.

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Best-selling, award-winning novelist Jean Brashar's next release is *Mercy* from Signature Select Saga, May 2005. [www.jeanbrashar.com](http://www.jeanbrashar.com)



### **...WHAT HE SAID TO ME WAS THIS:**

*"You care about them so much, and you never know if what you're doing is right. You don't mean to do the wrong thing. You just do the best you can."*

## Kids in the Kitchen

**I** have many happy memories of helping my mom and grandma in the kitchen. When I was smaller, my “help” may have come in the form of licking the beaters, but as I grew, I was able to stir and fold, then later I finally was allowed to cut with real knives and use the stove. I now have my own daughter, Greta, to help me in the kitchen (see photo opposite page).

Getting kids into the kitchen is the mission of Barbara Beery, who founded an Austin-based cooking school for children called Batter Up Kids. At her “culinary playground,” kids learn to cook all kinds of things in a fun, adventurous environment. She has written her first book, with recipes she perfected in the “classroom.” It’s called *Batter Up Kids: Delicious Desserts* (Gibbs Smith, Publisher; order at [www.gibbs-smith.com](http://www.gibbs-smith.com) or call 1-800-748-5439, ext. 157). I asked Barbara a few questions about kids in the kitchen and included one of her fun recipes here.

### Q: At what age can kids start cooking?

**A:** Wow. Hard to answer this one. Kids may begin to help “prep” foods as early as 2. They are able to pour, mix, stir, knead (more like pound!). They create! A 2-year-old might sit still and concentrate on one task for about five minutes, max. However, in their mind, they are cooking. Clearly, their perception is what counts here. As a rule of thumb, for every year of age past 2, you may add about five minutes per year for attention span. So by the age of 5, a child may sit and create for 15-20 minutes. But that means constant hands-on interaction and activity. A great deal depends on a child’s attention span and hand-to-eye coordination before the age of 6.

But by 6-7, they have the hand-to-eye thing mastered and can read numbers. This means really beginning to measure ingredients and read simple directions. At the very least, just reading one step of a recipe.

For 7- to 9-year-olds, reading a recipe becomes a big part of the cooking action.

Nine- to 11-year olds are cooking, really. Stove top cooking begins at this age, knife skills are learned.

Twelve and up ... what can’t they do?!!

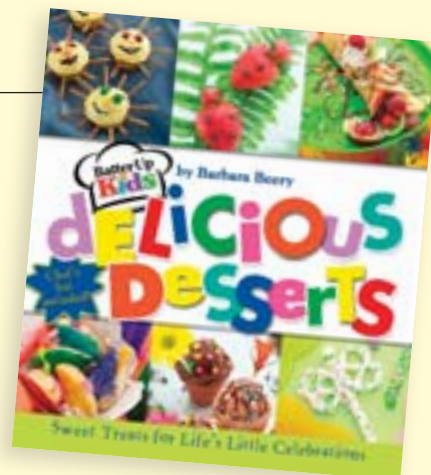
### Q: What makes a recipe suitable—and fun—for kids?

**A:** The way it is presented. How many people would even consider making a Baked Alaska? Now, introduce a child to a recipe called Baked Snowballs. Excitement, wonder, imagination.

That is how a child looks at cooking. It is fun and it is an adventure. Make time and take time. Slack up on rules. Enjoy the journey. Don’t

worry about the destination.

That makes most recipes suitable and clearly a great deal of fun!



### Baked Snowballs

4-6 slices of pound cake

Ice cream, frozen yogurt or sorbet

3 egg whites, room temperature

1/4 teaspoon cream of tartar

4 tablespoons sugar

1/2 teaspoon vanilla

Chocolate syrup (for garnish)

Maraschino cherries (for garnish)

**1.** Preheat oven to 500 degrees.

**2.** Use 2-inch or 3-inch round baking dishes or ramekins. Square dishes will not work. Cut each slice of cake into a circle so that it fits into the bottom of the baking dish. Place a circle of cake on the bottom of each dish.

