

**LAKE
HOUSTON
GARDENERS**

**A GARDEN STUDY
GROUP OF THE LAKE
HOUSTON AREA**

Lake Houston Gardener

Volume 20 Issue 1

Welcome Back!

September, 2017

This Month at LHG:
Propagating Plants

Meet LHG's New Facilitator	1
September Program	2
Area Happenings	2
The Veggie Patch	3
Flooded Plants	4
Treasurer's & Hospitality Reports	5
This & That	5

Meet LHG's New Facilitator



Moritza Day is Managing Partner of Day West & Associates, Inc, talent management firm she founded in 1993. Day West specializes in hiring and career consulting. She is a CPA. Her accounting career included financial roles with PwC in England, the aerospace industry in Athens, Greece, and Arthur Andersen & Co. in Houston.

She has served on the boards of the Houston CPA Society, Texas Society of CPAs, American Woman's Society of CPAs and University of Houston Bauer College of Business Alumni Association. She mentored students at the UH entrepreneurship program and the National Association of Women MBAs.

She has also co-authored a book, 1000 Best Job Hunting Secrets and writes a blog about workforce issues.

Moritza teaches yoga and is an avid traveler, having visited over 50 countries. She is a new gardener, having lived in a condo in The Heights until moving to Kingwood in 2016. She looks forward to working and learning with the Lake Houston Gardeners. We are so happy she have taken on this challenge!

In other LHG news, Anne Mullins has taken on the role of refreshment chairperson. It has been decided that we will continue to have volunteers bring snacks, but the club will only serve water from now on. (So if you need coffee or other drinks, it is BYO) Anne has also begun preliminary work on a club website. We are really excited by this possibility.

Judy Herman-Hees will continue on as Publicity Chairperson. Cynthia Douglas has volunteered to help with Facilitator duties if needed.



Planning Meeting

A planning meeting was held in July at the home of Judy Herman. A group of members including Judy Herman, Erika Thorson, Vickie Snyder, Ann Mullins, Moritza Day, Cindy Young, Jane Marvin, Gudrun Opperman and Jo Sanders met to discuss ideas for the upcoming year. Ideas were tossed around with several members committing to contacting various speakers for the year. We have secured speakers for the next nine months. Barbara Adams, LHG treasurer, has secured the South Woodland Hills Community room for our Christmas party on December 4. A field trip to Shangri La Gardens this spring is in the works. We hope to get a Pct. 4 bus to transport us in time for nesting season at the gardens.

It goes without saying that we have all greatly appreciated Judy Herman-Hees for filling the Facilitator position for these past several years. She stepped into the position willingly when needed and has done a fantastic job. A big thank you goes out to her!

HELLO SEPTEMBER



September LHG Meeting

Retired Extension Agent, Tom LeRoy, will once again present a program to LHG members. This time the topic for the evening will be Plant Propagation. We always learn much from Tom's presentations, and this will be no exception as this was his field of study for his Masters Degree.

Do join us to kick off the garden club year. Meet up with old friends and hopefully greet some new members and visitors. Meeting begins at 7 pm, with fellowship and refreshments at 6:30.

See you there!

Please check ahead if you are planning on attending any listed programs. Much of this newsletter was written before the flooding occurred. I have deleted the obvious cancellations.

We want to offer our best wishes to any member impacted by this unprecedented flood. We know of several of you that lost quite a bit. Offers of help go out to anyone who needs it. Let us know through phone or e mail if you do need help. Once it is appropriate we will see if we can mobilize some help with getting your gardens back in order. Until then, stay strong! We are sending our thoughts and prayers out to you.

Cross Pollinating:

Houston Federation of Garden Clubs Program

On Friday, September 8th - 10 a.m., the **Houston Federation of Garden Clubs** will meet at the White Oak Conference Center, 7603 Antoine Dr., Houston. The guest speaker will be **Nanako Tongleaf**, Professor of Ikenobo and her topic will be Ikebana Design. Visitors are very welcome and carpooling can be arranged. Refreshments will be provided.

If you need further information please contact member Sandra Evans at sandraevans@suddenlink.net.

