

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE March 29, 2008

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Lawn & Garden Expo

If sheer numbers were any indication, the 8th Annual Lawn and Garden Expo was highly successful in terms of what Ellis County's Master Gardeners do best – which is to promote horticultural education.

Children's workshops at the Expo were a perfect example of the group's educational goals.

"Here we have a wildlife habitat," said Master Gardener Rosemary Morgeson. "We are showing kids how important natural habitats are to our environment, making them aware of the importance of preserving the natural environment."

Master Gardener Carolyn Foster agreed. "The whole room is designed to educate the children with hands on activities to stimulate their desire to preserve," she said. "They are learning how plants grow, how bugs grow -- that bats aren't vampires."

"Children really teach us," added Master Gardener Micki Roark. "Adults will follow the children."

Plenty of adults were on hand for the Expo, too, with Waxahachie Civic Center parking already at a premium by 9:30 in the morning and shuttle buses carrying attendees from nearby Navarro College.

Printed literature on a number of educational topics was available at the Master Gardener's table, with experts on hand to answer questions about all things green and growing. Garden Clubs from Ennis, Ovilla, and Waxahachie had tables as well and provided information about club meetings and upcoming garden and wildflower tours.

For the fourth year in a row, Texas author and gardening authority Neil Sperry headlined with a presentation entitled "Growing Green – the Art of Responsible Gardening." Other keynote speakers were Gaye Hammond, president of the Houston Rose Society, and Dotty Woodson, an extension program specialist for water resources with the Texas AgriLife Extension.

Other adult workshops and presentations included:

- Intelligent Landscape Design
- Hardscape in the Landscape
- Pruning Trees and Shrubs
- Container Gardening
- Butterfly Gardening
- Vegetable Gardening and Drip Irrigation
- Bluebird Habitat and Houses
- Turf and Lawns
- Perennials/Annuals/Companion Plants
- Trees/Tree Diseases/Tree Health

Vendors and other Expo sponsors packed the main ballroom and lined the hallways at the Waxahachie Civic Center, offering attendees all kinds of products and information – Habitat for Humanity, Native Plants and Habitats, tractors, rain gutters, barbeque grills, siding, soap, and garden décor to name only a few. None were more popular than the Master Gardener’s plant sale, where shoulder-to-shoulder crowds could choose anything from blooming perennials to tomatoes, and at bargain prices.

The Ellis County Master Gardener Association is an all-volunteer group operating under the umbrella of the Texas AgriLife Extension Service. The group supports many garden-related educational activities, including offering a well-credentialed speaker’s bureau ready to give fascinating presentations on dozens of topics from azaleas to worms.

“Master Gardeners also go out to schools and events in the neighborhood,” said Foster. “Anyone interested in becoming a Master Gardener or in having us come out to demonstrate any one of these activities – we’d be more than happy to talk to them.”

For more information, call the AgriLife Extension Office at 972-825-5175 or visit the Master Gardener’s website at www.ecmga.com.

