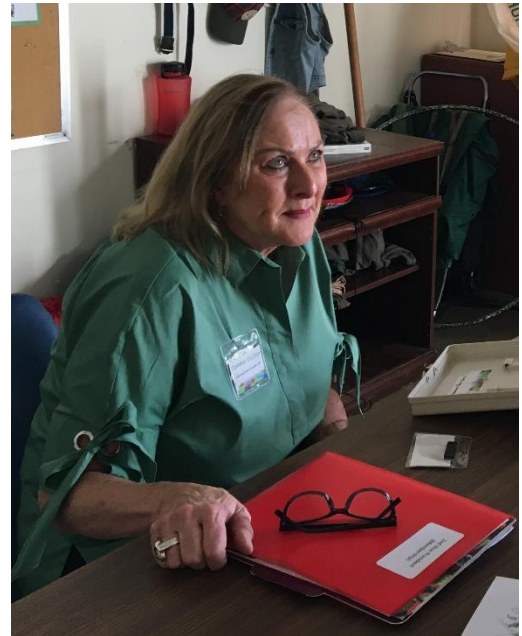


January 2023

This mild and sunny day brought out many club members and a few guests to the first LF Garden Club meeting of the year.

Tammy Delforge was at her station greeting everyone, checking us off her list and handing out name tags.

The beverage station was ready to go with fresh brewed coffee and was a popular gathering spot for many friends.



Adrienne Juno (above), and a group of ladies enjoying the gathering.



Hospitality

The ladies of the January Hospitality committee, **Lois Maier, Barbara Crum, Carol Calvert, Cathy Rogers and Mary Davis**, provided a variety of goodies for all to enjoy.



A real hit on this cool day was the hot, spiced apple cider. The aroma of fruit, cloves and cinnamon filled the room.



Lois is ready to try this aromatic, hot beverage.





Sally Gengo and Christine Kint



Pam Randall and Eleese Lester-Baier



Barbara Davidson & Dawn Bramwell and

Barbara Volz (left)





Today, on her 90th birthday, we celebrated **Zelma Mikolajczyk** with a song and our best wishes for continued health and happiness. A fancy decorated cake was presented to her.



Mary Davis with new member **Marlo Wilson** (left) and **Rica Brock** and **Cathy Rogers** (below).





Adrienne with our guest, her friend **Denise Lovelace**



Terri Cole with our presenter, **Valorie**



President, **Harriett Bedenbaugh**, is getting ready for the official business of the day.

After plenty of socializing, president **Harriet Bedenbaugh** called the meeting to order. As always, the meeting opened with a prayer delivered by **Mary Davis** and the Pledge of Allegiance recited by all.

Sheila Anderson, was ready to take the minutes of the meeting.



Meditation

Heavenly Father,

We thank you for new blessings as we welcome this new year of 2023!

January is a time for quiet and new beginnings.

Anyone who thinks gardening begins in the spring and ends in the fall,

is missing the best part of the year.

For gardening really begins in January with a vision full of dreams and new ideals.

It is the perfect time to reflect on how we want to live our lives and we pray that you,

O God, will make a bountiful garden in each of our lives .

Guide us to till and care for the soil with our love and devotion of others

Help us to sow the seeds of kindness and to weed out all ill thoughts

Let our words and actions be fruitful and let our ideas all be fertile

May all our plants flower with humility and may our compassion be seen in the

beautiful colors that bloom

Let the gardens of our lives reflect the love and joy that You shine on us and that we

can share with our families and friends

Thank you again for this renewal time in January to have this opportunity to refill our

souls with your endless love.

Amen

Program



Barbara Crum introduced us to our speaker for the day, **Rick Castagno**, a Harris County Master Gardener. His topic was on ***Spring Vegetable Gardening***.

Rick works with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension <https://harris.agrilife.org> and is involved with a research project involving novel tomato seeds from the Pan American Seed company.

At the research center many characters of the seedlings are considered to determine if the fruit will be successful in our climate. Two varieties are being presently studied, the *Blushing Star* and the *Sun Dipper* both varieties are compared to the Juliet, a proven champion in our gardens. Starting with the percentage of germination, the researchers then

measure growth, flowering, days to harvest and yield of each plant as well as appearance, hardiness and taste of the fruit.