Area Happenings

SAT.-SUN., SEPT. 9-10: HOUSTON CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY SHOW & SALE. 9am-5pm. Metropolitan Multi-Service Center, 1475 West Gray. Free. hcsstex.org

THURS., SEPT. 21-24: MASTER COMPOSTER TRAINING, Green Building Resource Center, 1002 Washington Ave. \$40. Green Building Resource Center. Register: 832-394-9050; steve.stelzer@houstontx.gov; codegreenhouston.org

SUN., SEPT. 24: DAYLILY ANCESTRY by MARY GAGE, 2pm-3pm. Mercer Botanic Garden, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble. Free. Cypress Creek Daylily Club event. www.cypresscreekdaylilyclub.simplesite.com

SAT., OCT. 7: GROWING NATIVE! WORKSHOP, 8:30AM-1:30pm, (\$35) & PLANT

SALE, 10:30am-4pm (free) Mercer Botanic Garden, 22306 Aldine-Westfield, Humble. WORKSHOP (only) Register: themercersociety.org; 713-274-4166.

SAT., OCT 7: PECKERWOOD GARDEN'S OAK COLLECTION / ACORN SHARING, 10am, 20559 FM 359 Road, Hempstead. \$15. Must register: eventregistration@peckerwoodgarden.org. peckerwoodgarden.org, 979-826-3232

TUES., OCT. 10: GROWING PLUMERIAS, 7:30pm, Cherie Flores Garden Pavillion, 1500 Hermann Dr. Free. Plumeria Society of America event. theplumeriasociety.org; 281-438-3653

THURS.-SAT., OCT. 12-14: 2017 BULB & PLANT MART. Garden Club of Houston event.

The Veggie Patch By: Hal Opperman

Have you taken the summer off? Time to get out and start that Fall Garden!

Yes, while it is currently raining cats and dogs and maybe snakes and frogs outside, if you want to have a good fall garden, now is the time to get started. Well, you can wait a few more days until it dries out, but don't delay too long.

A bit of planning is important and that certainly can be done on a rainy day. Write down on a piece of paper or on your device what vegetables you want to grow this fall. Then, go to the Lake Houston planting guide and make sure your choices have a decent chance to make it this time of the year. If you don't have the planting chart, let me know and I will be happy to send you a digital copy of the one we use at Oak Forest Elementary School.

Now that we know what we are going to plant, a decision needs to be made on whether we will plant seeds or transplants. You can buy lots of seeds for a couple bucks, so it makes sense to grow carrots, radishes, lettuce, spinach, and the like from seed. For veggies where you only want a few plants like broccoli, cabbage, and cauliflower you might be better off to buy some established plants at one of the local garden centers. If buying seeds, make sure the packet is labeled for 2018. Some places will try to get rid of old seeds at this time of the year and if you buy them you may get a poor yield.

Bed preparation is next! This is a really important step. Gudrun loves to say that without healthy soil, "you ain't got nothing". Well actually she would never say it like that. But you get the idea. Soil may be the most important ingredient for a successful garden. Think, compost, compost, compost! If you don't make it yourself, you need to buy it and please don't buy the cheapest because it is no doubt also the worst!

There are lots of ways of adding compost and organic matter to your soil. One simple way is to stop throwing away all the leaves that will soon be falling from your trees. Chop them up with a mulching mower or shredder and put them in the garden. It is best to bury them in the soil (or dirt if that is what you currently have). They decompose quickly and add lots of great organic matter. Even if you don't bury them, stack them up around transplants or use them as a mulch. Over time they will become part of your garden soil. Nevertheless, if what you have is dirt, you might want to give it a boost by planting your veggies in a good mixture of native soil/dirt and compost. There are several good composts for sale at the local garden centers. I usually use Natures Way Resources but that is just because John Ferguson has spoken to us a few times and I believe he truly knows what he is doing in mak-

ing his compost. It is not cheap. If you want cheap, you need to make it yourself and that is not real easy but you certainly can do it. In the area happenings section of this newsletter the Master Composing Course is listed as being available in September. It is a great course! You, too, can become a Master Composter. Heck if I did it you can, too.

If you have allowed the weeds to take over the past few months, you may have some hard work to do in getting your beds ready. If the weeds are already throwing seeds, you might want to pull them or cut off the seed heads before you dig the garden. If they are just green weeds, just bury them and let them return all the nutrients they contain to the soil. If you do this you may have to mulch heavily with newly mowed grass or mulched leaves. All this is good to add back to the soil.

If you have time and want to experiment you might try solarizing your beds. We are trying this with a few of ours at the school. Simply remove all the organic material from the top, mound the soil so it is higher in the middle, and cover with plastic. Ideally you can do this during the summer, so you need to hurry if you still want to get four to six weeks of hot sun. This method is supposed to kill weed seeds and wipe out some soil pathogens. We all have some of these nasty things since we tend to not have enough room to rotate our crops properly. Any way, stay tuned to see if it works for us. Or, try it yourself.

