



TEXAS A&M  
**AGRILIFE**  
EXTENSION

# Cultivating School Gardens Conference

July 20, 2022

• TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION SERVICE •

## • 2022 CULTIVATING SCHOOL GARDENS CONFERENCE - SCHEDULE •

8:00 – 8:10 am – Welcome and directions for the day

8:10 – 9:20 am – Keynote: *Benefits of Plants for Youth Education and Well-Being*, Speaker: Dr. Charlie Hall, Professor, Ellison Chair in International Floriculture, Texas A&M Department of Horticulture – A growing mountain of research continues to document the specific benefits a connection with plants and nature provides for youth learning and testing success, emotional and mental health, social life skills, and much more. Come and be enlightened and inspired in just how important your work in school gardening is to your students.

Split into concurrent tracks – choose your path

Track 1: Hands in the Dirt: Garden How-To

Track 2: Administration and Support: Funding, Resource Development, Curricula

TRACK 1: HANDS IN THE DIRT: GARDEN HOW-TO

9:25 – 10:25 am – *Location and Design Options*, Speaker: William Isbell, Harris County Master Gardener - How do you choose the right location and design layout for your space? Will your garden be accessible to those with disabilities and/or for various age groups? We will explore traditional, raised beds, container gardens, and cost estimates associated for each.

10:25 – 10:35 am – Break

10:35 – 11:35 am – *Get Growing! Soil, Seeds and Plants*, Speaker: Skip Richter, CEA-Horticulture, Brazos County AgriLife Extension – What makes great gardening soil? What are the secrets to starting seeds in the garden or growing healthy transplants indoors? Learn all this and more, as well as how to incorporate math and science in the process.

11:35 am – 12:35 pm – *Vegetables for Fall and Spring Gardens*, Speaker: Ginger Easton-Smith, CEA-ANR, Aransas County AgriLife Extension – When to grow what, and when to harvest them - expanding the harvest with cool and warm season vegetables, interplanting, succession planting, and veggies that might be new to students like Bok choy, daikon, edamame, etc.

12:35 pm – 1:00 pm – Lunch

1:00 – 2:00 pm – *Just Add Water: Irrigation Considerations*, Speaker: Boone Holladay, CEA-Horticulture, Fort Bend County AgriLife Extension – Learn how to identify existing plumbing, methodology of watering, common types of irrigation, designing and installation, water scheduling, and rainwater capture (harvesting).

2:00 - 3:00 pm – *Good Guys in the Garden: Knowing and Attracting Beneficial Insects*, Speaker: Paul Winski, CEA-Horticulture, Harris County AgriLife Extension – Attracting beneficial insects and pollinators to the garden not only helps control pest populations but also adds additional interest. Learn who the 'Good Guys' are and how to keep them in your garden.

3:00 – 3:10 pm – Break

3:10 – 4:10 pm – *Planning a Well-Tended Garden*, Speaker: Stephen Brueggerhoff, CEA-Horticulture, Galveston County AgriLife Extension – Maintaining developed gardens is key to a sustainable garden. Explore maintenance topics such as watering, weeding and mulching, and review tips for scheduling summer maintenance.

Track 2: Administration and Support: Funding, Resource Development, Curricula

9:25 – 10:25 am – *Building A Supportive Team: Partners and Partnerships*, Speaker: Brandi Keller, CEA-Horticulture, Harris County AgriLife Extension - School gardens are more likely to succeed with a strong plan and committed team/volunteers. Learn how to build a garden committee and recruit support in the local community for long-lasting success.

10:25 - 10:35 am – Break

10:35 - 11:35 am - *Student Management in the Garden*, Speakers: Martha McLeod, Fulton Learning Center, Aransas County - Utilizing gardening and natural environments to enhance learning; integrating poultry, and developing habitat - and how to connect it all to TEA standards.

11:35 am – 12:35 pm – *Strategies for Funding Your Garden*, Speaker: Randy Seagraves - Explore budgets, grants, resources, and fundraisers to grow sustainability for new and existing gardens.

12:35 - 1:00 pm – Lunch

1:00 - 2:00 pm - *STEM and Literature in the Garden*, Speaker: Lisa Whittlesey, Senior Extension Program Specialist, Junior Master Gardener® Program – School gardens offer more than just producing food and flowers. They are excellent outdoor learning environments for teaching academic subjects in an applied, hands-on format! Learn how to utilize your garden to creatively teach STEM, stimulate reading and writing, and cultivate an environment of inquiry-based learning for children.