**3.** Now fill the dishes to the top with ice cream, frozen yogurt or sorbet. Then place filled dishes on a cookie sheet and put in freezer.

**4.** Place egg whites in a mixing bowl and whip until frothy (like soapsuds).

**5.** Add cream of tartar and beat until soft peaks form (like shaving cream).

**6.** Gradually add sugar and then vanilla. Continue to beat until smooth and shiny (another 2 to 3 minutes).

**7.** Remove ice cream-filled dishes from freezer and spread the snow meringue over the top of each of the ice cream cups. Make very sure the snow forms a “blanket” over the ice cream. There should be absolutely NO ice cream showing.

**8.** Put snowballs on cookie sheet and place in oven. Bake until golden brown, from 1 to 3 minutes. Watch very closely, as they brown quickly.

**9.** Take snowballs out of the oven and garnish each with chocolate syrup and a cherry. Serve immediately.





**T**he recipe contest subject for June is **Summer Soups**. Soup in the summer? Sure, if it's cool and refreshing. Do you make a great gazpacho, a cool cucumber or other cold soup your family loves? Send the recipe to us before March 10. The top winner will receive a copy of the *Texas Co-op Power Cookbook* and a gift pack from Adams Extract. Others whose recipes are published will also receive a gift pack from Adams Extract. Be sure to include your name, address and phone number, as well as your co-op affiliation. Send recipes to Home Cooking, 2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704. You can also fax recipes to (512) 486-6254 or e-mail them to [recipes@texas-ec.org](mailto:recipes@texas-ec.org).

Fun to make and fun to eat, that's what we were looking for this month. The winning recipe fits the bill! No-Cook Dandy Candy was sent in by **LORIE STRALEY**, a Wood County EC member. She writes, "This recipe is one my sister and I made many times when we were children. You can use different flavorings and colors to make it fun; I like to use maple syrup instead of corn syrup for a maple candy flavor. Our children, ages 12, 9 and 6, make this now, and my sister and I still like to munch on these candies!" Lorie will receive a copy of the *Texas Co-op Power Cookbook*. She will also receive a gift pack compliments of Adams Extract, as will the other winners whose recipes are published below.

### No-Cook Dandy Candy

2 tablespoons butter  
1 tablespoon light corn syrup  
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract  
4 little pinches of salt  
1 cup powdered sugar  
Sprinkles

Put butter in the bowl. Rub the butter on the sides of the bowl using the back of a spoon. Put syrup, vanilla and salt in the bowl and stir. Dump powdered sugar in the bowl—all at one time. Stir again. When you are tired, rest. Then stir

some more. Take a handful. Squeeze it. Do it again and again. Dump everything on the cutting board. Pound it! Squeeze it! Roll it! How does it feel? Smooth? Yes!

Take a small piece and roll it between your hands to make a ball as big as a walnut. Put it on a dish. Make another ball, and another until you have used all the mixture. Roll each ball in the sprinkles. Cover and refrigerate for 1 hour. Share and enjoy! Makes 10-12 balls.

Serving size: 2 balls. Per serving: 146 calories, trace protein, 4 grams fat, 28 grams carbohydrates, 158 milligrams sodium, 12 milligrams cholesterol

### Fish in a Sleeping Bag

1 can (8-count) refrigerated crescent rolls  
8 frozen fish sticks, slightly thawed  
8 slices of cheddar or American cheese

Heat oven to 375 degrees. Unroll dough into 2 long rectangles; press perforations to seal. Cut each rectangle lengthwise into 2 strips; cut each strip into 2 pieces, forming a total of eight 6x2-inch rectangles. Place 1 piece of cheese and 1 fish stick lengthwise on the end of each rectangle. Fish stick will cover about 2/3 of rectangle. Fold remaining dough over fish stick, stretching slightly so that dough covers about half of fish stick. Firmly press edges together to seal. Place on greased cookie sheet. Bake at 375 degrees for 15 to 17 minutes or until golden brown. Serves 8.