If you are with me so far, it is now time to actually plant that garden. Do follow the dates on the planting chart. Sorry, but it is too late to plant fall tomatoes unless you put them in pots that you move in or cover during the first cold snap this fall. Do give the plants and seed rows a good organic fertilizer when you are planting. Dig it into and around the soil next to the plants. I use MicroLife 6-2-4 almost exclusively but there are other good organic fertilizers, too. Just be sure you don't starve the new babies! In a few weeks after the seeds have germinated and the transplants have become established use some liquid fertilizer on them. Continue to fertilize as they are growing rapidly.

When the sky stops irrigating your plants, make sure you do. Just like you, if they can eat and drink, they will be merry!

Establish a routine of checking them every day for pests, moisture level, and nutritional needs. You can begin enjoying the fruits (vegetables) of your labor in 60 days or less.

It is always great to start a new year with the students at Oak Forest. If you aren't busy on Thursdays, we would love to have you join us there. Teaching kids organic gardening is one of the most satisfying things I have ever done! Several other club members are also volunteers.

Of Waterlogged Plants and Gardeners

As I write this article we are still in the midst of the heavy rainfall of Harvey. We hope that you and your loved ones are safe and dry. Who knows how this will end or when. At this point it feels like the rain will never end. But of course, it will end.

After this deluge is over, and our attention is not still focused on surviving this storm, as gardeners we will be looking at our flattened waterlogged gardens and heaving a big sigh. It is on this that I want to focus with this article.

We all know that plants need water, (but not this much!). Plant roots, however need oxygen as well. When this much water hits soil, saturating it, air is replaced in the soil pores by water. As with most living things deprived of air, plants drown. Some plants, namely our native plants, can tolerate this better than others. Some plants will just curl up and die, literally. So what to do.

Not to panic just yet. After the rains let up, and it is safe to be outside, check to see if your plants had been flooded. If so they may have a layer of silt or mud on the leaves. This should be washed off. I know, I know, adding more water seems counter-intuitive. However, a layer of mud on the leaves keeps photosynthesis from occurring. The plant can't help itself regenerate if it cannot make food for itself.

Most of the damage will occur if the plants have been inundated for a long period of time, say several days or even a week. If the water recedes fairly quickly, many plants will stand a better chance of surviving. Once more favorable conditions return, watch for signs of plant dieback. Don't be too hasty to do any pruning. The plants may spring back to life.

Native trees and shrubs will withstand being waterlogged just fine. Non-native material may not be able to handle as much water. Perennials will bear watching for signs of trouble. Vegetables and annuals are least likely to survive. Herbs will most likely curl up their toes.

What trouble signs should you watch for?

1. Yellowing or browning of leaves
2. Leaf curling and pointing downward
3. Leaf wilting (Don't be fooled by this as it looks just like the plant is thirsty. Don't be tempted to water it.)



4. Reduced new leaf size
5. Early fall color on trees
6. Defoliation
7. Branch die-back
8. Gradual plant decline

Don't be too quick to prune anything. Give it a chance. If

branches are green and pliable, they will grow new leaves. Remove only branches



that are broken or obviously dead.

If roots of trees or shrubs have been exposed by the erosive force of the water, cover them with a layer of soil or compost. On the other hand, if mulch has been piled around the base of plants and trees, move it aside to allow air to get to the base of plant.

It's a good idea to clean up any rotting plant material and fallen leaves that are rotting in order to remove potentially harmful fungi and bacteria which would affect plant recovery.

Heavy rainfall will leach nutrients out of soils, particularly if they are sandy in nature. A light application of a balanced fertilizer will give the plants a needed boost. Add Epsom salts to allow plants to take up nutrients more efficiently and to add magnesium and sulfur. These reduce plant stress. Foliar feeding with something like Ocean Harvest, etc., or compost tea is very useful, too.

Let the soil dry out before you try to work it. By walking on it or otherwise working it,

you might destroy the structure of the soil itself. When you do decide to work it use small hand tools not to cause more compaction to it.

The soil may even become 'sour' smelling due to the absence of air which allows smelly anaerobic bacteria to grow. If you had good organic soil to begin with, the good bacteria and fungi in the soil will re-establish themselves naturally after a time. If the soil lacked much in the way of organic components, give it a boost with new compost and dried molasses.

Watch for fungal diseases. You may need to treat with a fungicide. Stressed plants also attract insect pests, so be mindful of those. Try to use the organic fungicides and insecticides that are available.