Important Tips for vegetable growing:

- Seeds must be in the ground in December
- Transfer to ground in about 8-10 weeks after germination (~end of February)
- For best results use a resistant variety (check A&M web site)
- Start with good soil and add $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup slow release, complete fertilizer containing:
 - Nitrogen – Phosphor – Potassium
- Add 2-3 TBS fertilizer weekly and a Fish emulsion spray
- Flowers will develop if night temperature is over 40F and below 70F
- Tomatoes will not grow after June (too hot!)
- Stake trunk early and leave plenty of room between each plant
- Cut lower branches off the ground to prevent infestations from soil
- Snip off suckers that come off the main trunk
- Cut growing tip if plants get too tall (>6 feet)
- Depending on variety, it takes 60-75 days to harvest
- Pick fruit before fully ripe to prevent bird and squirrel damage
- Other pests are best picked off the plant or use an organic product (i.e.: pyrethrum) and spray ground sparingly to kill eggs
- Favorite varieties: Brandywine, Celebrity and Juliet



Flower of the Month



The **Snowdrop** is a birth flower for the month of January. It is the earliest flower to bloom every year. Snowdrops are fitting as the January birth flower because it symbolizes rebirth as well as success in overcoming trials.

The Snowdrop is a perfect reminder that there is a great life ahead and that today is only a beautiful beginning. Aside from rebirth, Snowdrop also symbolizes purity, sympathy, and hope. Purity is a symbol that is associated with its snow-white petals.

But perhaps the best symbolism of this delicate flower is hope. Having this flower around is like embracing the strong belief that the new year will bring amazing things and that everything will be alright after all. The Snowdrop used to be considered bad luck because the flower always seemed to pop up in graveyards.

Snowdrops do best in well-drained soil and in light shade, conditions similar to their native woodland habitat.

The meeting continued with reports from the various committee chairs.

Tammy Delforge announced that 40 members plus 2 guests were in attendance.

Sheila Anderson reported on the upcoming Federation meeting and their scheduled speaker, the horticulturalist of Brookwood Communities.

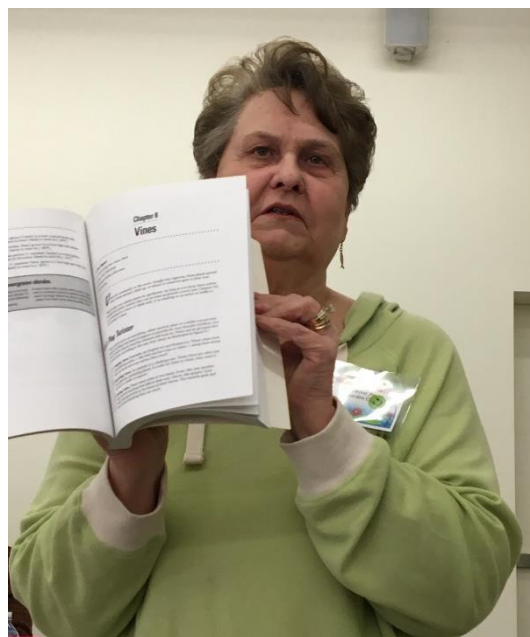
Barabara Davidson reminded us of the upcoming March Mart at the Mercer Arboretum. For more information we can check out the link in on our website.

Susan Busler gave the financial report.

Barbara Crum announced the speaker for next month's program.

Sandra McKeon has a bus reserved for a tour of old cemeteries in Galveston on January 27th.

Harolene Hatley featured another gardening resource book from our library.



Dawn Bramwell reported on a succesful fundraiser with the sale of vouchers for PFAS totalling so far over \$2,500. The final number will be available next month after all voucher are redeemed and the overhead is subtracted.

Jean Robinson, on behalf of the garden club has sent a Peace Lilly plant to the memorial service of **Betty Hughes**. Betty, a long time member of the LF garden club, died last month. **Susan Hanson** lost her son unexpectedly and the garden club sent cards, plants, thoughts and prayers of comfort to her. Both Susan and Betty's family wrote notes of heartfelt gratitudes to the membership of the club.



Horticulture



Rica Brock shared her passion for succulents with us. Not only is she facinated by the variety and and carefree nature of these plants but she also enjoys finding unusal containers to grow these plants in.

She looks for and finds pottery and glass ware in thrift stores. By drilling a small drainage hole in the bottom with a special diamond drill bit, she converts any dish into a flower pot.

Not only glassware and pottery can be used as planters. Any houshold item can be transformed in an attractive vessel for these unusal plants. She displayed examples of her creations for all to see and maybe find our own inspiration.