Serving size: 1 piece. Per serving: 400 calories, 20 grams protein, 19 grams fat, 24 grams carbohydrates, 1,100 milligrams sodium, 40 milligrams cholesterol

**NANCY MCCLENDON**, Greenbelt EC

### Mrs. King's Chocolate Oatmeal Cookies

2 cups sugar  
1/2 cup milk  
1/4 cup cocoa  
1/2 cup butter (1 stick)  
2 1/2 cups oatmeal  
1/2 cup peanut butter  
1 teaspoon vanilla

Combine sugar, milk, cocoa and butter in pan over medium heat until boiling, stirring constantly. Remove from heat, add all other ingredients (oatmeal first). Drop by spoonful onto waxed paper; let cool. Lick pan. Makes 24 cookies.

Serving size: 1 cookie. Per serving: 168 calories, 3 grams protein, 7 grams fat, 24 grams carbohydrates, 67 milligrams sodium, 11 milligrams cholesterol

**TRINA DAVIS**, Trinity Valley EC

### Banana Cream Crunch Sundae

2 cups vanilla yogurt (not frozen)  
2 bananas, cut into slices  
1 cup crushed peanut brittle  
4 maraschino cherries

Mix together yogurt, bananas and 3/4 cup of the crushed peanut brittle. Spoon mixture into 4 sundae dessert glasses. Sprinkle with remaining peanut brittle and place a cherry on top. Serves 4.

Serving size: 1 sundae. Per serving: 420 calories, 7 grams protein, 9 grams fat, 90 grams carbohydrates, 297 milligrams sodium, 13 milligrams cholesterol

**BETTY HURLBUT**, Medina EC



AROUND TEXAS

# March

1. Brush Country Music Jamboree, Bob Wills tribute, **Three Rivers**, (361) 786-3334
2. General Sam Houston's Birthday & Texas Independence Day Celebration, **Huntsville**, 1-800-289-0389
- 3-5. Somervell County PRCA Rodeo, **Glen Rose**, (254) 897-4509
- 3-6. BorderFest 2005, **Hidalgo**, (956) 843-8686
4. Knights of Columbus Fish Fry, **Dripping Springs**, (512) 894-4470
- 4-5. Stitches in Time Needle Art & Quilt Show, **Lampasas**, (512) 932-3886
- 4-5. Piecemakers Quilt Show, **Uvalde**, [www.uvaldeaac.org](http://www.uvaldeaac.org)
- 4-6. NORBA National Texas Supergrind, mountain bike races, **Boerne**, 1-888-842-8080 or [www.boerne.org](http://www.boerne.org)
5. Texas Independence Day Celebration, **Luckenbach**, 1-888-311-8990 or [www.luckenbachtexas.com](http://www.luckenbachtexas.com)
5. Corsicana Opry, **Corsicana**, (903) 872-8226
5. Globe Theatre Opre, **Odessa**, (432) 366-3240
5. Family Fun Festival, **Brenham**, (979) 830-8661
5. Nolan Musical, **Nolan**, (325) 978-3019
5. Ole Time Music, **Pearl**, (254) 865-6013
5. Johnson County Lawn & Garden Show, **Cleburne**, (817) 793-4625 or [www.JCMGA.org](http://www.JCMGA.org)

6. St. Francis Xavier Church Parish Festival, **Stonewall**, (830) 644-2218
- 10-11. Community Garage Sale, **Kirbyville**, (409) 423-5827
11. Country Opry, **Victoria**, (361) 552-9347
12. Texas State German Convention, **Rockne**, (281) 288-1944
12. Red Green's Outdoor Party & Chili Cookoff, **Athens**, (903) 675-5630
12. Mineola Star Select Opry, **Mineola**, (903) 569-2087 or [www.chamber.mineola.com](http://www.chamber.mineola.com)
12. Hearts & Barks Benefit Dinner & Silent Auction, **Bosque**, (254) 675-7712
12. Miss Live Oak County Pageant, **Live Oak**, (361) 449-3552
12. Market Days, **Georgetown**, (512) 868-8675 or [www.discovergeorgetowntx.org](http://www.discovergeorgetowntx.org)
- 12-13, 26-27. Chicken House Flea Market, **Stephenville**, (254) 968-0888
14. McDade Jamboree, **McDade**, (512) 273-2307
- 18-20. Kleberg County Sheriff's Patrol Trail Ride,



LOUIE BOND

East Texas events such as the Jasper Azalea Festival are dedicated to the spring flowering shrub.