Don't rush to replant right away, for the reasons given. Any seeds that you may have planted before the flooding may have rotted and will need to be replaced.

Keep your spirits up, after all, gardeners are a resilient lot. We have a lot of faith in renewal. If you lost your garden plants, our LHG community will provide cuttings, seeds and plants from the gardens that were less affected by flood waters.

And at the end of a rain is usually a bright sunny day. Gardens and gardeners will persevere! And the bright spots in my garden now are the many bulbs that bloom after the rains. Many gingers are very happy as well. So I leave you with some bright spots from my garden to give you cheer and hope for a brighter tomorrow.



**Lake Houston
Gardeners**

Meet on the 2nd Monday of
every month except
June—August
7 p.m.
Good Shepherd Episcopal
Church
2929 Woodland Hills Drive
Kingwood, TX
77339

2017—2018
LHG STEERING
COMMITTEE

Moritza Day
Facilitator
713-206-0710
mday@daywestinc.com

Judy Herman-Hees,
Publicity
281-360-3908
frauherman@cebridge.net

Barbara Adams,
Treasurer
3018 Evergreen Glade Ct.
Kingwood, TX 77339
281-359-8441
barbadams222@gmail.com

Gudrun Opperman,
Newsletter Editor
281-360-8092
Hoppergo@aol.com

Anne Mullins
Hospitality
832-264-1433
anne.e.mullins@gmail.com

Treasurer's Report: Barbara Adams

Beginning Balance 04/25/17	\$ 2,446.63
No Deposits	\$ 0.00
Expenses:	
Amazon.com - gift card for Langridges	\$ 75.00
Amazon.com – gift card for G. Oppermann for presentation	75.00
Church of Good Shepherd – building use Sept - Nov	150.00
South Woodland Hills – Comm Ctr rental xmas party	200.00
South Woodland Hills – Comm Ctr deposit xmas party	300.00
Barbara Adams – reimburse gift card Judy Herman-Hees	<u>75.00</u>
Current Balance as of 08/25/17	\$ 1,571.63

Hospitality Report: Anne Mullins

Welcome back! We hope to see lots of new faces and old friends this year. As mentioned earlier, we are changing hospitality somewhat in order to keep the work load and expenses down for the hospitality position. We will be offering water at meetings along with snacks brought in by monthly volunteers. If you wish to bring your own non-alcoholic drinks along, feel free to do so.

I will be circulating a sign-up sheet at the September meeting. Please consider signing up to bring goodies to a meeting. We typically have three volunteers per meeting. Thank you!

This and That

Things to do this Month:

Refresh Container Gardens: Fall is in the air, we hope. Refresh container gardens with snapdragons, dianthus, mums, petunias, lobelia, crotons & more.
Watering: Maintain watering on newly planted seeds and transplants, use a rain wand to avoid disturbing plants with small root systems. On St. Augustine and other lawns, water well but less often. With shorter days and cooler nights – begin to reduce the amount of water applied as needed. Avoid watering in the evenings if possible to prevent fungal diseases.
Hummingbirds: Migrating hummingbirds can be found at your feeders and natural nectar sources. Keeping feeders clean, filled, and in a shady area will encourage visitors
 Recipe for Nectar: Bring 4 cups of water to a boil, add 1 cup of granulated sugar, stir until dissolved. Allow to cool, fill feeders. Keep excess sealed in refrigerator. (no need to add red food coloring)
 Natural nectar sources for hummingbirds: Turk's cap, Hamelia, shrimp plant, firespike, salvia, lobelia (cardinal flower), Mexican oregano, pride of Barbados, Anisacanthus, and cigar plants. These are all hummer magnets.
Vegetable Transplants: Get your transplants in your fall vegetable garden. Cool-season vegetables such as cauliflower, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, kale, mustard, lettuce, and kohlrabi can be planted September through January, look for seeds

or transplants to add to your garden.
Mulch, Mulch, Mulch: Mulching keeps plant roots cooler, weed seeds at bay and conserves water. Apply 3" deep around trees and shrubs, but don't pile up on trunk. Add compost around annuals, herbs, and vegetables. Do not mound mulch against the base of a plant, this only invites insect and fungus to come in contact with the crown of plants
Pests: Blast off sucking insects (aphids, mealybugs, etc.) with water and/or spray with insecticidal soap. Leaf miners are active on citrus but they will not kill your citrus, leave alone or alternate treatments of spinosad and neem to keep them at bay. BT will get rid of cabbage loopers. Insects such as chinch bugs and fungal diseases on lawns (grey leaf spot) are two things to watch out for.