2:00 - 3:00 pm - *Success Stories from School Gardens*, Speakers: – Garden tours of several school gardens. We will look at their garden successes and hear how they overcame challenges.

3:00 – 3:10 pm – Break

3:10 – 4:10 pm - *Health and Wellness: The Nutrition Connection*, Speakers: LGEG team member, Caren Walton - Engaging kids in tasting what they've grown and cooking the harvest to launch them into a lifetime of healthy eating.

4:10 – 4:30 pm – Closing remarks and door prizes; CPE reminder; information on accessing video recording and additional resources

4:30 pm – Adjourn

## • 2022 CULTIVATING SCHOOL GARDENS CONFERENCE - PRESENTERS •



STEPHEN BRUEGGERHOFF  
CEA - HORTICULTURE  
TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE  
EXTENSION - GALVESTON  
COUNTY

Stephen furthers the Extension mission of education programs and community service, offering horticultural consultation to residential clients, business owners and green industry practitioners. Stephen manages and proudly supports the Galveston County Master Gardeners Association, providing coordination to consistently deliver quality research-based regional programs. Stephen received a Bachelor of Science in Horticulture from Sam Houston State University and a Masters of Forest Resources from the University of Washington. With over 15 years of experience, Stephen has supported the environmental community as lecturer, instructor, administrative organizer and collaborative partner. Email: [sbrueggerhoff@tamu.edu](mailto:sbrueggerhoff@tamu.edu)



GINGER EASTON-SMITH  
CEA - AG & NATURAL  
RESOURCES  
TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE  
EXTENSION - ARANSAS  
COUNTY

Virginia (Ginger) Easton-Smith has been the Agriculture and Natural Resources Agent with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in Aransas County for 13 years. Texas Master Gardeners, community gardens, best practices for landscapers, and 4-H are some of the programs she works with. Prior to working in Aransas County, she was an Ag Agent for 17 years in Hawaii and also worked for a landscape contractor. She received her B.S. and M.S. degrees in Horticulture Science from the University of Hawaii. Ginger supports collaborative programs presenting for virtual *Gardening In the Gulf Coast* lecture series. Email: [vasmith@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:vasmith@ag.tamu.edu)



DR. CHARLIE HALL  
PROFESSOR & ELLISON CHAIR  
IN INTERNATIONAL  
FLORICULTURE  
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

Dr. Hall is nationally recognized in academia, and has published several research papers in professional journals about the emotional, mental, physiological and social benefits of plants to people. Dr. Hall currently serves as the Chief Economist for AmericanHort and Co-Chair of the Advisory Council of Seed Your Future. He is former President and Past-President of the board of directors for America in Bloom. Dr. Hall is our conference Keynote Speaker. He is an Honorary Lifetime Member of the Texas Nursery and Landscape Association and has received TNLA's Award for Outstanding Service to the Nursery Industry. Email: [charliehall@tamu.edu](mailto:charliehall@tamu.edu)



BOONE HOLLADAY  
CEA - HORTICULTURE  
TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE  
EXTENSION - FORT BEND  
COUNTY

Boone holds a bachelor's degree in Horticulture from Stephen F. Austin State University and master's degree in Agricultural Education from Texas A&M University. Boone brings horticulture experience from Moody Gardens, Producers Cooperative in Bryan, and Texas A&M Department of Horticultural Sciences. Having work experience in many horticultural industries from retail to landscape design and irrigation installation, he brings that knowledge into Fort Bend County programming efforts. He is happily married to wife Soni, is the proud father to daughter Bailey, and currently resides in Fulshear. Email: [jb.holladay@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:jb.holladay@ag.tamu.edu)



WILL ISBELL  
TEXAS MASTER GARDENER  
TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION -  
HARRIS COUNTY

Will's experience is with educating children in the garden and immersing youth with hands-on experiences. He provides leadership for Extension volunteers at Hermann Park Conservancy's McGovern Centennial Garden - The Family Garden, and has served as President of the Harris County Master Gardener Association. He established *Open Garden Day*, a children's education day within the Extension demonstration gardens, immersing youth with hands-on experiences. Email: [williamtisbell@yahoo.com](mailto:williamtisbell@yahoo.com)



BRANDI KELLER  
CEA-HORTICULTURE  
TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE  
EXTENSION - HARRIS  
COUNTY

Brandi Keller is a Horticulture County Extension Agent for Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in Harris County. She has been with Extension for 5 years with 4 of those as Harris County Master Gardener Program Coordinator. She has presented and written articles for the Harris County Extension Home Grown Lecture Series since 2020. She writes a weekly gardening column for the Houston Chronicle. With a B.S. in Conservation from Kent State University, she loves nature and sustainable gardening. Brandi enjoys making art, taking photos, birding and bragging that she never lived on a ship despite being a US Navy veteran. Email: [brandi.keller@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:brandi.keller@ag.tamu.edu)