- Kingsville**, (361) 592-2987
19. American Music in the Texas Hill Country, **Fredericksburg**, (830) 997-2835 or [www.pioneermuseum.com](http://www.pioneermuseum.com)
19. Possum Kingdom Relays, **Graham**, (940) 549-0370
19. Bluegrass & Gospel Show, **Waxahachie**, (972) 937-3980
19. Pineywoods Pickin' Parlor Concert, **Mineola**,

## FESTIVAL OF THE MONTH

BY JIM GRAMON

### Rio Grande Valley Livestock Show and Rodeo: Mercedes, March 12-20

Since 1939, crowds have flocked to Mercedes for the Rio Grande Valley Livestock Show and Rodeo, the

fans with two Ranch Rodeos, three CPRA (Cowboys Professional Rodeo Association)-sanctioned rodeos and a

gate admission to the show grounds.

More than 2,500 exhibitors are expected at this year's livestock show. There's also entertainment galore and mouth-watering taste treats.

While at the show, be sure to stop by to see the Touchstone Energy® hot air balloon, hosted by Magic Valley Electric Co-op, March 17-20. Standing 77 feet tall and 60 feet wide, the 77,000-cubic-foot balloon should be easy to spot. The balloon's pilot is Texan Cheri White, a Women's National Hot Air Balloon Champion who is also a cooperative member and the mother of twins.

For more information about the Rio Grande Valley Stock Show, visit [www.rgvlivestockshow.com](http://www.rgvlivestockshow.com) or call (956) 565-2456.

Jim Gramon is the author of FUN Texas Festivals and Events. [Jim@JimGramon.com](mailto:Jim@JimGramon.com), [www.JimGramon.com](http://www.JimGramon.com).



RIO GRANDE VALLEY LIVESTOCK SHOW AND RODEO

There will be thrills for all at this year's Rio Grande Valley Livestock Show and Rodeo.

oldest and largest stock show and rodeo south of San Antonio.

2005 is a bonanza year for rodeo

Sunday afternoon performance that's all bull, so to speak. Ranch Rodeos on March 12 and 13 feature competing teams in steer tying, calf branding, wild cow milking, steer loading, wild horse saddling and shovel races—events sure to entertain the spectators. The CPRA-sanctioned rodeos include the popular mutton bustin' contest and calf scramble, in addition to the requisite rodeo events. These rodeos will be held March 17, 18 and 19, all starting at 8 p.m. A Bull Riding, Bull Fighting

Extravaganza takes place March 20 at 2 p.m. All rodeo performances are \$5 per person, which does not include



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(903) 569-8037 or [www.pineywoodspicknparlor.com](http://www.pineywoodspicknparlor.com)