The extreme freeze our area suffered over the holidays has damaged many plants. **Bette Gerhold** researched ways to help in the recovery process when possible. Below is a formula posted by (garden Guru) Randy Lemmon which she shared with the group.

POST-FREEZE Recovery Action Plan

(edited from Randy Lemmon's original text)

There are two phases of freeze recovery for the Gulf Coast area.

- During and immediately after the freeze, some plants will display visible damage and will require quick action to prevent further damage.
- Depending on the severity and duration of the freeze, other plants may take weeks, or even months, to display the true damage suffered. Homeowners can follow these steps to help their landscapes recover.

Step One:

If it's mushy, or goeey, get rid of it! Cut it out, remove it! It is imperative to cut away anything that's mushy and wet because it could harbor fungal diseases that will be pulled into the remaining plant. Spray a copper-based fungicide to prevent fungal diseases. Protect plant from future freezes that can kill root system if plant was cut to the nubs.

Step Two:

After danger of another hard freeze (mid-March), start with a lawn care protocols.

- First, give the lawn a "haircut" to get rid of all the burnt tips. Bag these grass clippings— don't let them fall to the soil and create a layer of thatch. If not able to bag, rake out as much dead grass as possible.
- Start the lawn fertilization schedule. <https://texags.com/forums/34/topics/3087327>
- Lower the mower deck a notch or two (rather than 'scalping' to the roots) and vacuum up as much debris as possible to expose roots to air, sunshine, water and fertilizer. Be aware: another freeze could kill a scalped St. Augustine lawn.

Step Three:

For thatch build up: don't mechanically de-thatch – after the initial mowing, add trace minerals/trace elements according to fertilization schedule. Use soil amendments containing humus or humates and molasses (Nature's Way, Soil Mender and Azomite) to help break down thatch. Double-screened composts can be great amendments, too, if nothing else is available.

Step Four:

Inspect the trunk of palm trees. If a smooth-trunked palm shows no cracks or doesn't seem mushy to the touch, there is a good chance it survived.

Step Five:

Cut off any palm fronds that are droopy or completely flopped downward. Wait on pruning other fronts even if they are yellow or brown. If a palm is small or short enough, pull on interior fronts. If they easily slide out, the plant is dead.

Sago palms fronds won't pull out even if dead –a fuzzy growth in the crown, with spines poking out in a twist, indicates that the sago is alive.

Step Six:

If it's crispy and brown, cut it back to green wood. Hibiscus, lantana, hamelia and other perennials are great examples. Or just leave brown plants alone until no more freezing weather is certain. After cutting damaged plants to green wood, super-protect plants from another freeze. Reason: A fresh cut will pull freezing temperatures directly into the plant. If, after cutting, the plant will already sprout new growth, tender greens are more susceptible to damage from a future freeze.

Step Seven:

If, after cutting a damaged plant to the ground and the root system seems to be firmly locked, leave it alone; it may come back from the roots. Again, super-protect from further freezes. If, however, the root system moves around easily –it's dead and should be removed.

Step Eight:

If you were able to salvage the trunks and save the graft of tropical fruits like citrus, avocado and papaya, prune them back. If the trunk and graft were saved, citrus and avocado can come back from the brink. Blackening at the tips of branches indicates fungal disease. Refer to Step One and over the next couple of weeks, treat all the pruned branches and any slight cracks with a copper fungicide.

Step Nine:

Look for cracks and splits in trunks. This applies to almost any plant in the landscapes as well as standard shrubs like azaleas, gardenias, bottlebrush, plumbagoes and durantes. One itty-bitty crack is nothing to panic about, but big splits and multiple cracks are a sure sign that moisture inside the bark froze, expanded, and popped through. It also shows that freezing temperatures started creeping into the plant. A plant with a single crack might be salvageable, but not with multiple cracks and dark-looking fissures.

<https://randylemmon.com/miscellaneous/post-freeze-recovery-action-plan/>



Randy Lemmon

A graduate from Texas A&M with a degree in Agriculture and Communications, worked for the Tx Farm Bureau before hosting KTRH Radio '*The Garden Line*' in 1996. Lemmon has written several gardening books and was a frequent guest on local television. He suddenly passed away at Mt. Sinai Hospital in New York City due to complications of a stroke. Randy was 60 years old. His expertise will be missed by many gardeners.