MARTHA MCLEOD  
STEM CHALLENGE TEACHER,  
BIRDING TEAM SPONSOR  
FULTON 3-5 LEARNING  
CENTER

Martha McLeod was born and raised in the Brush Country of South Texas where she learned value of wildlife and habitat education, soil and water conservation, and land stewardship. She has been an educator for 30 years teaching science to elementary students. She has sponsored youth gardening programs that include vegetable gardening, pollinator gardens, and poultry layers for over 20 years, and a youth birdwatching program for 13 years. Former birding students now in middle and high school serve as mentors and tutors to her elementary students. Her teams of youth birders take top honors in the TPWD Great Texas Birding Classic in their respective categories. Email: [mmcleod@acid.org](mailto:mmcleod@acid.org)



ROBERT 'SKIP' RICHTER  
CEA - HORTICULTURE  
TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE  
EXTENSION - BRAZOS COUNTY

Skip has served as a county horticulturist with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service for 33 years in Montgomery, Travis, Harris, and Brazos County, providing horticultural education for residents, and training and managing Master Gardener volunteers. He helped develop Extension's "Don't Bag It" yard waste recycling programs, the "Composting for Kids" educational web page, and the Grow Green environmental education program which educates Austin area residents on landscaping practices that protect water quality. Email: [robert.richter@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:robert.richter@ag.tamu.edu)



RANDY SEAGRAVES  
PROGRAM SPECIALIST  
TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE  
EXTENSION INTERNATIONAL  
JUNIOR MASTER GARDENER  
PROGRAM

Randy is an Extension Program Specialist and Curriculum Director for the International Junior Master Gardener program. A former 3rd grade teacher, Randy is the lead author of eight JMG® curriculum guides, including *Learn, Grow, Eat & GO!* curriculum and the recently released *Early Childhood Learn, Grow, Eat & GO!* curriculum. He guest lectures for horticulture and education courses at Texas A&M and has been a guest host for the *Weekend Gardener* television segment for local CBS affiliate in College Station and regularly speaks at regional, state and national conferences across the country. Email: [seagraves@tamu.edu](mailto:seagraves@tamu.edu)



CAREN WALTON  
PROGRAM SPECIALIST  
TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE  
EXTENSION INTERNATIONAL  
JUNIOR MASTER GARDENER  
PROGRAM

Caren is a Program Specialist with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension for the International Junior Master Gardener program. She worked closely with the AFRI grant project titled, *Texas Grow! Eat! Go!* along with Extension horticulturists, health experts, University of Texas Health Science Center and Texas A&M University School of Public Health. She assists with administration of JMG® health and nutrition curriculum *Learn, Grow, Eat & GO!* With public school classroom teaching and professional school administration background, Caren provides program implementation, educational planning, and support of school district implementation for the JMG® program. Email: [ccwalton@tamu.edu](mailto:ccwalton@tamu.edu)



LISA WHITTLESEY  
SENIOR EXTENSION  
PROGRAM SPECIALIST  
INTERNATIONAL JUNIOR  
MASTER GARDENER  
PROGRAM

Lisa is author/co-author of nine award winning youth environmental curriculums, and has been featured in over 170 popular press articles. She has been speaker to over 285 regional and national conferences and recent work has focused on utilizing the Junior Master Gardener® program *Learn, Grow, Eat & GO!* curricula with intervention as a part of a 5-year USDA AFRI funded Extension and Research project focused on child and family interventions for obesity prevention. Lisa is a lecturer for Texas A&M University Horticulture Department, and does educational videos for the public through Texas A&M AgriLife Extension social media outlets. Email: [lisa.whittlesey@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:lisa.whittlesey@ag.tamu.edu)



PAUL WINSKI  
CEA - HORTICULTURE  
TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE  
EXTENSION - HARRIS COUNTY

Paul has been a county Extension Agent - Commercial Horticulture since January 2013. He offers over 30 years of experience in the greenhouse and nursery industry with expertise in new product development, integrated pest management and nursery/greenhouse production. Paul's programming focuses on the green industry for nursery/greenhouse producers, landscape maintenance companies, golf courses and arborists. Paul supports professional and personal enrichment programs through Harris County Horticulture Home Grown Series podcasts and lectures. Email: [paul.winski@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:paul.winski@ag.tamu.edu)