19. Azalea Festival, **Jasper**, (409) 384-2762
19. Main Street Market Day, **Marble Falls**, (830) 693-2815 or [www.marblefalls.org](http://www.marblefalls.org)
- 19-20. German Heritage Festival, **Tomball**, (281) 379-6844
- 19-20. General Granbury's Birthday/Brazos River Music Fest, **Granbury**, (817) 573-5299 or [www.brazosrivermusicfest.com](http://www.brazosrivermusicfest.com)
23. Easter Carnival Egg-stravaganza, **Kyle**, (512) 268-5341 or [www.cityofkyle.com/parks](http://www.cityofkyle.com/parks)
- 25-26. Easter Fest on the River/Chili & BBQ Classic, **Kerrville**, (830) 864-4614
- 25-April 2. Walker County Fair, Rodeo & Barbecue Cookoff, **Huntsville**, (936) 291-8763 or [www.walkercountyfair.com](http://www.walkercountyfair.com)
26. Antique Truck & Tractor Show, **Nursery**, (361) 578-8484
26. Bluegrass Music Show, **Quitman**, (903) 763-4411 or [www.quitman.com](http://www.quitman.com)
26. Mud Dauber Fest & Ball, **Luckenbach**, 1-888-311-8990 or [www.luckenbachtexas.com](http://www.luckenbachtexas.com)
27. Traditional Easter Egg Hunt, **Richmond**, (281) 343-0218 or [www.georgeranch.org](http://www.georgeranch.org)
- 28-April 2. Henderson County Livestock Show, **Athens**, (903) 677-6354
30. Kite Fest, **Kyle**, (512) 268-5341 or [www.cityofkyle.com/parks](http://www.cityofkyle.com/parks)
- 31-April 2. Young County Rodeo, **Graham**, 1-866-549-0401
- 31-April 3. Antique Fest, **Carmin**, (979) 278-3412

## April

- 1-3. Chalk Bluff Bluegrass Festival, **Uvalde**, (830) 278-5515
- 1-3. Vintage Motocross, **Jefferson**, (903) 240-2385
2. Three Rivers Salsa Festival, **Three Rivers**, 1-888-600-3115 or [www.threeriverssalsa.com](http://www.threeriverssalsa.com)
2. Corsicana Opry, **Corsicana**, (903) 872-8226
2. Countywide Yard Sale, **Tuleta**, (361) 375-2558
2. Spring Art & Craft Show, **Burnet**, (512) 756-0834
2. Ole Time Music, **Pearl**, (254) 865-6013
2. Brush Country Music Jamboree, **Three Rivers**, (361) 786-3334
2. Billy the Kid Day, **Hico**, 1-800-361-4426
- 2-3. Eldorado Elgoatrod, goat races, **Eldorado**, (325) 853-2434
3. Blooms Above the Blanco, **Kyle**, (512) 268-9981
9. Van Zandt Gospel Music Festival, **Canton**, (903) 340-1330

Event information can be mailed to Around Texas, 2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704, faxed to (512) 486-6254, or e-mailed to [aroundtx@texas-ec.org](mailto:aroundtx@texas-ec.org). It must be submitted by the 10th of the month two months prior to publication. E.g., May submissions must be received prior to March 10. Events are listed according to space available. We appreciate photos with credits but regret that they cannot be returned.

## Insects and Bugs

**Y**ou wouldn't think "creepy-crawlies" and the like would serve as objets d'art for our camera-toting readers, but think again: Our judges were "oohing and ahing" over many of this month's entries. We think you'll be pleas-

antly surprised by these amazing photos of Insects and Bugs.

**Caught Napping** is the topic for our May issue. Send your entries—along with your name, address, daytime phone, co-op affiliation and a brief description—to Caught Napping, Focus on Texas, 2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704, before March 10. For digital photo requirements and e-mail instructions, go to [www.texas-ec.org/tcp/faq.html](http://www.texas-ec.org/tcp/faq.html). A stamped, self-addressed envelope should be included if you want your entry returned. Please allow four to six weeks for your photos to be returned.



We suspected trick photography, but Bluebonnet EC member Trey Bailey assured us that this amazing photo is original and unaltered. Nine-year-old **TRAVIS BAILEY** snapped this katydid riding on the windshield of a pickup (Travis' hat, at the bottom of the photo, is on the dashboard).



Pedernales EC member **DAVID R. WHITE** says this green beetle was "an intriguing find. It flew into my backyard on a summer evening and landed on the fence. I haven't seen one before or since." He couldn't identify the bug, but we suspect it's a green longhorn beetle.



