

Weatherford Telegram

Master Gardeners suggest good dirt and daisies

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Spring inspires a common thought among Parker County gardeners: "What do I need to do to have beautiful gardens?"

Soil would be the first consideration, and a soil test would be helpful.

Soil test kits are free at the AgriLife Extension Office, and there is a nominal fee from Texas A&M for processing your soil.

Armed with the information, you'll be more accurate with additives your soil needs.

As a rule of thumb, for sandy soil, work in compost, which adds much needed nutrients and slows water drainage.

If soil is clay, add lava sand or expanded shale and compost, which will aerate the soil and allow water to flow and not stand.

Think about raised beds if your property sits on rock.

Mulch, mulch, mulch after your gardens are planted to conserve moisture and keep plants protected during our long, hot summers and cold winters. Mulching offers the added bonus of keeping down weeds and offering some protection from certain diseases.

The really fun part comes from adding the color and texture that only plants provide in the yard. But what flowers are best, and where can we find them?

Have you thought about the daisy look?

Blackfoot Daisies, Four-Nerve Daisies and Zexmanias all have a daisy look and require very little water after they are established. They bloom from spring until frost and, when planted in mass plantings, are spectacular.

Black-eyed Susans, Copper Canyon Daisies and Purple Coneflowers will be beautiful in late summer and into fall adding bold color and texture.

Fall Asters and Pincushion flowers have a different daisy look and are sun loving, as are those mentioned above, yet some can tolerate a bit of shade as well.

Remember the traditional Shasta Daisy is lovely.

Parker County Master Gardeners conduct the spring plant sale from 8 a.m. to noon Saturday, April 17, and will have all of the plants mentioned above.

There will be many more native plants and grasses, perennials, annuals, ground covers, roses and shrubs to suit your gardening fancy.

Master Gardeners will be available to help you with your selections. You will be able to learn about rainwater harvesting, plant propagation, drip irrigation and enjoy a tour of the Demonstration gardens located at the Extension Office. Garden tours will let you see how plants look at maturity and in combination with differing varieties.

It's all in the parking lot of the Texas AgriLife Extension Service Office, 604 N. Main St. in Weatherford.

Parker County Master Gardeners are sponsored by the Texas AgriLife Extension Service of Texas A & M and Jon Green, the Ag. agent for Parker County. The mission of PCMG is to assist the county agent in providing horticultural information and education throughout Parker County. For information on the Master Gardener program and its activities, see www.pcmg-texas.org.

This story was contributed by PCMGA President Judy Schmidt.

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