**SHARON CURRY** submitted this photo of a spider that made her home on Curry's front porch. "She became a mascot for my grandchildren, who hurried down the walk to check on her every weekend when they came to visit," said the United Cooperative Services member.



This fascinating photo of a caterpillar was taken by **WILLIAM J. ROBITAILLE**, who belongs to Pedernales EC. "I just take pictures of them, but I don't know what they are," he said. We think it might be a swallowtail caterpillar.

### UPCOMING in Focus on Texas

ISSUE	SUBJECT	DEADLINE
May	Caught Napping	March 10
June	Picnics	April 10
July	Water Gardens & Ponds	May 10
August	Those Were the Days	June 10
September	Bridges	July 10
October	Pumpkin Patch	August 10



"In all my 50-plus years I have found many locust shells, but only this past fall did I finally see the locust just emerging from the shell," writes **JUDY MILLER**, a member of Central Texas EC.





## A Fine Feathered Friend

I can state without a doubt that roadrunners never say, “Beep, beep!” They coo and they clatter, but mainly they’re quiet. How do I know this? Well, one of my best friends is a roadrunner.

We met in southern Robertson County about three years ago in early spring. I was working alone in my garden when she appeared suddenly, stood on a brick nearby and cooed to me. Surprised and delighted, I cooed back. I have no idea what pleasantries we exchanged that day, but she’s been my friend ever since. And bird watching has taken on a whole new meaning.

The roadrunner begins most mornings perched on a rooftop or some other elevated spot, feathers fluffed, sunning herself. Once sufficiently warmed, she spends the entire day energetically searching for food.

Her sight and hearing are both excellent, and she seems to know exactly where I am at all times. If I work in the garden, she patrols the perimeter, watching to see what sort

of bugs I will stir up. When I’m in my kitchen, I spy her just outside the window, sitting on the fence. And when I mow, she follows behind to gobble up any grasshoppers or lizards I disturb. I have seen her jump with lightning speed to catch a flying insect in mid-air.

My friend is a master of camouflage. By crouching down and fluffing out her feathers, she fades into the background of tree limbs and weathered fence posts. But she is by no means a plain bird. Her feathers, though mostly shades of brown, are variegated with white and black, speckled in some areas and striped in others. She has a red streak near the back of her eye, which shows best when she raises her crest.

Her wings are adequate for flying, which she accomplishes with grace and speed when necessary. But she prefers to run, with neck and tail extended. Her tail stands straight up when she’s curious or alarmed. But when she’s showing off or playing,

she wags it like a dog. It fans out beautifully in flight, giving her the appearance of a phoenix.

She goes about her way quietly. On many occasions, she has followed my husband and me down the dirt road to our catfish ponds, but we’ve realized this only after reaching our destination and turning around to see her close behind. She keeps her distance and never lets us touch her, but she’s never far away.

She seems genuinely fond of us. Sometimes her behavior resembles that of a child who tags along behind the adults, showing off. If we don’t come outside to see her, she comes to us. Once as I was cleaning house with the doors wide open and music playing softly, I caught a glimpse of movement on the front porch. There was the roadrunner, just outside the storm door. She peered at me through the glass with a lizard clamped securely in her beak. Then she wagged her tail from side to side, as if to say, “Look at me, see what I’ve done!” After I smiled and gave her the appropriate praise, she turned and ran off into the yard.

Her intelligence and versatility enable her to adapt and persevere regardless of the challenges she faces from one season to the next. I have never tried to feed her or entice her into being a docile pet. I want her to remain wild and self-sufficient, so that she can always survive on her own.

She has built several nests, but raised no young since she took up residence here. I hope that she will one day find a mate and raise a family, even though it may lead her away from my yard. Until that day, I will continue to offer her friendship and safe haven, and thoroughly enjoy the pleasure of her company.

*Helen Hensley is a retired graphic artist originally from Denton. She and her husband own 18 acres in southern Robertson County, where they raise cattle, fish their ponds, and tend their garden. They have been members of Navasota Valley EC for 18 years.*

